

**THE NOMINATION OF GENERAL CHARLES Q.
BROWN, JR., USAF, FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO
THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE CHAIR-
MAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

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This hearing is printed to include all available information
requested or required to be inserted for the record.

**THE NOMINATION OF GENERAL CHARLES Q.
BROWN, JR., USAF, FOR REAPPOINTMENT
TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF
STAFF**

TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jack Reed (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Reed, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, Warren, Peters, Manchin, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Cramer, Scott, Tuberville, Mullin, Budd, and Schmitt.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Chairman REED. Good morning. Let me call the hearing to order. Good morning. The Committee meets today to consider the nomination of General Charles "CQ" Brown to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General, congratulations on your nomination and thank you for stepping forward to lead at this critical time.

I would like to welcome your wife, Sharene who is with us today, and thank your sons, Sean and Ross, who I am sure are watching proudly. We thank your family for their continued support of your service over many years.

I would also like to thank the current Chairman, General Mark Milley, who will retire later this year. General Milley has served this Nation honorably for more than four decades and has led the Joint Chiefs with skill and vision. We are grateful for his service, and we congratulate him on his retirement.

General Brown, you are well qualified to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As the current Chief of Staff of the Air Force, you have led the service as it adapts to a rapidly changing global security environment. You bring a record of success for leadership around the globe and command experience at all levels of our military. This expertise will serve you well.

If confirmed, you will serve as the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the Secretary of Defense, and Congress. You will be expected to be an effective strategist, advisor, and manager, and your counsel will be relied upon as we confront the multitude of national security issues before us.

Indeed, we face significant challenges. First and foremost, as the National Defense Strategy makes clear, China is our primary competitor. China is the only nation with both the intent and the capability to challenge the interests of the United States and our allies and partners. At the same time, Russia remains a violent, destabilizing force, and nations like Iran and North Korea continue to push the boundaries of military brinksmanship.

To succeed in this environment, the U.S. Military must better develop its joint capabilities across all domains, including space, cyber, and information. As the Defense Department recently released Joint Concept for Competing makes clear, the objective of our Nation's adversaries is to win without fighting. The document warns that if we do not adapt our approach to competition more effectively, the United States risks ceding strategic influence, advantage, and leverage while preparing for war that never comes.

General Brown, I am interested to know how you would promote the development of joint capabilities to ensure our military remains the world's premier fighting force. While it is the purview of the military services to equip our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and guardians, if confirmed as Chairman you will be responsible for identifying new joint capabilities and performing net assessments to ensure the services are procuring the right capabilities needed for the Joint Force. The Chairman must review capabilities holistically across this total force, which can conflict with the priorities of individual services. The Committee would be interested to learn how you plan to manage this dynamic, if confirmed.

In addition, the National Defense Strategy, the National Military Strategy, and the annual Chairman's Risk Assessment are vital documents this Committee relies upon to perform its oversight functions. General Brown, I would like your assessment of the implementation of the National Defense Strategy and the National Military Strategy and whether you would recommend any changes or updates to those strategic documents. Further, it is imperative that these documents be submitted to Congress on time. I look forward to working with you to ensure these statutory deadlines are upheld.

The Joint Force is fundamentally about people. As the Nation's senior-most military officer, it will be your responsibility to understand the needs of America's servicemembers and to be their greatest advocate. Our military is facing its most difficult recruiting environment in decades. Fewer and fewer young Americans are eligible for or interested in service, and issues such as discrimination and harassment too often push current members out.

While recruiting is one of the primary duties of the military services, if confirmed as the Chairman, you will be responsible for advising the Secretary on comprehensive joint readiness, which includes assessing the effect of manpower shortfalls across the total force. Therefore, I would like to know your thoughts on the current recruiting crisis and the impact it may have on the readiness of the Joint Force.

Finally, if confirmed, you will be the most visible military officer in the Nation. It will be critical for you to represent the force with total professionalism and trustworthiness. Frankly, I am concerned about the health of our Nation's civil and political military relation-

ships. More and more, the military is being dragged into political fights, and public trust in the military is eroding because of it. Civilian control of the military is a sacred duty that must be carried out responsibly, not be exploited. General, I would like to know how you will work to help improve civil-military relations and demonstrate this ethos yourself.

General Brown, if confirmed, you will lead the Joint Force at a momentous time. I am grateful for your willingness to step forward to meet this challenge. Thank you, and I look forward to your testimony.

Now let me recognize the Ranking Member, Senator Wicker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that fine statement, and General Brown, welcome to this Committee. I welcome your nomination to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is great to see that you are accompanied by your wife, Sharene, and the Chair has also acknowledged your sons, Sean and Ross, who are supporting their daddy throughout the confirmation process.

As you testify before us and prepare to assume the senior-most position in the U.S. Military, you are continuing with a profound concept that dates back to the founding of our republic. It dates back to before our Constitution, to the days of George Washington, where we established and we maintain the proposition that the military, in our country, is answerable to the civilian elected leadership of our country. You have been nominated by our commander in chief for the senior-most position, and I believe you are exceptionally qualified for this position. And certainly, Mr. Chairman, we need an exceptionally qualified officer during this perilous national moment.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, multiple senior national defense leaders have told this Committee we are in the most dangerous global security environment since World War II, and I agree. During that pivotal time 70 years ago, our country faced two great military powers across different oceans, with a capability and intent to threaten American domestic security directly. We see a similar dual threat today, which the Chair has already alluded to. The Chinese Communist Party is conducting the largest and most rapid military buildup in modern history, surpassing our own military in many places. It is a military built for a single purpose—to undermine Indo-Pacific and American security and prosperity by expanding the Chinese Communist Party's totalitarian influence to the entire globe.

In Europe, the Kremlin's brutal war in Ukraine is the most dangerous crisis we have faced in half a century, and their self-defeating war of aggression has brought China, North Korea, and Iran all closer together.

This dangerous moment demands an exceptionally competent set of uniformed leaders. Regrettably, many Americans have lost confidence in our senior military leadership, which, for the past 20 years, had been very high. While we all may debate the reasons, I believe that the lack of accountability for failures among military leadership being thrust into the spotlight of politically divisive

issues, like critical race theory and abortion, have significantly contributed to this decline in trust.

General Brown speaks often of accelerating innovation in the Air Force. He recognizes the difficulties of doing so amid an entrenched bureaucracy. And he is open about how he has learned in his job and improved his approach. That candor and self-accountability should serve him well in this new role, including, as an example, to other officers.

I am hopeful that General Brown's detailed focus on innovation and culture change will bring new thinking and action to the massive problems that our Joint Force faces. I hope General Brown will continue to focus on restoring a culture built on meritocracy in the U.S. Military that continuously fosters new approaches to readiness and warfighting.

Make no mistake. The next few years will be critical for our national security. As General Brown has stated, we cannot wait for a crisis to drive change for our Joint Force. Years of lackluster budgeting for our national defense has put us far behind where we need to be. We have a bureaucracy and an industrial base that is clunky, and a military promotion system geared toward risk aversion. It will take honest and realistic threat and capability assessments from our senior uniformed leaders to empower lower-level personnel to fix the many problems we face. I expect General Brown will offer his most frank, unreserved military judgment both to the President and to Congress, if confirmed.

During a similarly decisive moment for our national defense in 1980, then-candidate Reagan spoke of the need for a renaissance in American military superiority, to avoid war with the Soviets—to avoid war. Reagan said, "Our best hope of persuading them to live in peace is to convince them they cannot win at war." We avoided war then, but only because we had leaders who were bold enough to pursue the wisdom of peace through strength, with alacrity. That timeless advice still applies today, and I am hopeful our nominee agree.

Thank you, General Brown, for being here, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

General Brown, your statement, please.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHARLES Q. BROWN, USAF, FOR RE-APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

General BROWN. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored by the opportunity to appear before you this morning. I want to thank the President and Secretary of Defense for their trust and confidence in nominating me to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I also thank General Mark Milley and Hollyanne as they conclude their decades of remarkable and honorable service to our Nation. We wish them the very best.

I would like to take a few moments to acknowledge my family. Joining me today is my wife of 34 years, Sharene. She has been committed to our family and to my journey and has also tirelessly advocated for the families of our airmen. I am also extremely proud

of our two sons, Sean and Ross. They are outstanding young men, excellent in their own right. I would not be here today if not for their sacrifice, love, and support.

I would like to thank my number one fan and my most vocal supporter who played a lead role in my development into the man I am today, my mother Kay. I also want to thank the most influential leader in my career, who commissioned me, my father Charles, a Vietnam veteran who retired from the United States Army is a colonel after 30 years of service. I am also grateful to my sister, Stephanie, for her support, as well as the influence my younger brother, Kevin, had on me and our family before his passing.

I want to express my gratitude to this Committee and the Congress for your continued support, to our men and women in uniform, DOD civilians, and their families. It is thanks to your enduring commitment and advocacy that we remain the most capability military force in the world.

I come before you today having served the last 3 years as a service and joint chief. But for the 11 years prior, I served in seven assignments across four combatant commands—EUCOM, AFRICOM, CENTCOM, AND INDOPACOM. I have held leadership positions focused on our five national security challenges—China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and violent extremists. So I arrive before you having spent less time as a general officer in Washington, DC, and more time with our fielded forces, allies, and partners, either in conflict or preparing for conflict.

Having led warfighters abroad shapes my thinking. As a result, I am mindful of the security challenges at this consequential time and the need to accelerate to stay ahead of the growing threat. The Department of Defense must implement the National Defense Strategy and prepare a Joint Force that can win the next war, if called upon, a Joint Force that serves today and into the future to maintain peace.

If confirmed, I commit to provide the President and the Secretary of Defense my military advice informed by the joint chiefs and our military leaders. Throughout, I will collaborate with the Department's civilian leadership, the interagency, and with our allies and partners, and if confirmed, I commit to provide candid and open communication to this Committee and the Congress. I will work closely with you to invest in our national defense and strengthen our national security.

Finally, I commit myself to sustaining faith and confidence with our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, guardians, and DOD civilians and their families. I will likewise work to sustain faith and confidence with the American people and their elected officials. Above all, I will dedicate myself to this proposition, that the American people should understand and know their military and its servicemembers, serve solely as unwavering defenders of the Constitution and our Nation.

I thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, General.

There are a series of questions that are addressed to nominees. You can respond.

Have you adhered to the applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

General BROWN. I have.

Chairman REED. Have you assumed any duties or taken any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

General BROWN. I have not.

Chairman REED. Exercising our legislative and oversight responsibilities makes it important that this Committee, its Subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings, reports, records, and other information from the executive branch on a timely basis. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify before this Committee, when requested?

General BROWN. I do.

Chairman REED. Do you agree, when asked before this Committee, to give your personal views, even if your views differ from the Administration?

General BROWN. I do.

Chairman REED. Do you agree to provide records, documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner when requested by this Committee, its Subcommittees, or other appropriate committees of Congress, and to consult with the requester regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such records?

General BROWN. I do.

Chairman REED. Will you ensure that your staff complies with deadlines established by this Committee for the production of reports, records, and other information, including timely responding to hearing questions for the record?

General BROWN. I will.

Chairman REED. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests?

General BROWN. I will.

Chairman REED. Will those witnesses and briefers be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

General BROWN. They will.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, sir.

As I indicated in my opening statement, we are facing a challenging environment, and one of the aspects is the challenge of recruiting, with fewer and fewer Americans eligible because of many factors, including health and other aspects, but also a sense of lack of participation in the military.

Recruiting is a primary duty of the services, the chiefs of staff of each of the services. But what actions will you take to ensure this recruiting process becomes successful and also enhances readiness?

General BROWN. Senator, I appreciate the question, and as service chief I have had an opportunity to really think deeply about this, and I have had a number of opportunities to engage with my fellow service chiefs on how best we move forward.

As the Chairman, if confirmed, one of the key areas I do think about is ensuring that the young people and their influencers understand the opportunity to serve and the great opportunities provided by serving in the military. I think, just based on my own ex-

perience, being a role model, to show the young people and their influencers that there are many great career opportunities within the military, and there are many that have served in the military and have gone on to be successful, whether they stayed for a full career or stayed for one tour.

I really believe that young people only aspire to be what they see or know about, and it is hard for them to be part of an organization or aspire to go down a career path they do not fully understand or appreciate. And so we have a responsibility to reconnect with the Nation to talk about the opportunities and for all of us that are interested in national defense and national defense how we share the stories of what inspired us to join. You know, I joined because of my father and his recommendations, and because of opportunities I had in ROTC, I was going to be an engineer and I decided to become a pilot because I had to be exposed to—be able to fly at ROTC summer camp.

So there are a number of things I think we can do, and those are things I will do, if confirmed as the Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, General. Another topic that I mentioned is the development of joint capabilities. The services are principally responsible for developing equipment and operational techniques, but you will be the point of ultimate decision on many of these proposals. And historically, service parochialism has interfered with true jointness.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to inhibit parochialism, encourage interoperability, and to get us the best equipment and the best-trained people in the field?

General BROWN. Senator, I appreciate the question again, and one of the things that was started by a couple of the Vice Chairmen before was to rework the Department's Oversight Council, instead of being just an Oversight Council, a bit more directed to ensure we have the joint capabilities. I want to continue to build upon that, but we also need to do it based on analysis to show the value of each part of the Joint Force and what they provide. And there will have to be some give and take and some hard decisions and hard calls that need to be made, but I think that is a responsibility, not just for me but also with the service chiefs and also service joint chiefs, that we have to take off our service identities and think about what is best for the Joint Force.

Chairman REED. Thank you.

We are engaged in supporting the Ukrainian people in a critical battle because my view is if they lose, we lose also. Are there any immediate lessons, operationally or strategically, that you have taken away from the conflict in Ukraine?

General BROWN. Senator, I think strategically the thing I do think about is how the value of information, before the campaign started and before the conflict started, and how that was able to bring not only NATO closer together but also to bring together allies and partners around the world. So that was one point about how we collaborate and how we build relationships well before a crisis occurs and then how we use the information we have available to help their decisionmakers or local decisionmakers make those decisions and move forward.

I think the other thing I would highlight too is the value of logistics. And I think the Russians learned if you do not pay attention to logistics it is hard to win and hard to move forward. I think we also learned that the timeline for military operations, particularly in a conflict, sometimes take longer than we might expect, and that is also a challenge.

And I think the other piece that I would highlight is just the will to fight. The one thing about the determination and the will of the Ukrainian people and their leadership, that is something that is hard to measure before a conflict, but it plays a huge dividend.

And then last thing I would say, from my own perspective as an airman, the value of air power, and having watched what either side has been able to do or not do, but the value air defense, innovative air defense, and how that has been helpful to the Ukrainians in the defense of their nation.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, General.

Senator Wicker, please.

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, General Brown. Let me first mention a statutory requirement that you and I have discussed before, 10 USC 153. It requires the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to complete a Chairman's Risk Assessment, CRA, of the National Military Strategy each year. Now we have had a problem with this in the past, and a frustration from Congress in not receiving this CRA. Even the National Military Strategy itself last time was unacceptably late.

If confirmed, I need your commitment to carrying out the statutes governing the relationship between the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Congress, including submitting the Chairman's Risk Assessment on time. Can I get your assurance that you will do this, General Brown?

General BROWN. Ranking Member Wicker, as we discussed yesterday, I will assure you that I will do my best to make sure we get those documents to you on time, because it is important to allow you and the Congress to do the things you require in order to provide the budget for us and the authorization to execute.

Senator WICKER. Absolutely. This is a law passed by the Congress, signed into law by the President of the United States some years ago, and if you, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff need some additional resources or if there is something within your jurisdiction that keeps you from doing this, will you let us know so that we can be on time with this very important CRA?

General BROWN. Yes, sir. I will definitely communicate with you if there are any challenges.

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much for that assurance.

General Brown, let's talk about the Pacific. Congress provided the Administration with authority to provide \$1 billion in transfers of United States equipment authority to help Taiwan. Is it your best military judgment that the usage of this drawdown authority and training would improve Taiwan's ability to defend itself?

General BROWN. Yes, sir, it will, and it will help them procure some asymmetric capabilities to defend their nation.

Senator WICKER. All right. So I certainly hope that we can move forward with that.

I described, in my opening statement, General, I described our defense capacity and our industrial base as “clunky.” You and I also discussed this in our conversation. Do you agree with my assessment that the bureaucracy and the industrial base are clunky, based on the speed with which technology has evolved and changes as compared to how we are able to access that as a military?

General BROWN. I do, and I think it is an area we can all improve upon. We have a great innovation here within our Nation, and we want to make sure that we are putting that into the hands of our warfighters as quickly as possible. I also believe there is an integral process to this, just based on there are so many things that are software-based today. And if we can knock down any barriers to be able to move faster, I am all for it.

Senator WICKER. Well, do you have specific plans for how we would do this, based on your experience in the various theaters you mentioned?

General BROWN. Some experience. What I have been able to do is part of this is really how I build those relationships. That is what I have done as the Air Force Chief of Staff. That is what I did in my previous assignment as Commander of Pacific Air Forces is to be engaged and be able to collaborate and figure out where those barriers might be that prevent us from moving as fast as we need to.

Senator WICKER. Okay. Now let’s talk about the European theater and NATO. The Department of Defense leadership regularly states that the Department is following the normal process for requirements generated by the European Command. Can we agree, General, that the threat against NATO countries today is far different than it was 3 years ago, before the Russians invaded Ukraine and depleted much of their ammunition and capability in this unjust and illegal war?

General BROWN. Yes, sir. I would say the threat and the security environment are both different from where they were 3 years ago.

Senator WICKER. Okay. Well, on a bipartisan basis, Senators and members of the House have repeatedly asked senior joint leadership staff to lead a dynamic requirements review of the European theater that accounts for this reality. In other words, we were prepared to defend NATO nations against the threat which Russia is simply incapable of doing at this point. Are we able to be flexible enough to admit that and to direct more of our help toward our ally in Ukraine?

General BROWN. Ranking Member Wicker, if confirmed, one of the things I want to be able to do is actually assess where we are. I am an engineer by background, so doing assessments and doing analysis is how I think about things. And that is something we do need to do, not just for Europe but I would say for all of our major security challenges, to continue to reassess.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Gillibrand, please.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations, General Brown. Thank you to your family for being here to support you.

I just returned from a codel surveying a lot of our operations in Europe to prepare Ukrainians to fight, to preposition equipment, to do the type of readiness trainings with our NATO allies that are so essential to preparation and to give Ukrainians the ability to win their war against Russia. And you mentioned how important logistics are and how important readiness is and the will to fight is.

We have a growing threat from China, from the Xi regime, with regard to Taiwan, and I would like to hear your assessments on the challenges of that type of theater versus the ease with which we were able to do the work with our NATO allies in Europe, since we have allies on the border of Ukraine that facilitate a lot of our training and exercises and preparation. So could you talk a little bit about the challenges with regard to that other theater and what type of preparation you think will be essential.

General BROWN. Sure. Thanks for the question. The thing that I think about when you are looking at the two theaters, there are a couple of factors that play in, and it is geography and infrastructure. And when you look at the geography of Europe, where you have a large land mass, borders, and you also have infrastructure with roads, railroads, airfields that are all close together.

In the Indo-Pacific you do not necessarily have that. What you have is more maritime space, islands, but you do have airfields. So it would be more challenge, and oh, by the way, the size of the region is much larger than it is in Europe, so the distances are pretty massive.

So from that perspective, one of the things that I have thought about, going back to my time as the Commander of the Pacific Air Forces is you cannot wait until the crisis occurs to be able to deploy capability. You have to pre-position capability and have that in place. You have to work with allies and partners to have access to locations so you can put capability into place. And that is an area that we are focused on, not only as an Air Force but I would also say as a Joint Force.

As a matter of fact, right now we are in the process of a large exercise, Mobility Guardian, led by Air Mobility Command, to really test ourselves on how quickly we can move by air and other means to get capability into the theater as quickly as possible. And we will take that and learn from that. We also did, for the Air Force, did a tabletop exercise focused on the logistics in the Indo-Pacific.

So because of those differences in geography and infrastructure, we cannot use the same approach in both theaters, and that is where I have been focused, as the Air Force chief, and will continue to focus as the Chairman, if confirmed.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Agreed. With regard to Asia, there will be certain reliance on other assets such as cyber, such as space, such Air Force, as you say, and one of the challenges that we have is critical infrastructure that is necessary to deploy, to stage, to prepare. And we recently heard reporting on China's cyber threat with regard to Guam. I would like to know your thoughts on how will cyber threats inform your thinking in viewing these logistics and mobility plans, and what collaboration exists between the joint staffs and DHS and relevant senior risk management agencies to

ensure whole-of-government alignment in the event of such a conflict.

General BROWN. What I do think about from the cyber threat, it is not just for Guam, but I really say the aspect of if you were back in the continental United States and the aspect of in order for us to generate combat power and get it deployed we depend on various supports and rail yards and other arrays and airfields to get ourselves to be able to deploy. We have got to be able to protect that critical cyber infrastructure, and if we do not it will challenge us to be able to get ourselves deployed. And so that is why it is very important to work collectively, not just inside the Department of Defense, primarily through Cyber Command, but as you highlighted, the Department of Homeland Security and others to take a look at the critical nodes that we have to protect.

Because I believe we are in a contested environment today that we need to be paying attention to, and I think we have seen that in past examples, and we have got to make sure we are working closely together, across the entire government, and also with our allies and partners to ensure we are protecting ourselves in the cyber domain.

Senator GILLIBRAND. And with regard to cyber, services are responsible for establishing a range of personnel policies for cyber personnel and providing them to Cyber Command. This leads to variations across services and length of service requirements and length of tours at Cyber Command. As Chairman, how would you approach working with the service chiefs to help bring service policies into better alignment with the needs of Cyber Command?

General BROWN. I think one of the key areas is, one, to meet the needs of Cyber Command, but at the same time align some of our policies and processes so we are not committing amongst ourselves for talent. If we have similar approaches it helps us to bring in all talent across the Nation, and then also help to retain that talent within the services as well.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.

Senator Fischer, please.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, General, to you and your wife and your family for your service to this country.

I took note of a comment you made in your opening statement. You said, "Having led warfighters abroad has shaped my thinking." As you know, I remain deeply concerned about our munitions production capacity, and in the Wall Street Journal a couple of days ago they wrote an editorial about America is runny out of ammo, Biden admits the problem, but then why not do something about it.

I remember hearing the President make a passing comment on that a couple of days ago, and I was struck by it because it is the first time I had heard from the Administration concern about munitions for our security and our defense here in this country. So, frankly, after years of underinvesting in munitions production, we now find ourselves, I think, in a very precarious position.

While this Committee has generally been supportive of providing aid and transferring excess munitions from our stockpiles, we also

have a clear expectation that the Department will work with us to ensure that we produce more munitions, as many as we can, and as fast as we can, to backfill our stockpiles, increase our margins, and support our allies and partners.

Do you agree that we need to increase our munitions production capacity?

General BROWN. I do, and one of the areas I would highlight is for all the services in this year's budget submission we asked for multiyear procurement, and that multiyear procurement was designed to help increase our stock, but also what it does for us is help provide predictability to the defense industrial base, to their supply chains, and to the workforce.

Senator FISCHER. Yes. This Committee has led Congress in giving more tools to the Department to address these shortages, and that includes providing multiyear procurement authority, modifying older and unnecessary contracting requirements so that we can get contracting officers to move faster. We need them to move faster.

I understand the Department is reviewing its total munitions requirements amid the worsening geopolitical environment. As new stockpile levels are determined, particularly for precision guided munitions, will you work with this Committee to identify any emerging gaps in our stockpiles?

General BROWN. Yes, I will.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. Do believe the tools that we have given the Department, those contracts, multiyear, is that going to continue to help you meet those requirements as well?

General BROWN. Senator, I think it will, and one of the areas, as we work through the contracting aspect, is how we incentivize our contractors, contracting officers, and how we build those contracts to make sure they are moving in the right direction, to change the culture of how we have done things in the past.

Senator FISCHER. Right. To be clear, I think there is much more that can be done in fiscal year 2024 to address the munitions production challenges that what was in the President's budget request. For example, for \$67 million, the Army could expand the capacity of the GMLRS from 120 per year to 1,000 per year by 2025. This is a key long-range fireline that could be relevant in multiple theaters.

And I am frequently asked, "What can we do to help Taiwan help themselves more?" Well, for around \$70 million more dollars we could expand the Harpoon production capacity such that we accelerate the final deliveries to Taiwan from 2029 to 2027, and that 2027 is an important date that we hear from Xi himself as a goal that he hopes to reach to be able to invade Taiwan. But it is not in the fiscal year 2024 budget request.

We could have \$150 million more dollars. That buys us another Patriot launcher battery this year alone.

These are some of the examples of what we could be doing, and I would say what we should be doing, but we are not doing it because of budget constraints. They have all been confirmed by industry and by the Department that it can happen, and I hope that you will be an advocate to be able to help us push for what we need

to address threats that we face as a country and as a world in any emergency spending package or supplemental that comes up.

Would you be willing to put yourself forward? We talk about this all the time, you and I. I always say if the American people hear about the threats that we have, we will see tremendous support for our military and for the needs that we have to be met, for the resources that we must have to defend this country.

General BROWN. Senator, I will definitely work with you, be very candid about the threat, and then also be willing to make the tough calls, if confirmed as the Chairman.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, sir.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Senator HIRONO, please.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations, General, on your nomination. I thank you and your family for your service to our country.

To ensure the fitness of all nominees who appear before any of the committees on which I sit I ask the nominees the following two initial questions.

One, since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

General BROWN. I have not.

Senator HIRONO. Two, have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

General BROWN. I have not.

Senator HIRONO. General, I thank you for your consistent support for our servicemembers' access to critical health care no matter where they are stationed around the world. And as we face recruitment and retention challenges across the services, support for servicemembers of all backgrounds is critical. And for almost four decades now, you have built inclusive, diverse, and ready teams in the Air Force, and I assume you will support such teams throughout the DOD.

When we had a chance to chat yesterday you gave me an example of how important the DEI programs—as we refer to diversity, equity, and inclusive programs—are within the military. You talked about your own experience. Can you share with this Committee what you shared with me yesterday?

General BROWN. Sure, Senator. I think about, for my own career and all of our members, all they want is a fair opportunity to perform. And by preventing them that fair opportunity they do not want to be advantaged or disadvantaged or discounted based on their background. They want to have the opportunity, but they have got to be qualified.

And I will just tell you, from my own career, when I came in and flying F-16s, I did not want to be the best African American F-16 pilot. I wanted to be the best F-16 pilot. I would say the same thing when I went to Weapons School to go back as an instructor, be the commandant, and every position I have had throughout my career. I wanted it because I was the best and qualified. I did not want to be provided a position or promotion based on my background. I wanted it based on the quality of my work. And I think that is the aspect that all of our servicemembers look for is they

want a fair opportunity, but they also want to be rewarded for their performance.

Senator HIRONO. And when we had this discussion, fair opportunity means that they are able to have experiences that they may otherwise not have access to, and that is the importance, in my view, of the attention being paid to the importance of diversity in our services and the fairness that diversity provides.

If confirmed, you would be the highest-ranking officer in the U.S. Military, which gives you a unique perspective on the burden of command. I have repeatedly asked for leadership accountability and structural changes from the DOD in the wake of high-profile failures, in Hawaii, for example, the disaster at Red Hill, which I am sure you are familiar with, and that disaster has led to public mistrust in the military in Hawaii.

General Brown, how do you view the burden of command and the ultimate responsibility entrusted in military commanders?

General BROWN. There are two factors I think about in the responsibility of command or leadership at any level. You have the responsibility to get the mission done, but you are also accountable for the mission as well. And that accountability, if it does not go well, you should be held accountable. And those are the areas that I have focused on and ensure that we maintain the standard across the military, but at the same time maintain the public confidence from the American people that we do support.

Senator HIRONO. I think that if we do not hold commanders responsible that it does continue to shake the faith that communities have in the leadership of the military, and as chief of the joint chiefs you are going to have major responsibility to make sure that the burden of command, as I have expressed it, is carried through.

I just visited with the Deputy Secretary of the DOD, our shipyards, and I just want to make sure that you will continue to support the modernization of our shipyards, because even as we make decisions to build new ships, i.e., assets, that we have to make sure that we have the capability to repair and maintain the ships that we already have, and that means that a shipyard improvement commitment has to continue. This is a multiyear commitment. I would like to have your commitment that we will continue to fund this very critical part of our military readiness.

General BROWN. Senator, you have my commitment.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Hirono.

Senator Rounds, please.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Brown, first of all I want to thank you for your years of service. I also want to thank your family, specifically Sharene, who is with you here today, and your children. When we deploy someone, and you have been deployed multiple times, it is not just you that gets deployed. It is the entire family that feels that deployment. And I thank all of you for your service to our country.

General, earlier this year at the Air Force posture hearing you and I discussed the impact of auctioning off portions of the spectrum and what that would do to our defense capabilities. Those same concerns were echoed by all of the other service chiefs and the combatant commanders, all of them.

Based on what we have discussed before, if this report, which is due in September, demonstrates that auctioning off the 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz portion of the spectrum will adversely impact our national security, what would be your advice to the President and to the Congress, and how would you proceed?

General BROWN. Senator, I would echo exactly what you just highlighted, the impact on our national security, because that part of the spectrum is where we have many of our capabilities across the Joint Force, and if we had to vacate that we would lose that capability and we would have to figure out how now to regain that capability, and that will take time and cost money. Now is not the time to drop our national security.

So my recommendation is we should not vacate, realizing we have to still get through the study before we make any decisions. But there will be an impact, and if confirmed, I will bring, with the services, detailed information on the challenges and how it might impact the Joint Force.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir. Let me just ask you, with regard to your professional military opinion, do you think there is a possibility that our adversaries are actually attempting to influence the debate and to convince us that it is appropriate to sell portions of the spectrum that are vital to our national security?

General BROWN. Well, Senator, I cannot speak positively on that topic, but I would not be surprised if our adversaries were always trying to do something to decrease our advance and complicate our decisionmaking, and it is something that we need to be paying attention to as senior leaders.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir. I have gone on record many times regarding my concerns about the DOD's approach to providing space-based, ground moving target indication capabilities to DOD users following the divestment of the JSTARS platform. There is an ongoing conversation within the interagency as to how the funding, responsibility, and priority of GMTI, the ground moving target indication capabilities, will be handled. And I am not confident—I am not confident—the warfighters will get this vital capability that they need to close the kill chain in the future.

As Chairman, will you use your position to make certain that our men and women on the front lines have full and priority use of the platforms conducting GMTI missions in the future?

General BROWN. Senator, I will.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir. General, this is something that I never thought I would be sitting here in the U.S. Senate asking questions about, and yet it is one that has been brought to my attention by our South Dakota adjutant general. General Brown, you will take the seat in the midst of the largest recruiting crisis in the history of DOD's 50-year, all-volunteer force. While the services struggle to meet recruiting numbers, there has been an increased emphasis on immutable characteristics like race and sex, and the Department has increasingly focused on new policies and plans in areas like equity, extremism, gender ideology, abortion, and sex change operations. There is even a growing bureaucracy that focuses on these specific issues.

I am aware of a situation, and it was just brought to my attention, where a young woman in the South Dakota National Guard

experienced a situation at basic training where she was sleeping in open bays and showering with biological males who had not had gender reassignment surgery but were documented as females because they had begun the drug therapy process. This 18-year-old girl was uncomfortable with her situation but had limited options on how to deal with it. If she raised her hand she feared she would be targeted for retaliation. She could have recycled, which would have delayed her freshman college start and would not have provided a guarantee of a different situation. She could request to leave the Guard for religious purposes and not be able to pursue her dream of serving our country.

General Brown, this is a challenging situation. If confirmed as the Chairman, how do you propose to handle situations like this which I truly believe may be impacting recruitment and morale by placing a disproportionate emphasis on gender-related ideology?

General BROWN. Senator, one of the things I have thought about throughout my career, as you are being inclusive you also do not want to make other individuals uncomfortable. And so as we look at our policies and approaches and get feedback like this we have to take a look to see if we can improve on how we approach situations like this. As I have done as the service chief, as I have done throughout my career, if confirmed, I will continue to do so.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Senator Kaine, please.

Senator KAINE. General Brown, congratulations to you and your family for the nomination. You are eminently qualified for the position.

Just situational awareness. Two events happened yesterday that really bear upon the Nation's military mission, one very positive, one negative. The positive event yesterday was the announcement by the Biden administration working together with the NATO Secretary General and the governments of Sweden and Turkey, that Turkey would support accession of Sweden to NATO. It was followed up immediately by an announcement from Hungary that they would also support accession of Sweden to NATO.

Just in the last few years, people were questioning whether NATO had value or whether the U.S. should continue in NATO. We have demonstrated, through American leadership, the strength of alliances, that democracies in the world can link arms, and when we do, our alliances enable us to defend Ukraine and promote democracy throughout the world. And I think it is important to recognize that the U.S. and the cause of global democracy is stronger today because of this decision announced yesterday that Sweden would now be greenlit for NATO membership.

The bad event that happened yesterday was the retirement of General David Berger. It was not bad that he retired. He had a distinguished career and served very ably, as we all know. But for the first time after that retirement, in 164 years, the United States Marine Corps does not have a Commandant confirmed by the Senate of the United States.

I am the father of a United States Marine. I am unaware of anything that the marines have done that would warrant being punished in this way. I am unaware of anything that the marines have

done that would warrant being disrespected in this way, having their leadership hobbled in this way.

One of my colleagues is exercising a prerogative to place a hold on 250 generals and flag officers. I am unaware of anything that they have done that would warrant them being disrespected or punished or delayed in their careers. Just because a prerogative can be exercised does not mean that it should be exercised.

We marked up the National Defense Authorizing Act in this Committee 2 weeks ago, and there were some things that I wanted in the act that I did not get in. I was disappointed. There were some things that got added to the act that I opposed. I was disappointed. But I am not taking my disappointment out on people who have volunteered to wear the uniform of this country and even risk their lives in doing so.

I would urge all of my colleagues to turn away from the path that we are on, where we are disrespecting and punishing people because we are unhappy with policies in the military that these individuals had nothing to do with. If I am not able to convince my colleagues in a committee of a position, that is on me. I will have to try to do a better job next time and maybe try to convince more to support the position that I have taken. But if I am unable to do that, I would never even contemplate taking out my disappointment and punishing people who have volunteered to wear the uniform of this country.

People who volunteer to serve in the military do so knowing that their lives could be at risk. But if they think not only will my life be at risk, but do I want to run the risk that a member of the Senate being unhappy with a policy I had nothing to do with may choose to block my career, that might be a risk that people might choose not to undertake. That might be the kind of thing that might make them decide if my Article I branch is not going to respect the service that I have given this country, including deployments overseas, maybe I should look for a line of work where I will be respected.

General Brown, I want to ask you a question about AUKUS. I think this Committee, and other committees, have been following the AUKUS agreement very closely. I am particular focused on it as the Chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee and also because some of the work on the Virginia-class submarines that are part of Pillar 1 will be done in Virginia.

Much of the focus on AUKUS right now is about Pillar 1, the ability to transfer Virginia-class submarines and related technology to Australia. Pillar 2 refers to a suite of cooperative activities in areas such as advanced capabilities, quantum, AI, cyber, and hypersonics. If confirmed, what role do you see for yourself in advancing integrated deterrence initiatives in the Indo-Pacific, such as AUKUS?

General BROWN. Senator, the thing I do think about, when you do look at AUKUS, is more to the nuclear-powered submarines, but all these other factors that we can bring together to break down barriers, to work with allies and partners, not just with Australia and the U.K., in this case, but really across the Indo-Pacific.

One of the benefits that I have had, having served as the Commander of the Pacific Air Force, is the number of air chiefs and

chiefs of defense and, in some cases, ministers of defense that I have known personally and had a chance to engage with. That dialog, to me, is hugely important to determine how best we can move forward and break down barriers, and identify areas that we can work together on, not only as a military but also between our nations as well. And that is where my focus will be, is to continue that dialog, to ensure we can work together and highlight where the challenges may be and then work with the right entities to be able to move forward to ensure that we are able to win the next war, if called upon to do, but definitely deter to avoid war.

Senator KAINE. I thank you for that answer. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Ernst, please.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much, General Brown, for being here today, and I want to thank your wife, Sharene, as well for being here. We appreciate your support through the many, many years.

General Brown, you have had a very distinguished career and have held many commands, and I want to distinguish between some of my colleagues. I know the burden of command was referenced, but I would state having served as a low-level commander in our armed services that it is not a burden to be a commander. It is a great honor and distinction, and I want to thank you for your service to our country.

You are moving into a new position. I will assume your confirmation, and I support your confirmation. I think you are the right person at the right time. If confirmed, you will be Chairman at a time when threats to the Nation are mounting while our resources are actually shrinking. We will be operating our Department of Defense under a constrained environment, and under those constrained budgets we have to put our defense dollars toward smarter investments. And you, as Chief of the Air Force, have focused on modernizing our Air Force. I assume that you will continue the modernization process through the rest of our service branches.

So General, you will inform investments across what we talked about, the Iron Triangle, of modernization, force structure, and readiness. So I am assuming there will have to be hard choices made and some tradeoffs. So if you could, could you talk a little bit about your vision of modernizing our force?

General BROWN. Senator, I appreciate the question, and to your question, I have done kind of the same thing as a service chief, and if confirmed as the Chairman, I will take that same approach.

I have often talked about how we have to balance risk over time and look at capability and capacity, because we cannot just try to modernize completely at the risk of today's operations. At the same time, we cannot maintain all capability for today's operations and not have the capabilities because of the threats we see forthcoming.

So as you look at that Iron Triangle, it is the balance between those, and again, I really believe, on analysis, that we have to do. We can work emotion, but emotion does not work. It is really the analysis that we have to go through to be able to determine how we make those tough calls, and then we have a responsibility, and I have a responsibility if confirmed as Chairman, to articulate what

that risk might be from whatever choice we make, and then we determine, as a Nation, how we accept that, or how we mitigate that risk. Again, I think this is where allies and partners play a key role in some of these areas of how we ensure and think about all the capabilities that we have available and how we might use those to make the best decisions, based on the resources that are provided.

Senator ERNST. Thank you. I was going to ask about mitigating the risk, and you are talking about that, using allies, partners, but spreading out the risk over time, so I do appreciate that.

During the office call you also mentioned the constant demand signal that we have gotten from our global combatant commanders, and how would you strike that right balance between our near-term readiness and those future modernizations, including and accepting prudent risk?

General BROWN. Well, I have lived on both sides of the coin, serving as Deputy Commander in the United States Central Command but then also as a service chief. And the way I have always thought about this is we have got to put all of the cards and all of the details on the table and then have a conversation that is not tied to a particular position and figure out what is best to do for the Joint Force, what is best to do for all the combatant commands, because there is going to be some give and take as we do this. And that is where those dialogs, to me, are very important. It is really about dialog. There are many things we can agree on, and those are the things we need to move forward on and continue to debate the things that we do not necessarily see eye to eye on.

But at some point you have to make a decision, and I think my role, if confirmed as the Chairman, is to provide my best advice to the Secretary of Defense and the President on how we make those decisions, and again, articulate where I see the risks of whatever path or options we do lay out.

Senator ERNST. Thank you. I appreciate it. And in just my last few moments I do want to talk about my concern that the military is being dragged into politics. And if confirmed, how would you keep the military out of the political limelight and focused on the mission of our Department of Defense?

General BROWN. The first thing I would do is set a personal example, that I would stay nonpartisan and nonpolitical in how I approach the position of Chairman, if confirmed. And I would set that same expectation throughout the force, that we need to stay out of politics and stay nonpartisan and nonpolitical, and at the same time advocate that our civilian leadership does not bring us into political situations. Part of that is a dialog that we have to have and that we have to maintain a standard as part of the force, and that is what is expected of the Nation, for us as military members, to support the Constitution of the United States and stay out of politics.

Senator ERNST. Thank you very much, sir. I look forward to supporting you. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Ernst.

Senator Manchin, please.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General Brown, first of all let me thank you for your service. I want to

thank your wife and your children and your family for their service and support of you for your service. It is a team effort; I know that.

We had a nice conversation, and I appreciate that very much, and I want to ask a question and followup on the financial stability of what we are dealing with, and the demand in the Department of Defense in defending our country.

The bottom line is, that we have been talking about, if we do our job on time, and we, as Congress, get our budget done by September 30th, what does that mean to you all as far as having that on-timeliness as far as financial, to you? How much money would that save you by not going into the continuing resolutions, or an omnibus bill at the end, and now we have been doing it for far too long.

General BROWN. I do not have a figure. I would have to come back to you, Senator, with a figure. We can get that for you. But what I can tell you is it is the aspect of—

Senator MANCHIN. Let me just throw out one for you. The American Enterprise Institute threw out a rough estimate of \$200 million per day under the latest continuing resolution, that covered the start of fiscal 2023. That is a total of \$18 billion, just that. I have been told by retired generals who were not on the spot that basically have said that they could save, overall, 5 percent, a minimum of 5 percent, and 5 percent across the board of \$880 billion, that is \$44 billion. And we have been talking about more appropriated funds for our military, with all of the challenges we have. The money is right there, the spending power of us doing our job, and we are going to need someone like you who is going to take the financial concerns and basically let us know how we should be able to help by just doing our job too. We ask you to do yours.

General BROWN. Yes, Senator, I would agree, and the key area that I would highlight in challenges is we lose buying power, as you described. At the same time we lose predictability, not only for the force but also for our industrial base, to be able to produce the capabilities that are required for our joint team.

Senator MANCHIN. Here one other fact, too. The Department of Defense Comptroller noted that from fiscal year 1991 to 2010, the average delay for defense appropriations was 29 days. The average delay for appropriations for defense was 29 days. That is a tremendous amount of money over the period of time that we have talked about.

I would hope that you would work with us in trying to make sure that we are keeping our feet to the fire, to make sure you have the resources to do the job that we need you to do. That is my commitment to you.

Going to another topic, fiscal responsibility. I have been extremely concerned about the lack of progress in business modernization, auditing commercial cost comparison independent evaluations of programs, how it is run. The Department of Defense is the only department in the Federal Government that we do not have an audit. Myself and the late Senator John McCain, our dear friend, worked with me on that, and we tried our darndest, and we got a few of them done but not many. So if you could commit to getting the Department audited and making sure they do it in a

timely fashion it would be very helpful for us to do our job here, to make sure that we are appropriating the funds that are needed.

General BROWN. Senator, I commit to work with you on that.

Senator MANCHIN. Okay. The other thing is the concerns of the abolishment of the Chief Management Officer. They abolished the Chief Management Officer position within the Department in 2020, and most recently, with the abolishment of the cost assessment and program evaluation, not only do they not want to audit, they do not want anyone being held accountable to oversee to make sure they will audit.

So thankfully I had an amendment in the NDAA this year to reinstate the Chief Management Officer, the CMO, that was adopted into the Senate and to ensure that the Department has a leadership position.

So based on your 40 years in military service, and your nomination to become the most senior member of our military and the service, do you believe that a confirmed and chartered Chief Management Officer is a position the Department and you, if confirmed, would benefit from and will basically support?

General BROWN. Senator, I agree that having that position filled, or someone filling that position to help us go through the audit process, like you described, to make sure we are doing our aspects of fiscal responsibility, is important.

Senator MANCHIN. The problem we had before, it never had support from the top, and you know yourself, if the leaders do not support it, it is not going to happen. And that is why they said, well, it was meaningless. It was not doing the job. They had no charter to do it. There was no direction for them to do it. But I guarantee you it needs to be done, and no business with any type of value to it whatsoever would ever operate without an assessment value, an officer that can do the management, the whole process.

So it is there. It is coming back for you, sir, so we hope you take advantage of it.

General BROWN. Thank you.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Manchin.

Senator Cramer, please.

Senator CRAMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General Brown, and to your entire family, thank you for your service. Congratulations on the nomination.

Let me just followup with Senator Manchin's point about the Chief Management Officer. I just had to turn around and ask myself, why did we get rid of it again? I remember when it happened. I remember the person in the position. We did it to, quote, "cut bureaucracy" and what we did is cut our throats. And I am with you, Joe. I hope we get it back. And then we have to, as members, insist, regardless of who is at the top, that we have some fiscal responsibility at the Department.

All right. Thank you for firing me up just before my questioning, Joe.

It will not surprise you, General Brown, that over my nearly 5 years on this Committee I have asked almost every single combatant commander if they get enough ISR from the air, and it will also not surprise you that every one of them says no. Now, that is a lit-

tle bit like asking the billionaire if he has enough money, and the answer is always no, he can always use more.

That said, you had a wonderful discussion in response to Chairman Reed's questions about interoperability, the changing role, as well as with Senator Ernst. But as Air Force chief, you were making tough calls and asked for some cuts to airborne ISR, sometimes with the hope or the promise of replacement with space capabilities. But now, in this new role that I, like Senator Ernst, I suspect, you will soon be confirmed, how do you plan to bridge that gap? Again, it is a more specific question to the broader question that Joni asked, but as you view the needs of the combatant commanders, as they State, versus the needs that the services want to provide, specifically, in this case, the Air Force with eyes in the sky, how do you see that moving forward in your decisionmaking?

General BROWN. Senator, as you highlight, this has been an ongoing debate between the services and the combatant commands at large, and having sat as a joint chief for the past 3 years I have really started to think through how we approach this. There are aspects of, when you look at, not just the ISRs, what are you trying to get from the ISR, it is information that is being provided from the ISR. And so there is one aspect of the platform, but how are we getting the information back to combatant command headquarters so they can make decisions?

So with the stamp of the Space Force and access to space-based ISR, it is the combination of the two, and it is going to drive us to have to change some processes about how we provide information and how then we work with the combatant commands.

And this is a conversation that we have been having. I have had this conversation with General Saltzman, the Chief of Space Operations, of how we lay out a different approach in some areas to be able to get to all the information that is available and not just what is reliable on an airborne ISR that may not be there 24/7, 365. And that is where the focus has to be of how do we, maybe in some cases, do things a bit differently and provide not only the capability we have today but even greater capability in the future.

Senator CRAMER. I appreciate that. I want to piggyback a little bit on Senator Rounds' questioning. He has become very consistent, as I have, on what matters the most, and I have great respect for his questions about relieving the spectrum, particularly prior to the study that you have talked about.

So without prejudging that study, and maybe even piggybacking a little bit on some of the things you said earlier about specifically our defense industry base, but I am going to talk more about the private sector in general, what I think we do not talk about enough on the Committee is the role that technology companies or telecommunications industry, particularly in 5G, all important back to some of the other discussions we are having, and you have been noted to be an innovator, and you have been, and I appreciate that.

What role has the private sector played in the advancement of the technological tools that are at your disposal, both in the Air Force and now perhaps hopefully the Joint Force?

General BROWN. They play a pretty big role, and I will just tell you from my own personal experience the opportunity to go out to Silicon Valley a couple of times and talk to those who have an in-

terest in national security, that is a conversation that we need to continue to have, so we understand the aspect of all the capabilities we have within our Nation and how they all, in some form or fashion, contribute to our national security. Even when we have these discussions about spectrum, there is an economic aspect that supports our economic security, but there is national security, and we have got to have those conversations in the same room because it has an impact in some form or fashion. And that is why it is important that we build those relationships, and we have that dialog to ensure we are doing what is right for the Nation as we make decisions.

Senator CRAMER. I appreciate that attitude. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Cramer.

Senator Kelly, please.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Brown, thank you for your decades of service, and welcome today.

I want to talk to you a little bit about our military's close air support capability. We have discussed this issue at length a number of times, and you know how important this is to me. And you know that our ground troops and special operators depend on this capability, and it is often a life-or-death matter for them. And you and I have talked through some of the current planning that the Air Force is doing to transition to a future CAS capability. And in my view, the design of our close air support needs to stay centered on the guys on the ground.

So General, how will you achieve this same level of protection for those troops with future CAS solutions, and how are we going to avoid any kind of a gap?

General BROWN. Senator, I appreciate the question, and as we talked in your office a couple of months ago it is the aspect of not only the platforms that we operate, it is the technology that we use, and still be able to use the basic tactics, techniques, and procedures we used since we started doing close air support. It is the aspect of providing that capability and the dialog and we will be able to move information electronically to be more responsive, at the same time have weapons that are highly precise to support our servicemembers on the ground.

Senator KELLY. And one of my concerns here is, you know, F-35s, multi-mission, and a lot of capability in the airplane. I just ask that you continue to focus on this as an important mission for future fighters, including the F-35.

And then I am also concerned about the personnel that support our CAS community as we transition to these new platforms. Are there any plans to transition some of the skill sets that reside in our tactical air control and JTAC community today?

General BROWN. They are, and we are using their capability to help us in our command and control as well as making sure the procedures that we already have we do not let atrophy and continue to work that.

One thing I will highlight to you on the F-35 is many of our A-10 pilots, they have a lot of CAS background and are flying and going to F-35s. As a matter of fact, I just met a captain here this past week who has just converted from the A-10 into the F-35.

Those are the kinds of things we have got to continue to do to ensure we do not let the skill sets that we have atrophy.

Senator KELLY. Yes, that is a positive thing now, but when we look at a decade from now you are not going to have that same kind of transition. So I encourage you to continue to focus on this and make sure we retain the unique expertise of these other groups, not just the pilots but the tactical air controllers and JTACs.

I want to talk about another issue. I am the only graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Congress, as far as I know, so I pay special attention to our Nation's maritime strength. We talked a little bit about that when Senator Gillibrand asked her questions. And I am concerned that the United States investment is falling dramatically behind what the Chinese government has invested in terms of the size and modernization of each of our respective merchant fleets.

Since the 1980's, there have been a series of policy decisions that have brought us down to a rather startling figure of just 80 U.S.-flagged merchant vessels operating in international trade, and 60 of those consist of MARAD, Maritime Security Program, that allows them to contract United States-flagged vessels during times of war. So we have 80 ships. The Chinese have over 5,500. And they are the world's top shipbuilder, and they control ports that handle 67 percent of the world's shipping containers.

As you know well, this impacts our ability to supply our own troops in conflict. You talked about how much different the Western Pacific is from Europe—you know, islands, mobility, and logistical challenges. It also impacts trade and global supply chains in peacetime, and it is critical. I mean, this is the kind of capability that cannot be turned on and off overnight. We need to investment now if we want to rely on it tomorrow. I know in your new role there is a chance that you are going to need this capability.

We also see some similar underinvestment in the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, which is under the Department of Transportation's purview, but it trains a lot of military officers and the mariners that will man those ships. Our nation's national security leaders cannot turn a blind eye to these capabilities simply because they lie outside of the military's and your immediate jurisdiction. And I think we really need to increase our focus here.

So if confirmed, can I have your commitment to keep this concern top of mind as you enter into this new role as Chairman?

General BROWN. Senator, if confirmed, you do have my commitment.

Senator KELLY. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Kelly.

Senator Tuberville, please.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, General.

General BROWN. Good morning.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thanks for being here. Thanks for your service. And in talking to you yesterday, you moved over 20 times in your career. I do not think a lot of people understand the complexity of that with a family, so thank you for your service.

General, I think most of us up here agree that other than foreign countries, \$32 trillion in debt is one of our biggest threats to national security. We are broke. In the past, you have criticized the Department of Defense's complex bureaucracy and have expressed a desire to improve its inefficiencies. By law, the Joint Staff is capped at around 2,300 personnel, with some exceptions.

Can you clarify at this time, how big is our staff as we speak? Do you have a number on that?

General BROWN. Senator, I do not have an exact number. I will have to get that for you. But I know it is somewhere around 2,000.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yes. Thank you. I would appreciate that.

You know, the House NDAA includes a study to look at reducing the size of the office. Do you have any suggestions on where we could look to cut staff or budget to help, and not cut back efficiency?

General BROWN. Not at the moment. As I go into this position, if confirmed, that will be one of the things I do take a look at when I look across the Joint Staff. And I would also say, as we look across the aspects of our military departments, if there are things we can do to increase our efficiency and our capability and capacity, those are things I would focus on.

Senator TUBERVILLE. You know, the fiscal year 2023 budget for the Joint Staff was around \$1.2 billion, and the budget request for fiscal year 2024 is close to \$1.3 billion. I guess you are familiar with that, right?

General BROWN. Not the level of details of the Joint Staff budget, because I have been focused on the Air Force budget.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Okay. Thank you. That is pretty high. But I would like you to give us kind of a rundown the next time we see you in a hearing in terms of where we are at with that. Is it too much? Not enough? You know, we do not want to cut back our military. It is so important. But we also want to be efficient in what we use. So I would appreciate anything that you could do for us in terms of giving us an update on what you are going to set your team up as, because you are going to be the new leader. So I would hope you would keep an eye on that because that is a lot of money.

I got an article yesterday that says Air Force delays some moves, bonuses, as inflation cuts into personnel budget. Could you explain that? That came from the Stars and Stripes.

General BROWN. Sure, Senator. As we built our budget a couple of years ago, and, you know, based on the factors we had, the economic factors, as well as the force mix factors based on different career fields and different rank structure, we typically will come back and ask for reprogramming. We are working through the process of reprogramming, so we do not go through an anti-deficiency act and not spend money we do not have.

And so part of this is for us to be able to work with Congress to get the reprogramming in place so we can actually—all the programs and impacts are outlined in that article that we communicated to the force here recently—we can reverse and minimize the impact to airmen and their families throughout the rest of this fiscal year.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yes. And we all know how important it is, and I think most of us have talked about it up here today, recruiting. You and I talked about that yesterday. Our recruiting is in a tailspin in most areas, unfortunately. And with an all-volunteer military we are going to have to do better. We have got to do better with salaries, incentives, all those things to get our young men and women involved and interested in our military. I think it is so important. We can have all the upper echelon we can get, but unless we have the people that actually does the job on the ground, and in the planes, on the sea, we are going to have huge problems because we live in a dangerous world.

So thank you for taking this on. It is going to be a hard job, and any way we can help you we are here to help. Thank you, General.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Tuberville.

Senator Warren, please.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you again, General Brown, and congratulations on your nomination. Mrs. Brown, welcome here today.

So the Department of Defense is full of talented, patriotic leaders who are working hard to keep us safe. Even so, the Pentagon remains too cozy with powerful defense companies that are reaping huge profits from hundreds of billions of dollars in government contracts.

When our top leaders leave government service and head straight to big paydays on the boards of the Department of Defense's largest contractors or as defense industry lobbyists it sends the message that the Pentagon is for sale.

Now during his confirmation hearing before this Committee, Secretary Austin publicly committed not to go to work as a lobbyist for defense contractors after he leaves his current job, and I appreciate the commitment, and I believe that the American people do as well.

If confirmed, General Brown, you will be the President's top military advisor, and your actions will set the tone for the entire armed forces. So I would like to hear you make those same commitments. General Brown, if confirmed, will you commit to not going to work as a lobbyist for a defense contractor for 4 years after you leave government service?

General BROWN. Senator, I am sensitive to the perceptions of a conflict of interest that discussed in your office, and I do not intend to pursue opportunities in the defense sector or a lobbyist upon retirement from military service. You know, my passion is in leadership and mentoring.

Senator WARREN. Good.

General BROWN. And that is where I want to focus my efforts after military service, of building the next generation of leaders.

Senator WARREN. I appreciate that, and I will take that as a yes.

Let's do the second part, even though I think you got the answer in there. Lobbying is not the only way that former officials cash in on their government service. Giant defense contractors frequently hire former top Pentagon officials in non-lobbying roles and add them to their corporate boards. The former Pentagon official gets paid handsomely, and the defense contractor touts their name in order to get more contracts.

General Dunford, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, joined the board of Lockheed Martin, DOD's top contractor, less than 5 months after leaving government service, and so far he has received nearly \$1 million in compensation in that role. By contrast, Secretary Austin pledge not to join the board of one of these companies when he left government.

So General Brown, if confirmed, do you commit to not receive compensation from a defense contractor for 4 years, including compensation for being a board member?

General BROWN. I will do the same answer I just highlighted.

Senator WARREN. Okay. I will take that as a yes then.

You know, it is really important. I am going to take you at your word on this, and the American people and I will hold you to it. This is a matter of personal integrity, something that I know is very important to you.

I want to close and use our remaining time by asking about the impact of the holds on the promotions and assignments of senior military officers that the Senator from Alabama has imposed. The families of these servicemembers are held at a standstill. They are unsure about where to enroll their kids in school or whether they need to arrange a move across country, or even somewhere else around the world.

General Brown, can you just spend a minute here and talk to us about the impact that these holds are having on our military families?

General BROWN. There are several factors that I think about as we are going through this and how we are working to mitigate the challenges associated with the holds. There are aspects of readiness in the transition in leadership, and for our young servicemembers to know who is in the position of leadership that is qualified, has the experience to be there, and not, in some cases—you know, we have strong deputies, but at the same time they do not have the same level of experience going forward.

In addition to the senior officers there is a whole chain of events that go down to our more junior officers, and that has an impact. It has an impact on their progression in their career field, potentially, because if one does not get promoted or move on then they are blocking a spot for someone else. At the same time, we have several members who have served honorably, and they are ready to retire, but they are going to, in some cases, stay with us to help us mitigate through that challenge.

The area that hits us, I think, that we do need to think about is how it impacts our families, because it has an impact not just for the senior officer but all their staff and all those below them it has an impact. And as you highlighted, whether it is schools, whether it is employment, or the fact that they have already sold their home because they thought they were going to move and now they are living in temporary quarters, that creates a challenge.

The last thing I would highlight on that is my concern for future retention, because we have our more junior officers who now will look up and say, "If that is the challenge I am going to have to deal with in the future, I am going to balance between my family and serving in a senior position." And we will lose talent because of those challenges.

The spouse network is alive and well, and the spouses will compare notes. And the member may want to serve, but the spouses and the families get a huge vote on while we continue to be able to serve. And I thank my family for that opportunity to be able to continue to serve.

Senator WARREN. I see Mrs. Brown nodding her head on this as well.

You know, if the Senator from Alabama continues his reckless action he will soon be holding 650 leaders, who have served our country honorable, hostage, and as you rightly point out, that has effects on many more of the best and brightest who have volunteered to serve our Nation.

I heard the Senator say, as he concluded his questions, that if there was anything he could do to help you in your actions and help the service that he would be glad to do it. What he could do to help is lift this stay before it does more damage to our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Warren.

Senator BUDD, please.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Chairman. Good morning, General Brown, and congrats on your nomination. I enjoyed our meeting last month, just a few weeks ago, in my office.

In that discussion we talked about the importance of securing the right capabilities to deter our Nation's adversaries. Last week my office received a long-awaited report on divestment of F-15 aircraft, including at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in my home State of North Carolina. The report bears your signature, and it states that the Air Force plans to divest the remaining 149 F-15Cs and Ds in the inventory and 119 F-15Es, leaving fewer than 100 E models while procuring only 24 F-15EXs in each of the next 2 years.

So I am concerned about the divestment of a very capable fighter aircraft, particularly F-15Es with upgraded radars and electronic warfare suites. These are the most advanced, fourth-generation fighters in the world, with years of service left. It is particularly concerning given the current threat window and the fighter capacity gap that I believe you have talked about repeatedly.

The report states that these cuts will be used to modernize the force. My question is this. What combat-capable platforms are ready and available today—and I emphasize today—that can be procured now, not in the 2030's or the 2040's?

General BROWN. Senator, I understand your concern in the aspect of it as we look at this. It goes back to a comment I made a little bit earlier about how we balance capability and capacity. And as we do this it is not just the platforms themselves. It is the other aspects of our command and control in terms of bringing some reconnaissance capabilities, that we will continue to invest in to bring those forward to make each of the platforms we have more capable, not just for the Air Force but I would say the same thing across the Joint Force. And it also has to do with munitions as well.

Because of our procurement cycles for each one of these it is typically from the time we get a budget, and if we get it on time, which is why that is so important, it takes about a year to 2, and in some

cases, most times than not, 2 years to get that capability. And so not only on the fighter piece but it is also the capabilities to make those fighters more relevant and combat capable as we go forward, and that is how we are trying to balance between the two and make sure we have the analysis, the research and development to make sure we are staying ahead of the threat, which actually adds to that as well, in bringing in advanced technologies into some of these platforms and capabilities we are procuring, not just, again, for the Air Force but really for the Joint Force as well.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, General. In your advanced policy questions regarding the role of Special Operations Forces in implementing the National Defense Strategy you State, and I quote, "SOF remains ideally suited to identify a competitor's coercive capabilities and the Gray Zone, encounter them with deliberate, credible actions while managing escalation," end quote.

Given that SOF is ideally suited and provides expanded, low-cost and credible options for combatant commanders and the President across strategic competition, counterterrorism and crisis response, would it be, in your best military advice, would you give the advice to this Committee to cut Special Operations Force structure?

General BROWN. Well, that is something that, if confirmed, I would do a bit more analysis on, but I would also highlight the fact that our Special Operations Forces over the course of the past 20 years of conflict grew a fair amount. And as we rebalance the force and think about all the national security challenges that we have, as outlined in the National Defense Strategy, how can we balance that SOF capability, what it does today and what it will do in the future. Because the aspect of SOF, I think, will be a bit different from what we have done, particularly in the Middle East, for the past 20 years.

Senator BUDD. I understand that. I just have tremendous concerns of what I have seen in the President's budget. But let me ask an ongoing question on the same topic.

Do you agree that SOF play a critical role, particularly as it relates to broader efforts to gain influence, advantage, and leverage as part of strategic competition?

General BROWN. I do.

Senator BUDD. Thank you.

Changing topics, military recruiting shortfalls continue to be a grave concern as we consider how the recruiting crisis impacts our Nation's military readiness. In our discussions in my office we talked about diversity, equity, and inclusion policies that, in my view, deter rather than encourage young people to serve. I have heard from many young and qualified individuals from North Carolina who are hesitant to join a force they see as extremely political and defined by DEI policies.

In August 2022, you signed a memorandum, along with the Secretary and Under Secretary of the Air Force directing Air Education and Training Command the Air Force Academy to achieve diversity and inclusion goals broken down by percentage of both race and sex. We talked about this. It was a good discussion. But I want to give you an opportunity to respond in an open session. What is the purpose of this memo, the one from August 2022, and how do such policies improve recruiting? Bottom line, I think that

we should be suspect of any policies that give advantage to some groups at the expense of others. But I will give you an opportunity.

General BROWN. Senator, the goal is to tap into all the talent across our Nation, and that memo outlined applicant goals, and the goal there was to actually outreach to broader aspects across the Nation and show them the opportunities to join the force.

What the memo also says is there is a goal to allow those young people to understand what the opportunities are but to get selected and to come into the Academy, ROTC, or any other program that is merit-based, and they have to be qualified and meet the standard to join. We have got to make sure we provide the opportunity. I have talked personally about recruiting aspect. Young people only aspire to be what they know about, and if they do not know anything about the military, and we do not outreach to them, we may miss some tremendous talent.

But they have got to be qualified because we are a merit-based organization, and that is the way we have operated for an extended period of time, and that is the way we will continue to operate as a military force.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, General. I yield back.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Budd.

Senator Peters, please.

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Brown, good to see you again, and congratulations on your nomination, and thank you for your years of service.

General Brown, as we discussed, for the U.S. to be able to successfully defend against all the threats that we face in the 21st century it is going to be absolutely vital that we are as efficient as possible when it comes to our force structure as well as understanding our limited manpower resources. And as you know very well, our National Guard comprises a significant portion of both our air and ground combat capabilities, and oftentimes these units actually have a higher level of experience than their Active Duty counterparts and are more easily able to meet recruiting as well as retention goals.

The National Guard is a critical part of our domestic cyber response and mission assurance duties and plays a key role, I think, or I know, between the Department of State and local officials.

In a time when innovation is absolutely critical, National Guard installations are able to easily host private sector partners who are conducting testing and evaluation of emerging technologies, and every year thousands of National Guardsmen build closer ties and increase interoperability with partners and allies across the globe through the State Partnership Program.

Camp Grayling, in my home State, in northern Michigan, is a place where thousands of U.S. troops train alongside NATO and INDOPACOM partners every summer during Exercise Northern Strike, and I think it is just one example of the tremendous capabilities our National Guard brings to the total force.

Simply put, the United States cannot compete with near-peer competitors, combat long-term insurgencies, implement the National Defense Strategy, or overcome recruiting and retention challenges without an adequately resourced and empowered National Guard.

So my question for you, sir, is what investments does the Department need to make in the National Guard to build and to maintain a force able to meet the challenges that our Nation will face for the rest of this century?

General BROWN. Well, Senator, I have tremendous value working with the Air National Guard throughout my career, in having had them under my command in the combat operations as well as serving as the Air Force Chief of Staff.

I think the key area, a couple of things that we have to think through as a Joint Force, and if confirmed as the Chairman, is to ensure that our Guard members have the capabilities with the resources and equipment that is modernized so they can be a front-line institution to be ready to go whenever the nations call. And then at the same time it is some of the personnel programs we have to ensure that we are taking care of those members and their families, particularly knowing that they change status as they go on and off Active Duty or get deployed back and forth. The better we can smooth those processes, that helps us out.

And then the last thing I would kind of highlight is the work we do on the Active side and how we ensure that the process to retain that talent and bring it over into the Guard or the Reserve component. There are areas where sometimes we make it a little more difficult than it has to be, and we may lose an opportunity with a great servicemember who decides to go do something else. But the value that our Guard provides, whether it is because of their dual status, you know, their civilian career and their military career, I have been a great proponent of the State Partnership Program. That has done tremendous work for our allies and partners.

So the Guard, both the Air and the Army Guard, are great assets to our Joint Force.

Senator PETERS. Great. It is good to hear that. General Brown, when you assumed the position of Air Force Chief of Staff you issued a directive for airmen, quote, "to accelerate change or lose." You described this concept as a necessity for the Air Force to be able to dominate in a very dynamic, rapidly changing security environment.

As Chairman, if confirmed, you would have great influence on bringing this type of attitude to what is perhaps the most risk adverse, bureaucratic organization in the world. So my question for you sir is, what are the biggest challenges that you can identify to having the Department embrace this culture, which I think is essential, of accelerating change?

General BROWN. Well, one of the areas that I have found as I try to do this—and I have made some progress in—I have been happy with some of the progress I have made in certain areas as the Air Force chief, but at the same time, there are some areas that I am not as happy about.

The challenge there is having all of our servicemembers understand the big picture and why this is so important, why we need to modernize, and what is at stake. And from that perspective, then you step away from your own interests and then we do what is best, not just for your part of the organization but what is best for the entire organization. That is how I have approached it as the Air Force Chief of Staff. If confirmed, that is exactly the way I

would approach it as the Chairman of the joint chiefs. And having served as a joint chief, I have had to be able to do the same. We have got to be able to do that a bit more across the force and put what is best out front for the force, to ensure we are doing the right things to protect the Nation and our national interests.

Senator PETERS. Thank you, General. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Peters.

Senator Mullin, please.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, Chairman, and going kind of on the same lane that Mr. Peters was but not necessarily the same question but talking about the accelerating change or lose. When you had originally drafted that as Air Force Chief of Staff, you outlined the urgent need for technology advancement in your "accelerate change or lose" comment.

An important factor in our ability to outpace our competitors is the health of our defense industry. Are we able to actually leverage them in an accurate way to be able to have the same mentality to, as you said, accelerate change or lose with the industrial base in the current State that it is in?

General BROWN. I do think we can, and the thing I have found as a service chief for the past 2 years, after I wrote "accelerate change or lose" that it not a flip of a switch. It is a bit of a culture change that takes a bit of time to get it bought into the force and start to move.

And so what I have seen is aspects of the defense industrial base, aspects of the defense industry to start to shift. We have been able to do it in certain programs, a couple of programs for the Air Force, and the B-21 program is a good example, Sentinel is a good example, Next Generation Air Dominance are good examples where we have taken a different approach to drive ourselves in a different direction. I would say the same thing with AFWERX, where we are being able to build relationships with smaller companies and smaller technologies, have them play in the competitive space. Because that is what happens outside of the Department of Defense.

So we have been able to make some advancements in those areas, but you are still going to have the major defense acquisition programs that are a bit broader. But we are making progress, and that is something we have got to continue to do, and if confirmed, the same energy I put in as the Air Force Chief of Staff on accelerating change is the same thing you can expect from me as the Chairman, if confirmed.

Senator MULLIN. I could not agree more. I mean, in the private sector, in any sector, we have to accelerate change, or you do fall behind. So I agree with what you are saying. But how do you keep the industrial base nimble without sacrificing legacy systems and knowledge at the same time?

General BROWN. Well, I think part of this is the aspect of how we write our contracts, how we incentivize and set the business model, realizing that our defense companies have stakeholders that they have got to report to. But at the same time, we have got to make sure we provide the combat capability for our Joint Force.

So it is important for us to come together so we are not talking past each other or debating on different sides of the aisle on this, or different sides of the perspective. It is really how do we come

together and figure out how we move forward. The way I operate is basically on a Venn diagram. There are some things we agree about—let's skip those and move those forward—and the things we disagree about, how then do we break down those barriers and then help improve. Part of that is building relationships within industry so they understand where we are going and what they are trying to achieve, and then we can work together to ensure we are doing what is right for the Nation.

Senator MULLIN. All right. Switching gears a little bit, nearly everyone that comes in front of this Committee this year has talked about the challenges we have with recruiting. There have also been, obviously, comments about having to change our posture a little bit because our lag to be able to man some of the systems that we are trying to move forward with or some of the areas that we are trying to grow in.

But at the same time, during COVID, we had let 8,000 capable service men and women go for not wanting to get the vaccination. As more technology has come out, we think that they probably had the right to do so. But how do we bring those individuals back into the fold now that the pandemic is, quote, "over," and get them back, plugged in, and reinstate them to where they should be, if they choose to come back?

General BROWN. Each of the services has a process to allow those members who want to return and review them coming back into the service.

Senator MULLIN. Do you support bringing them back in?

General BROWN. On a case-by-case basis with the reviews done by the services.

Senator MULLIN. What would be the case-by-case? I mean, what are red flags for you?

General BROWN. Well, in some cases maybe there were other factors beyond just the COVID vaccination that may prevent them from returning.

Senator MULLIN. But if it was based just specifically on the refusal to get the COVID vaccine, you support bringing them back in?

General BROWN. I would be supportive, but I would defer to those who are going through the cases before I—I do not want—

Senator MULLIN. Well, obviously, being the Chairman, you are going to have a big sway in it. If you say, "Hey guys, let's bring these guys back," if this was the only thing that was on their mark, and you say, "Let's bring them back in," I think most people would probably follow that leadership.

General BROWN. Somewhat true, but I am not in the command chain. If confirmed as the Chairman, I am not in the command chain. There are commanders that make those decisions, but I will provide my advice on how best to approach moving forward.

Senator MULLIN. Well, thank you for your service. Ma'am, Ms. Brown, thank you for your service too and supporting him along the way. We really appreciate you and the sacrifice you made in raising the family while he was serving the country, and all the 20 moves and making the house a true home for him to come to and feel comfortable. So thank you for that. Sir, I appreciate your serv-

ice, and I appreciate the conversation we had in my office. I look forward to working with you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Mullin.

Senator Rosen, please.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, General Brown, again for your service to our Nation, willing to serve in this critical role. I always thank the family members who serve right alongside with you, so I echo Senator Mullin. That boxing up 20 homes, it cannot be easy.

But I do want to make a quick comment before my questions because I do want to start off by saying that I am deeply concerned by the fact that your swift confirmation is being held up, along with hundreds of others of senior military promotions, including those in my State of Nevada. That would not be acceptable for any reason, but it is even more outrageous that these holds are to get rid of a policy that protects our servicemembers' reproductive rights. And so this extreme anti-choice agenda, it is jeopardizing our national security in order to impose restrictions on our servicemembers' reproductive freedoms. Enough is enough. We need to fill these critical roles, and I would like to see you have a quick confirmation. And so I am going to move onto that, General.

My colleagues have been talking about maintaining our technological edge because we know that there is global competition for a skilled workforce, declining investments in R&D, and DOD contracting challenges, and the STEM workforce gap. They are all impediments to eroding our defense technological edge with our adversaries. Meanwhile, we also know that China is investing heavily in advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, quantum computing. So we talk about accelerate change or lose.

And that is why in this Congress I introduced bipartisan legislation with Senator Blackburn to establish a pilot program to accelerate the scaling, production, and acquisition of advanced capabilities for national security through a public-private partnership that is going to incentivize American investment in small business that is working on innovative defense technologies. This legislation has been included in both the House and Senate version of the NDAA for fiscal year 2024.

So building on some of the prior questions, General Brown, if confirmed, how might the public-private partnership that catalyzes investment in advanced capabilities really enhance our competitiveness with China?

General BROWN. Well, if confirmed, what it does for us is it actually has us being able to tap into all the technical capability within our Nation. And that is why the aspect of these public-private partnerships are so important, because there are certain things that happen outside the Department of Defense that provides great capability, that it will solve some of the operational problems that we are faced with, that will help us better defend the Nation.

And that partnership, to me, is so important, and it is the aspect of how do we come together and build these relationships, create the dialog, and solve problems together that benefit both the pri-

vate sector but also the public sector, and particularly the Department of Defense.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. I want to move now on to combating Iranian aggression because just last week Iranian naval vessels attempted to seize two foreign-flagged commercial tankers right in international waters. Notably, this incident involved an Iranian Navy warship, not an Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps vessel, which is a troubling escalation.

So to address Iran's growing naval aggression I introduced, with Senator Ernst, the Maritime Act, which is bipartisan legislation that would require the Department of Defense to develop a strategy with our partners and allies in the Middle East to counter these maritime threats posed by Iran.

So General Brown, if confirmed, how would you confront Iranian aggression in all forms, and how would you leverage the regional partnerships fostered by the Abraham Accords to deter Iran's malign actions?

General BROWN. Senator, if confirmed, it is building on my vast experience, particularly in the Middle East. But you mentioned the Abraham Accords, and what I do see is greater cooperation between the nations within the Middle East. It is something we would have to continue to help support. Part of that is ensuring, as we do this we are also providing them the capabilities to be able to support efforts to push back against Iranian aggression in all forms. We have been able to do that in the past, but as you highlighted, the world and the threat has gotten more complicated, and so we cannot rest on our laurels. We have got to continue to work hard with our partners in the region and give them the capabilities, and also working with them as well, because we have got to be part of the solution as part of the United States and our military force as well.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. I want to talk a little bit, again, on our capacity to really meet the challenges going forward, and we know that cyber challenges are huge. We know in the private sector it is really huge to get that employment, get the skilled technologists, and we know that in the military as well. And as I have noted before this Committee numerous times, our Nation does face these unprecedented cyberattacks, consistent shortage of talent, cyber talent. They pose a significant threat to our security.

I have a bill to find solutions such as my Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve Act. It was included in this year's NDAA for fiscal year 2024, to provide the DOD with qualified civilian personnel to support the Department's cyberspace operations and ensure we have the talent needed to defeat, deter, and respond to malicious cyber activity, especially at times of greatest need, to provide surge capacity.

And so I know my time is just about up, but if you could answer quickly, how might nontraditional cyber reserve models be a possible pathway to recruit personnel who might not otherwise choose to serve full-time but possess those valuable cyber skills?

General BROWN. Senator, it allows us to tap into the great talent and capability across our Nation and allows us to address national security needs. And building those relationships, I think, are going to be important as a nation as we go forward.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Rosen.

Senator Cotton, please.

Senator COTTON. General Brown, welcome, and congratulations on your nomination, and thank you for you decades of service to our Nation. And Mrs. Brown, thank you for your decades of service as well.

There has been a lot of conversation this morning about munitions. I want to continue that conversation because I view it as one of the most vital challenges the Department faces today. Obviously, this is in the context of our support for Ukraine and its defense of its own territory and Russia's unprovoked war of aggression.

General Brown, has the Ukraine war caused the challenge to our munitions and defense industrial base or has it exposed some of the fragility and cracks in the defense industrial base?

General BROWN. Senator, I would say it has exposed, and the reason I say that is just based on experience. When I was air component commander for United States Central Command during the Defeat ISIS campaign we had some similar conversations. Back in 2017-ish timeframe, when North Korea was very active, we did some reviews and it highlighted it then.

Now it is highlighting it even more so, and it is the aspect of why it is important for us to not only invest in the platforms, we have got to invest in the munitions, do we have enough stockpile, particular the advanced munitions that are most effective. Those are the things that we need to continue to do, not only from the Department but also as we work with Congress to highlight those needs.

Senator COTTON. I agree with that, that the war in Ukraine has exposed those cracks and the fragility in our defense industrial base. Of course, those concerns are part of the broader context of China and the threat that it poses to Taiwan and our ability to deter Communist China from going for the jugular in Taiwan.

One important question here is to think about the kinds of munitions we have been providing to Ukraine and the kinds of munitions we provide to Taiwan, or that we might provide or might use ourselves in the future.

Speaking broadly, are the munitions used in Ukraine versus those that might be used in Taiwan, are those completely the same, totally different, or somewhere in the middle but closer to one pole or the other?

General BROWN. I would say they are somewhat different, just based on the environment that they are operating in. But there are some that are similar. I think the key part for us is to ensure—and this is one reason why we, in this year's budget submission, we had multiyear procurement. The more your procurement was to actually make sure that we not only had the munitions we are going to buy but also the facilities as well as the workforce and the supply chain, and that is the value of having these multiyear. It sets some predictability for defense and the industrial base so it is not an up-and-down with each budget cycle, and that will help them better plan and ensure we have the capability, not only for ourselves but as we also think about our allies and partners as well.

Senator COTTON. Well, I am glad you raised multiyear procurement because I think that has been something that could help address this problem. It is not a silver bullet, but it could help address it. To be clear, multiyear procurement, though, is not necessarily about saving money for the Department but about giving predictability and certainty to the companies across America that assemble or make components for these munitions. Is that correct?

General BROWN. That is correct. It is about building capacity. It is about buying down risk in the future. You cannot not put a price tag on risk. You know, ideally you do want to save money, but in the big scheme of things you have got to actually get the facilities built first. That is going to be some capital investment. But then, when you start to produce, that is when you may get some savings in the future.

Senator COTTON. Because if you are sitting at the head, not of the United States military, as you will, if confirmed, but rather, say, at the head of a major defense contractor like Lockheed or Northrop, or even one of their subcontractors who, say, makes parts for the rocket motors or the explosives or the steel, those are major capital-intensive investments if you are going to expand a line or even add a new line. And obviously you would be concerned if you cannot have multiyear certainty that that line is going to be at full capacity. Is that right?

General BROWN. It is not only the line and the capacity but it is also the workforce, making sure they are going to be available, and the subcontractors to support the major aspects that you need to pull together.

Senator COTTON. I think you and the Department have convinced the authorizers on this point. I think maybe appropriators still need some convincing to do. I am confident our Chairman, who also sits on the Appropriations Committee, can carry your points to the Appropriations Committee.

One final question I want to raise since it has been in the news is what has sometimes been colloquially called as "155" over the last few days. That is a 155-millimeter artillery shell that is one of the most basic shells that we use or that our Western partners use. We have spent about \$1.5 billion on production of 155 shells over the last 6 months to get to a point to quintuple our production rates.

I have looked at the inventory numbers which, in combination with donations from other allies and partners, do not appear to be approaching concerning levels yet. We have also heard, on this Committee, from several leaders that 155 production rates right now are sustainable.

Do you think that we are currently low on 155-millimeter artillery shells?

General BROWN. Senator, I have not looked at it that closely. I would have to come back to you with maybe a question for the record on that one.

Senator COTTON. Okay. Could you do that, please? And if confirmed, also, if you conclude that we are not, in fact, low, could you perhaps, in your role as the principal military advisor to the President, share the news with him, because I think he may have misspoken somewhat in an interview recently.

Thank you, General Brown.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Cotton.

Senator Schmitt, please.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, General.

General, do we have too many white officers in the Air Force?

General BROWN. Senator, what I really look at is the quality of all the officers that we have, and we look at the aspect of everyone who is qualified, meets the qualifications, is promoted.

Senator SCHMITT. Well, I would agree with you, but that answer is not consistent with your August 9th memo. In your August 9th memo, you said that—you signed onto that there should be a reduction essentially of about 9 percent of the white officers. That is 5,400—have 5,400 too many white officers. And this is the real impact, I think, of this desire of the Administration, and I am saddened to see this in this memo, of this obsession with sort of race-based politics being interjected into our military.

How did you come up with the percentage of 67.5 percent of the officers should be white, and how did you come up with 13 percent should be Black, and how did you come up with 10 percent should be Asian, and how did you come up with 1.5 percent should be American Indian and Native Alaskan, how did you come up with 1 percent being Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, and how did you come up with 15 percent of our officers should be Hispanic or Latino?

General BROWN. Senator, that memo is on application goals, not the actual makeup of the force. And those numbers are based on the demographics in the Nation.

Senator SCHMITT. Okay. All right. Ten percent of our country is Asian American? Is that where you came up with it, just the percentage of the population?

General BROWN. Essentially.

Senator SCHMITT. Because right now the actual percentage—I mean, this is where this is a ridiculous conversation, to be perfectly honest, because why did you not come up with, or are you going to come up with the percentage of the overall force? Did you contemplate that, of how many, you know, Black Americans should be in the Air Force, or how many Asian Americans should be in the Air Force? Did you contemplate the total force percentages?

General BROWN. Senator, what we looked at was the aspect of providing opportunities for anybody who wants to serve—

Senator SCHMITT. Listen, if that were the case—listen, if that were what was in this memo I would not be asking you these questions. But we have in a memo, signed by you, that you think right now there are too many white officers. This is a blanket statement.

And so I could go down the line of questioning of which of the 5,400 white officers that we have too many of should be fired, because that is the actual impact of all this. I agree with you. Your story about wanting to be the best pilot in the Air Force, regardless of race, that is what the military is supposed to be. It is this great meritocracy. It is why there are uniforms and haircuts.

And I heard so many of my colleagues talk about infusing abortion politics into this. That is exactly what is wrong. This Administration has infused abortion politics into our military, COVID poli-

tics into our military, DEI politics into our military, and it is a cancer on the best military in the history of the world. Those men and women deserve better than this, this idea that they have to go through these struggle sessions with DEI training.

Because trust me, I believe that we ought to have the broadest pool of applicants and get the best and the brightest, and we ought to be recruiting in various areas to make sure we have the best and the brightest from every community, regardless of your race or your gender or your ethnicity. But that is not what DEI is. DEI is an ideology based in cultural Marxism, and somehow, some way, we ended up in a place where a general in the Air Force is advocating for racial quotas, whether it be by applicants or the number of officers or maybe the total unit, and I just think that is wrong. I think that is the wrong approach.

You have had a distinguished career, and I thank you for your service. I just do not know how we can continue to have leadership that advocates for this divisive policy.

And so I will ask you also, there have been 8,500 military men and women fired because they chose not to get a vaccine. If confirmed, what would you do to go out, not just they can reapply and there is a process, to go out and recruit these folks back? What would you do to do that? What would you do to accomplish that?

General BROWN. Senator, if confirmed, I would provide them the opportunity to reapply.

Senator SCHMITT. I just do not think that is good enough. I heard that from Secretary Austin. I just do not think that is good enough. We did a great disservice to this country by firing people because they made that decision. I think they ought to be reinstated with rank and back pay. I have not heard that from anybody that has come before this Committee, and I am saddened by that.

I think I am out of time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Schmitt.

Senator Duckworth, please.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Brown, welcome to you and your family, and congratulations on your nomination.

I really enjoyed our discussion last month. I look forward to continuing to work with you on our military's readiness, if you are confirmed. Each of the military services faces challenges in meeting recruiting goals, in part due to historically small pool of eligible recruits, and that pool continues to shrink.

That is why I am introducing the ENLIST Act to begin to remedy this issue. My legislation enables the Department of Defense to expand its recruiting pool to include long-time residents of this country. This could include many people who love this country and are dedicated to service, like DACA recipients or people who originally came on a work or educational visa and have applied to stay permanently but cannot receive an immigrant visa due to caps in the system.

The ENLIST Act will aid recruitment efforts by allowing highly skilled and motivated individuals to succeed in the military while still maintaining the Department's security requirements and high enlistment standards.

General Brown, during our discussion you described traveling to bases and meeting new Americans eager to serve in the Air National Guard. I would like to know if you think that the ENLIST Act and its expansion of the pool of possible recruits benefits the military recruitment efforts, and I would also like to hear your perspective on the value that highly qualified immigrants bring to the military.

General BROWN. Senator, as we talked about in your office, I do think about those who, as you mention, love this country, want to serve, want to raise their right hand and take an oath of enlistment, and the opportunity for them to become citizens of the United States. It provides an opportunity because in many cases they are very talented, and they want to stay in this Nation. There are opportunities that the ENLIST Act would help us in some of our recruiting, and again, talent that resides in this Nation that wants to serve. And if they want to serve, and meet the qualifications, I think all should be provided the opportunity.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. I cannot think of a better way to show love of this country. You want to be an American? Put on her colors. Stand shoulder to shoulder and help defend her.

I would like to thank my colleagues on this Committee and the staff for their work on this year's NDAA, which supports a strong and ready total force. I am particularly proud of my NDAA provision expanding TRICARE coverage of assisted reproductive technology, or ART, for current servicemembers and their dependents. Studies show that servicemembers have higher rates of infertility compared to the general population, which is only complicated by an overly restrictive DOD policy and servicemembers' deployment schedules.

General Brown, expanding assisted reproductive technology services to female and male members of the uniformed services and their dependents, without regard to coital conception, helps members to start their families that they have always dreamed of. Do you think expanding our servicemembers' access to this important health care is a positive recruiting and retention tool?

General BROWN. Senator, what I believe is we, as senior leaders in the military, responsibly provide health care for all our members. And when I think about providing health care I do not try to determine aspects of what type of health care but health care at large. We have done that in the past, and we need to continue to do it and support our military members and their families with the health care to ensure they are healthy, and again, continue to serve and be part of the greatest fighting force in the world.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, General. And earlier this year I led an Indo-Pacific codel that reinforced to me just how important our alliances and partnerships are in the region. I am going back there again in August, to the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand. I think that these partnerships are incredibly important, and I have asked these same questions of every service chief who has come before this Committee because I think we can be doing so much more to better these key relationships.

General Brown, you have deep experience in interacting with allies and partners in the Middle East, in Europe, and in the Indo-Pacific. Can you speak about your personal relationships with air

chiefs from other nations and how that may benefit your role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, if you are confirmed?

General BROWN. Senator, when I think about it, it is all about relationships, and it is the relationships I have been able to build with these various air chiefs, and in some cases the air chief is retiring and a new air chief comes in, so I have relationships in the retired community as well. But it is also providing the opportunities to meet with the various chiefs of the defense, as I have gone and traveled around the world, to include the Indo-Pacific. And if confirmed as Chairman, I will have an opportunity to deepen those relationships with other chiefs of defense, and again, the value of these relationships I have as an air chief will open the door. And even if I do not know that chief of defense, having a relationship with that air chief actually helps to open the door and build a new relationship with a chief of defense who I do not already know, if confirmed.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. And Mr. Chairman, just one very quick, 10 seconds?

Chairman REED. Yes.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. I just wanted to clarify, because came in late. I apologize for that. But I only heard half of my colleague's questioning to you. And he seemed to say that he thought that you were advocating for quotas, racial quotas, in recruiting. I did not think that was the case. My understanding is that you want to broaden the recruiting and allow anybody who wants to serve, who qualifies to serve, and making sure that people have access to service, or are you actually implementing racial quotas and saying only a certain number of Asians, a certain number of Blacks, a certain number of whites can be recruited?

General BROWN. No. Broaden the pool, and we do not have quotas. That is against policy for staff quotas.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you for clarifying that, General.

Chairman REED. Senator Scott, please. Thank you, Senator Duckworth.

Senator SCOTT. Chair, first, General Brown, thank you for your service, and I want to thank your wife for her service. You have got a stellar background.

I just got back from the Middle East. I was in Israel when they had to go into Jenin and kill the terrorists that were targeting Israeli citizens. And everybody I talked to in Israel, all they talked about was the problems with Iran. I went to Bahrain, and they were concerned about the menace of Iran. And I went to UAE, and it is the same thing. Everybody is concerned about what is going on with Iran.

Also while I was over there the U.S. Navy was able to—and you really have to admire, I think it is the 5th Fleet—what they did. They stopped two ships from being taken over by Iranian forces and did a great job.

So here is my question. And as far as I understand, most of these tankers that are going through the Strait of Hormuz are not flagged in America. They are not owned by American companies. So can you talk about what is the value of the U.S. Military, U.S. Navy, being there. That is number one. number two is, are allies

doing their part, or should we be doing less and let our allies deal with it?

General BROWN. Well, the role of the U.S. Navy in that region, and along with the other services, is to help provide security within the region, which actually may have a global impact. And so the role that the Navy plays to help the free flow of commerce that impacts not just the United States but, more broadly, those countries in the region but many of our allies and partners, and that plays a key role in our participation there.

I think we have got to stay involved with our allies and partners, and as you highlighted, many of the countries in the region have started to talk more about Iran. And I think that is one of the areas that I, having served there with United States Central Command several times, we have been focused on counterterrorism. You now think about the aspect of Iran in the national security documents, the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, the coalescing of all the nations now to talk about this opportunity to work more closely together in our collective efforts to deter the activities by Iran in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf or any other place in the Middle East.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you. Another thing you brought up is—and a lot of the leaders were concerned about what the Biden administration is doing with regard to trying to negotiate some sort of deal with Iran. And once I get back I hear that the FBI is investigating Robert Malley, who recently served as President Biden's special envoy to Iran, because his security clearance was suspended based on mishandling of classified information.

So does this concern you, or are you concerned when we you are going to have an obligation to try to defend the transit and help Israel, things like that, and then over here you have got the Biden administration trying to negotiate some deal that is going to possibly give Iran more resources?

General BROWN. Sir, the thing that I do think about is the role of how all parts of our government play in our overall deterrence. And it is not just what the military does. It is what we do in the diplomatic space, it is what we do in the information space, what we do economically. I think all those things work collectively together, and if confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs I think I have a responsibility—I need to provide the military advice, but I need to put it in the context and understanding the other factors that are in play as well.

Senator SCOTT. Okay. Thank you. Homestead Air Force Base, we talked about that when we met. Can you talk about the importance of continuing to find a mission for Homestead Air Force Base, especially when you look at what now it looks like China is doing in Cuba. Can you tell me what you believe is the importance of Homestead?

General BROWN. Well, having spent 4 years at Homestead, and a matter of fact, that is where my wife and I, our first assignment after we got married, we have fond memories of being there.

But to your question, the capability we have down in southern Florida, that Reserve unit, and having flown with that Reserve unit when I was stationed there on Active Duty, is still being able to have a capability. That is something that we are working inter-

nal to the Air Force to ensure that Homestead still has a mission, and we still have a platform to operate there. And continuing dialog that we will have, and we will have with you as well, and the Air Force will have with you as well, as we look at Homestead and ensure that we maintain a mission there.

Senator SCOTT. All right. Thank you, and thanks for your service. Congratulations on your success. When I joined the Navy, it was a melting pot. It was a great melting pot. It gave you an opportunity to meet people that you probably would never meet. And I do not believe in quotas. I do not think anybody should.

But I do believe it is a great melting pot, and I think if we can recruit more people from different backgrounds, we ought to be doing that. But do not ever impact somebody's ability to get ahead because they might have a different skin color or background that somebody else. It sounds like you completely agree with that.

General BROWN. I do.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Scott, and General Brown, thank you too.

I just want to raise an issue or discussion about this August 2022 memorandum. It was designed to increase the pool of applicants, essentially to search for more talent. It was not designed to set the composition of the Air Force. Is that accurate?

General BROWN. That is correct. It was only application goals. It was not designed to eliminate the opportunities for anyone. It was just looking to open up the opportunities for as many as we could, and make sure we are outreaching to—

Chairman REED. And this memorandum was signed by the Secretary of the Air Force, the Under Secretary of the Air Force, Space Operations Chief, and I believe that is it. So it was a combined effort by the leadership of the Department of the Air Force.

General BROWN. Yes, Chairman, it was.

Chairman REED. I would like to quote from the memorandum. "These goals are aspirational, aligning resources to invest in our long-term objectives, and will not be used in any manner that undermines our merit-based processes." So the memorandum clearly declares that merit is the one standard by which you merit accession to the Air Force and promotion in the Air Force.

General BROWN. Yes, Senator. As a matter of fact, if that kind of statement was not included I would have never signed that letter.

Chairman REED. I completely concur, and I know your character. You would not have signed the letter.

General Brown, thank you. I look forward to your confirmation. I think you will lead with distinction and set an example of professionalism and skill that is continuing the example set by your predecessor.

With that I will adjourn the hearing. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:49 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Prepared questions submitted to General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF by Chairman Jack Reed prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Section 151 of title 10, U.S. Code, provides that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the President and the Secretary of Defense, section 153 of title 10 further assigns the Chairman responsibility for assisting the President and the Secretary in providing for the strategic direction of the armed forces; strategic and contingency planning; global military integration; comprehensive joint readiness; joint capability development; and joint force development activities, among other matters.

Question. Given the responsibilities of the Chairman, as enumerated in law, what background, experience, and expertise do you possess that qualify you to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Answer. In my over 38 years of military service, I've had the honor of leading and serving in the world's most respected Air Force alongside Total Force airmen—Active, guard, reserve, and civilians, the Joint Force, and our allies and partners. My assignments have covered issues from the operational to the strategic and have ranged from flying in combat, to serving on joint and component staffs to ensuring the Air Force accelerates the change necessary for us to remain the most dominant Air Force in the world. For the past 14 years and over 8 different assignments, I have been in leadership positions focused on the five national security challenges—China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and Violent Extremists. As Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and throughout my career, I've had the privilege of supporting not only servicemembers, but their families as well. These experiences have prepared me for the humbling responsibilities of being Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, if confirmed.

Question. Do you believe there is any action that you need to take to enhance your ability to exercise the responsibilities of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I would carefully consider any actions that would enhance my ability to exercise the responsibilities of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; I do not have recommendations at present.

In matters requiring global military strategic and operational integration, the Chairman is responsible for providing advice to the President and Secretary of Defense on ongoing military operations and advising the Secretary on the allocation and transfer of forces among geographic and functional Combatant Commands, as may be necessary to address transregional, multi-domain, and multifunctional threats.

Question. If confirmed, how would you execute these advisory functions, while ensuring that your role does not invoke command authority or infringe on the responsibilities of the Combatant Commanders?

Answer. I am keenly attuned to the distinction between the Chairman's advisory functions and the command authority and responsibilities of the Combatant Commanders.

If confirmed, I would conduct the Chairman's advisory functions by maintaining detailed awareness of ongoing and emerging issues within or across the Combatant Command areas of responsibility. Where tensions between resourcing and other requirements may exist, I commit to communicating my resultant advice to the President and Secretary of Defense, always cognizant of the chain of command as described in law.

Question. If confirmed, how would you structure your relationship with the Combatant Commanders to effect these responsibilities?

Answer. If confirmed, my relationship with the Combatant Commanders would be structured based on the existing mechanisms and procedures in law and policy.

Question. If confirmed, and given your observations and experience as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, what innovative ideas would you consider providing to the Secretary of Defense regarding the organization and operation of the Joint Staff?

Answer. I do have some perspectives on potential opportunities based on my experience over the past decade plus. If confirmed, I would carefully evaluate and consider the organization and operation of the Joint Staff before recommending any changes.

I will continue to deepen my understanding of Goldwater Nichols Act history, current and past Joint Staff operations, processes, and organizational construct, as well as the most recent rounds of defense reforms codified in several National Defense Authorization Acts.

Additionally, several congressionally mandated Commissions have or are performing invaluable service on topics such as artificial intelligence, strategic posture, and the Department's Planning Programming and Budget system. I'd like to take a deeper look at this work to inform any innovative ideas or recommendations I might provide to the Secretary of Defense.

Question. To the extent the Joint Staff performs functions that overlap with those of other DOD Components—particularly with regard to regional or functional topics—what would be your approach, if confirmed, to consolidating and reducing those redundancies?

Answer. If confirmed, I would carefully consider this issue before recommending any changes. I am aware that Congress worked with the department to look at these issues in the past.

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Question. What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you would face if confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Answer. Significant shifts in geopolitics and technology are converging with efforts by China and Russia to contest the post-World War II international order. Our alliances endure but are subject to stress and pressures catalyzed by intensifying and accelerating trends. The Joint Force, along with our allies and partners must now rapidly build appropriate capabilities and capacities to deter, and if necessary, prevail in great power conflict.

Our greatest challenges are not necessarily always those presented by our adversaries, but there are areas of improvement we need to address with more discipline and urgency.

For instance, we need to improve collaboration and sharing with trusted and new partners, whether foreign militaries or in various commercial sectors. Time is not on our side.

Our greatest asset is the American people—and the spirit of inspiration and innovation that have made this country a global leader. DOD needs to recruit and retain some of America's best to defend the Nation, while finding better ways to collaborate with America's finest in other domains and pursuits. The same applies to collaboration with our allies and partners.

Question. What plans do you have for addressing each of these challenges, if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to establish a better understanding of where we are and where we can improve on achieving the most critical priorities in our strategies and concepts. I am committed to open dialog and collaboration to achieve our national security goals. With this approach, I think I will be in a better position to work within the Department and with Congress to share my thoughts and advice. I look forward to engaging with you to seek your counsel and input.

Question. Are there significant opportunities that, in your view, DOD and the Joint Staff have been unable to leverage (or have leveraged only in part) during the period of your service as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Answer. I go with a sense of urgency and a willingness to change to advance national security objectives, to enhance warfighting capability and capacity, and to enhance deterrence.

There are a few opportunities that I'd like to highlight where I would like to offer my office and energy, if confirmed.

- We need to continue building an environment where all our servicemembers and their families can reach their full potential. This will need to be done in collaboration with DOD leaders and the civic leaders and communities that support our bases.
- There are opportunities to increase emphasis on non-materiel efforts in DOD—education and training, experimentation, and public-private partnerships. These need to be better coupled with the materiel programs and initiatives of the Department.
- There are opportunities to build stronger relationships with the commercial sector and emerging technologies, both within the U.S. and with our allies and partners.

Question. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that DOD and the Joint Staff leverage these opportunities, and on what timeline?

Answer. If confirmed, I would make significant effort within my authority and empower others within my span of control to encourage innovation and initiative at speed and scale.

If confirmed, I would also make a swift and considered assessment through the lens of the threat environment to inform specific initiatives and milestones.

CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY

Question. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that your tenure as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff epitomizes the fundamental requirement for civilian control of the Armed Forces embedded in the U.S. Constitution and other laws?

Answer. I am fully committed to the laws, policies, and norms associated with civilian control of the United States Armed Forces and look forward to working collaboratively with the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Congress is a key partner in fortifying our Nation's civil-military foundation.

I would seek to maintain and fortify the trust of the executive branch, Congress, and the citizens we defend. This includes supporting the Department's civilian leadership to advance the implementation of the National Defense Strategy in ways consistent with our Nation's civil-military laws, policies, and norms.

I would also work with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Combatant Commanders to affirm civilian control across our collective roles, responsibilities, and organizations.

Question. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy are fully engaged in preparing guidance for and reviewing contingency plans?

Answer. I support a collaborative planning relationship among civilian and military organizations consistent with the roles and responsibilities articulated in law and policy.

If confirmed, I would examine the efficiency, effectiveness, and alignment of our current planning processes and constructs in achieving our national security objectives. I would consult with the Department's civilian and military leadership to guide and inform any recommended actions or adjustments.

I welcome continued dialog with Congress.

Question. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness are fully engaged in evaluating and reporting on the readiness of DOD Components, and if necessary, in mitigating readiness gaps and shortfalls?

Answer. The Chairman has specific responsibilities articulated in law and policy to ensure the comprehensive joint readiness of the force in the present, and the future.

I am committed to ensuring the Department's civilian and military leadership are fully engaged and informed to evaluate the readiness of DOD components to execute the National Defense and Military strategies. I will deepen my understanding of the extensive set of issues, processes, and existing efforts to improve our Department's decisionmaking and reporting about joint force readiness, including alignment with other related processes.

I will work with Congress, a key partner, to build and sustain comprehensive joint force readiness.

Question. How would you define effective civilian control of the military? Aside from civilian control of the military via the executive branch, please describe the extent to which you believe Congress plays a role in furthering civilian control of our military?

Answer. Congress is a critical stakeholder and partner in the American tradition of civilian control of our military.

Congressional roles and responsibilities for oversight and funding of the military depend on a regular and trusted dialog at multiple levels of DOD-congressional interaction.

We are at a critical moment in geopolitics and technological change that will require improving existing ways, new ideas, and harnessing the power of America's powers of innovation and inspiration.

I believe it is imperative that we sustain robust congressional oversight and the necessary and on-time funding as key components of civilian control. But DOD also welcomes Congress' ideas and leadership to make many of the necessary changes to retain our competitive military advantage.

If confirmed, I will strive to be your best partner, while affirming civilian control in both the Executive and legislative branches.

Question. As a military officer, you take an oath to support and defend the Constitution. How do you balance this obligation with the responsibility to provide your best military advice to civilian leadership, even when that advice may differ from civilian political priorities?

Answer. I view these responsibilities as complementary and reinforcing.

Military advice should help provide options to our Nation's civilian leaders that support policy, while providing professional military judgments about the associated strategy, risk, readiness, and resource considerations.

Question. In your view, what is the appropriate role for the Department when supporting law enforcement in State or national emergencies?

Answer. DOD should be prepared to support civilian law enforcement agencies consistent with the legal limitations on direct DOD involvement in civilian law enforcement activities. DOD support to law enforcement should be considered against military readiness requirements to execute the National Defense and Military Strategies.

If confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, you will testify regularly before Congress, and may be asked to comment on partisan political matters.

Question. What is your view of your responsibility to provide your best military advice to Congress while also ensuring that you and your office remain apolitical, recognizing that you serve as a model for other senior uniformed officers and the entire armed forces?

Answer. If confirmed and as I've done as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, I am committed to maintaining regular and open lines of communication to ensure Congress can exercise its oversight duties in an informed and timely manner. My engagements will remain apolitical, and I am cognizant that my actions serve as a model for other senior uniformed officers and the entire armed forces.

Throughout my tenure, the Office of the Chairman and Joint Staff would speak and act with the utmost respect for American civil-military tradition and norms. I would expect no less from the Joint Chiefs and Combatant Commands. Together, we would seek to continuously earn your trust, and that of the American public.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

Question. Section 162(b) of title 10, U.S. Code, provides that the operational chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the Commanders of the Combatant Commands. Pursuant to Section 163(a) of title 10, the President has directed that communications between the President or the Secretary of Defense and the Commanders of the Combatant Commands be transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Do you believe that these provisions facilitate a clear and effective chain of command?

Answer. Yes, I believe that these provisions facilitate a clear and effective chain of command.

Question. In your view, how does this chain of command and chain of communication effectuate civilian control of the military?

Answer. Chain of command facilitates effective civilian control of the military, provides for clear lines of communication, and promotes accountability, as intended by the Goldwater Nichols Act. The chain of communications facilitates the Chairman's responsibility to oversee and advocate for Combatant Commanders, while synthesizing Combatant Commander perspectives into military advice to civilian authorities.

Question. Section 163(a) of title 10 provides that the President may assign duties to the Chairman to assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in exercising their command function.

In your view, are there other roles or responsibilities that should be assigned to the Chairman, to better enable the Chairman's assistance to the President and the Secretary of Defense in their exercise of command functions?

Answer. At this time, I believe the roles and responsibilities currently assigned to the Chairman are sufficient, and do not have recommendations for any additional roles and responsibilities.

If confirmed, I will perform the duties of the Chairman with an open mind and consult with the Secretary and with Congress should I conclude there are additional roles or responsibilities that should be considered.

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Question. Section 151 of title 10, U.S. Code, codifies the role of the Joint Chiefs as military advisors to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.

What is your assessment of the authorities and process by which you and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would provide military advice and opinions to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense?

Answer. The FY2017 NDAA enhanced the roles of the Chairman, the other Joint Chiefs, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a corporate body, to provide military advice to civilian leaders. As a member of the Joint Chiefs for 3 years, I have seen this provision implemented, and I assess the authorities and process as sufficient and appropriate for providing military advice and opinions to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.

Question. If confirmed, would you commit to provide your best military advice to the President, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council, even when your advice and opinions might differ from those of other members of the Cabinet, the President's other senior advisors, or from the President's own views?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to providing independent military advice to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council, even when my advice may differ from views of other cabinet members, the President's other advisors, or the President himself.

This is a fundamental part of performing my duties faithfully and responsibly, and in alignment with the Chairman's statutory responsibilities.

Question. If confirmed, would you commit to provide your best military advice to the Secretary of Defense, even when your advice and opinions might differ from those of other DOD senior officials, or from the Secretary's own views?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, how would you elicit from the individual Service Chiefs, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the Combatant Commanders, their best military advice, including advice and opinions that may diverge your own?

Answer. If confirmed, I would foster an environment that encourages dialog across a range of views and ideas, to include dissenting and alternate viewpoints. I would faithfully represent the range of ideas and views of the JCS and Combatant Commanders to our civilian leaders.

Question. If confirmed, how would you inform the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense, of the advice or opinion of another member of the Joint Chiefs, which may differ from advice you have presented on a matter?

Answer. In the instances where a Joint Chief offers a recommendation or has views different than my own, I have a duty to present alternate or dissenting views. When appropriate, I would facilitate communication between my JCS teammate and the principal to ensure effective and informed communication.

Question. If confirmed, what would be your response upon being advised that other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, individually or collectively, intend to provide their advice on a matter directly to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, the Secretary of Defense, or the Congress?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure that the President, National Security Council, Homeland Security Council, and Secretary of Defense receive a well-considered range of views, expertise, and information. Should other members of the Joint Chiefs, individually or collectively, elect to provide advice directly, I would facilitate JCS communication with civilian leadership, while maintaining both awareness and engagement.

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Question. If confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, specifically what would be your role in generating and shaping the content of, and improving DOD component compliance with, each such document?

National Security Strategy

Answer. The NSS outlines how the U.S. will advance its interests and pursue a free, open, prosperous, and secure world. It provides strategic direction for DOD and the interagency in the pursuit of national security objectives. If confirmed, as the Chairman I will provide my military advice to support the NSS.

Question. National Defense Strategy

Answer. The NDS directs the Department to act urgently to sustain and strengthen United States deterrence with the PRC as the pacing challenge. If confirmed, as the Chairman, I will provide military advice to the Secretary of Defense to help shape those priorities and then direct the NMS to develop the ways and means to meet those objectives.

Question. National Military Strategy

Answer. The NMS outlines the ways and means to support the NDS objectives. It provides strategic direction for the Joint Force, and, if confirmed, as the Chairman I will support and provide my military advice on implementation of the NMS.

Question. Chairman's Risk Assessment

Answer. The Chairman directs the implementation of the Contingency Planning Guidance (CPG) and integrates contingency planning across Combatant Commands for each of the NDS key threats. The Chairman uses the guidance in the CPG in the development of the NMS and Joint Strategic Campaign Plan (JSCP). Additionally, the Chairman provides guidance for preparing and reviewing contingency plans that conform to policy guidance from the President and Secretary of Defense. Last, the Chairman ensures that plans are feasible, suitable, acceptable, and complete for presentation to the Secretary. If confirmed, I will continue directing the implementation of the CPG and its use in the development of the NMS and JSCP.

Answer. The Joint Strategic Campaign Plan (JSCP) enables the execution of the Chairman's statutory responsibilities for strategic and contingency planning, global military integration, and the Chairman's oversight prescribed in Title 10, U.S. Code, Sections 153, 163, and 113. If confirmed, I would use the JSCP to operationalize the NMS into actionable tasks for global military leaders.

Answer. The Department has a robust process for strategic assessment, analysis, and decisionmaking to include several cross-departmental senior leader decision-making forums, in addition to informal processes such as the Chairman's Joint Strategic Planning System. If confirmed, I will continue cross-departmental collaboration to ensure decisionmaking processes are supported by all the rigorous analyses and assessments, and properly synchronized across the supported by all the rigorous analyses and assessments, and properly synchronized across the supported by all the rigorous analyses and assessments, and properly synchronized across the supported by all the rigorous analyses and assessments, and properly synchronized across the

Question. Will you commit that, if confirmed, you would undertake all necessary action to ensure that each of these strategic guidance documents is timely generated and issued, and updated, as necessary to reflect changes in assumptions, policy, or other factors?

Answer. Yes.

USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Question. In your view, what is the appropriate role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in establishing policies for the use of military force and the rules of engagement?

Answer. The President, as Commander-in-Chief, determines when to use military force. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are advisors to the President and the Secretary of Defense and should actively advise on the policies for the use of military force and the rules of engagement.

Question. If confirmed, what factors would you consider in making recommendations to the President and the Secretary of Defense on the use of military force?

Answer. If confirmed, my recommendations to the President and Secretary of Defense on the use of military force will be consistent with U.S. domestic and international law. Additionally, I would consider probability of success, cost in terms of casualties, and strategic risk.

Question. What is your understanding of your role, if confirmed, in the application of the Administration's policy and legal framework for the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force?

Answer. The 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force provides a legal basis for operations against certain violent extremist organizations. If confirmed, I would ensure Joint Force operations are consistent with the policies of current and past administrations expressed in reports on the Legal and Policy Frameworks Guiding the United States Use of Military Force and Related National Security Operations.

Question. Are you satisfied that current legal authorities, including the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force, enable the Department to carry out counterterrorism operations and activities at a level you believe to be necessary and appropriate?

Answer. Yes, at present, we have the legal authorities to carry out U.S. counterterrorism operations at the necessary and appropriate level.

Question. In your view, is a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force needed at this time? Please explain your answer.

Answer. The current AUMF provides the authority necessary to conduct current operations.

Question. What factors would you consider, if confirmed, in recommending to the Secretary of Defense which forces of other nations should be eligible for Collective Self-Defense by U.S. Forces, and under what conditions?

Answer. When "collective self-defense" rules of engagement are authorized, U.S. Forces may defend foreign forces against any attack or threat of imminent attack. If confirmed, the key factors I would consider in a recommendation to the Secretary of Defense would be the legality of "collective self-defense" for the situation in question and if its execution is in the interests of the U.S.

Question. Are there circumstances in which you believe it appropriate for U.S. Military Forces to be under the operational command or control of an authority other than the chain of command established under title 10, U.S. Code?

Answer. Normally, the U.S. Armed Forces operate under the established title 10 chain of command. However, there may be appropriate instances for the President to establish other temporary command relationships due to certain sensitive military operations. Regardless of the command relationship, U.S. military personnel are still accountable to the Title 10 chain of command and are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Furthermore, any operations the armed forces support are governed by the law of armed conflict. If confirmed, I would give the President my advice in any instance where an exception to the Title 10 chain of command may be warranted.

Question. What is your understanding and assessment of the authorities and agreements in place to permit U.S. military personnel to carry out missions under the provisions of title 50, U.S. Code? If confirmed, how would you modify these agreements or authorities, if at all?

Answer. I understand that relevant authorities and agreements provide the necessary framework for military forces to support activities of other U.S. Government departments and agencies when called upon by the President or Secretary of Defense as the situation dictates. I believe that the current authorities and agreements are sufficient. If confirmed, I look forward to that the current authorities and agreements are sufficient. If confirmed, I look forward to that the current authorities and agreements are sufficient. If confirmed, I look forward to

CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

Question. In August 2022, the Department released a Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP) to address various aspects of the Depart-

ment's policy, processes, and procedures related to investigating and responding to civilian casualty incidents.

In your view, what are the primary challenges for the combatant commands in mitigating, investigating, and responding to allegations of civilian casualties resulting from U.S. military operations?

Answer. The largest hurdles are timely receipt of allegations and access to evidence necessary to investigate. Implementation of CHMR-AP will assist Combatant Commands to learn and share best practices to improve Joint Force responses.

Question. What is your understanding of the implementation status of the CHMR-AP and what additional actions do you believe need to be taken to enable the Department of Defense to more effectively mitigate, investigate, and respond to allegations of civilian casualties resulting from U.S. military operations?

Answer. DOD is currently focused on hiring requisite personnel to implement the Action Plan. I agree with Secretary Austin that the highest CHMR-AP implementation priorities for the Department are continuing to hire requisite staff, continuing to stand up the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence to serve as the DOD's hub of analysis, learning, and training related to CHMR, and publishing a new DOD Instruction on CHMR to formalize Departmental policies, responsibilities, and procedures related to CHMR.

Question. Do you believe the combatant commands are sufficiently resourced for mitigating, investigating, and responding to allegations of civilian casualties resulting from U.S. military operations?

Answer. Yes. However, the Department can always improve our performance. Implementation of CHMR-AP will assist the Joint Force to improve. We are in the process of staffing the Department, to include the combatant commands, with the personnel necessary to effectively implement CHMR-AP.

Question. When civilian casualty allegations arise, do you believe they should be investigated by personnel sufficiently independent of the unit or task force which conducted the strike?

Answer. I believe civilian casualty allegations should be assessed and investigated in accordance with the Secretary of Defense's direction in the CHMR-AP. The CHMR-AP directs each Combatant Commander to designate a senior official to serve as the Civilian Harm Combatant Commander to designate a senior official to serve as the Civilian Harm Combatant Commander to designate a senior official to serve as the Civilian Harm

Question. How can the Department more effectively capture and share lessons learned from civilian casualty investigations so they can be incorporated into future operations?

Answer. I support the Secretary of Defense's vision for the nascent Civilian Protection Center of Excellence (CP-CoE) to institutionalize the advancement of knowledge, practices, and tools for preventing, mitigating, and responding to civilian harm. The CP-CoE will be the hub and facilitator of Department-wide analysis, learning, and strategic approaches, and will help institutionalize good practice for CHMR during operations.

JOINT OPERATIONS

Question. The Goldwater Nichols Act enabled an unprecedented degree of jointness within the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Combatant Commanders. Today, both the DOD and Congress recognize the need for a deeper level of integration and interoperability to overcome anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) networks and to deter and defeat large-scale aggression.

How would you characterize the jointness that is needed today?

Answer. The progress that the Goldwater Nichols Act enabled with respect to joint operations remains foundational for our ability to deter and if necessary, prevail in today's security environment. The growing sophistication of current and future threats requires us to move beyond integration between Services. To succeed we must integrate jointly across combatant command boundaries, domains (including cyber and space domains), the whole of government, and with our allies and partners to successfully sustain integrated deterrence.

Question. What do you perceive to be the role and capability requirements for close combat formations in future joint force operations?

Answer. The ultimate role of combat units (including close combat) will always be to engage and destroy the enemy. The future warfighting environment will not obviate the need for close combat formations. The changing character of war, specifically the rapidly expanding importance of doctrine that informs commanders how to leverage the electro-magnetic spectrum, information, space, and cyber capabili-

ties; requires us to reevaluate required capabilities and capacity, and how we build, train, and employ the Joint Force. The Joint Warfighting Concept is the unifying vision for Joint Force development, design, and warfighting approach.

Question. Service led joint and coalition experimentation events are improving interoperability and identifying critical gaps.

What is the Joint Staff's appropriate role in experimentation?

Answer. The Joint Staff has two roles in experimentation. First, it should manage integrated campaigns of learning to examine specific problems, gaps, and critical capabilities described in the Joint Warfighting Concept. Second, with its limited ability to prioritize joint funding on experimentation it should prioritize experimentation for joint peculiar problems that are highlighted through concepts or capability gaps.

Question. How would you ensure the Joint Staff is appropriately facilitating joint experimentation during the capabilities development process?

Answer. The Joint Staff is organized to facilitate joint experimentation in synch with the capability's development process. If confirmed, I would continue to integrate and synchronize experimentation not only across the Department of Defense but also with the Interagency and our allies and partners.

Question. What role do you foresee playing in influencing joint and enabling capabilities development that will link or knit together service-specific capabilities, such as Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) or contested logistics?

Answer. The recently released Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) provides a framework to determine which Service specific capabilities need to be more closely integrated. If confirmed as the Chairman, I would continue to use the JROC as an advisory council to inform my advice to the Secretary of Defense on requirements. Specifically, the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process was created to support the statutory responsibility of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) to validate joint warfighting requirements from Combatant Commands and Services which include CJADC2 and contested logistics.

The JROC and JCIDS processes and combined Joint Staff collaboration with the Combatant Commands and Services identify the integration and interoperable capabilities the Joint Force requires to operate across all warfighting domains. These requirements will be communicated through the Chairman's Program Recommendation to ensure the Services understand and apply resources against our most critical operational priorities.

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS AND COMPONENT COMMANDS

Question. Is the current model for creating joint force headquarters below the unified command level appropriate and adequate to meet the challenges articulated in the 2022 NDS? In your view, are there other models you have seen that we should be considering?

Answer. The current model is appropriate and adequate, but if confirmed, I will examine joint force headquarters models.

Question. Given the time required to stand up, man, and train joint force headquarters, and the short warning time that is expected before a potential conflict in certain areas of operation, would Combatant Commanders' operations and contingency planning and preparedness be improved by creating and exercising subordinate joint force headquarters during the competition phase?

Answer. Creating a subordinate joint force headquarters prior to emergence of crisis could improve operations, planning, and preparedness depending on the specific circumstances. Doing so would require analysis to determine if and when early establishment is warranted considering priorities for manpower allocation, staff actions, and expense across the Joint Force. If confirmed, I will examine this possibility with the Combatant Commanders and Joint Chiefs.

Question. The fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) required the Secretary of Defense to establish a standing joint force headquarters (JFHQ) in the INDOPACOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). What is your view on the need for a JFHQ in this AOR?

Answer. The Indo-Pacific is the United States Military's number one area of focus and China is the pacing challenge. When the DOD is called on to respond to international crises, we use the Joint Force to quickly integrate forces and capabilities across the military services. Creating a Joint Force Headquarters in the AOR can improve the Combatant Commanders' operations, contingency planning, and preparedness. For USINDOPACOM, the time to create and appropriately staff a JFHQ, and establish their communication and coordination channels across the military services, U.S. Government agencies, and allies and partners is ahead of crisis. In accordance with the NDAA, I believe it is prudent to conduct mission analysis to

define requirements and take the steps to establish a JFHQ in USINDOPACOM to enable persistent, all-domain awareness and credible deterrence against our adversaries.

Question. What are the most significant obstacles to establishing and exercising such joint force headquarters in advance of a crisis, and what could be done to overcome those obstacles, in your view?

Answer. Our combatant commanders are appropriately staffed to manage day-to-day operations up to crisis. Prematurely establishing a joint force headquarters in contingency pulls resources from other global operations and activities. However, if confirmed, I will examine this possibility with the Combatant Commanders and Joint Chiefs.

Question. What new technical capabilities, processes, or concepts of employment do you think would be needed to improve our ability to achieve high levels of readiness for, and realistically exercise, such joint force headquarters prior to a crisis, or to rapidly establish in the event of an unforeseen crisis?

Answer. Our combatant commanders maintain a high level of readiness for establishing joint force headquarters and regularly exercise and test their ability to do so in advance of an unforeseen crisis. The joint force is always looking at emerging technical capabilities, processes, and concepts, and we regularly conduct joint exercises to help develop and improve processes as well as inform concepts. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to identify opportunities to achieve high levels of readiness.

2022 NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY (NDS)

Question. The 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) identified China as the “most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge for the Department” and stated that Russia poses an “acute threat,” as illustrated by its brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. The NDS also identifies “mutually beneficial Alliances and partnerships” as “an enduring strength for the United States.”

In your view, does the 2022 NDS accurately assess the current strategic environment, including prioritization among the most critical and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its allies? Please explain your answer.

Answer. The 2022 NDS was developed with the military advice from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Force. In my view, it accurately assesses the current strategic environment and articulates the position of the Joint Chiefs with appropriate focus on the PRC as our pacing challenge and Russia as the acute threat.

Question. The National Military Strategy (NMS) underscores the importance of “ruthlessly prioritizing” to ensure the right balance is struck between long-term modernization investments on the one hand, and near-term efforts to enable INDOPACOM and EUCOM to deter and counter aggression by our pacing competitors. In your view, are their examples that substantiate this assertion?

Answer. Yes, and I would be willing to discuss further in a classified setting.

Question. In your view, does the 2022 NDS correctly specify the priority missions of the DOD and the capabilities by which DOD can achieve its objectives in the context of the current strategic environment? What do you perceive as the areas of greatest risk?

Answer. I believe the priorities established in the 2022 NDS are correct for the current strategic environment and that China will remain the most consequential strategic competitor for the immediate future, while Russia, as a major nuclear power, still constitutes an acute threat. Our greatest risk, however, is our ability to continue to address the current strategic environment at a level needed to deter aggression while preparing for an uncertain future. I would be willing to discuss more detail in a classified setting.

Question. In your view, are the plans and programs of the Commanders of the Combatant Commands appropriately focused, scoped, and resourced to counter the threats and achieve the national security objectives identified by the 2022 NDS?

Answer. Yes. I believe the plans and programs of the Combatant Commanders are appropriately focused, scoped, and resourced to achieve the 2022 NDS national security objectives within acceptable levels of risk.

Question. In your view, are the forces of each of the Military Services appropriately sized, structured, postured, and resourced to implement the 2022 NDS and the Combatant Commanders’ associated operational plans? Please explain your answer.

Answer. I believe the Military Services can field sufficient, capable forces to meet the requirements established in the 2022 NDS. I also believe that their current posture and structure is appropriate to address the demands of the directed CCMD

operational plans, within acceptable levels of risk. I would be happy to go into this in more detail in a classified setting.

Question. Do you believe the Joint Staff has the requisite analytic capabilities and tools to support you, if confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in evaluating the Military Services' force design, force structure and sizing strategies, and requirements for acquisition programs, to ensure that each Service can and will generate forces that are manned, trained, and equipped to execute the operational plans associated with the 2022 NDS?

Answer. DOD continually strives to deliver robust analytics supporting future joint force design and development to meet NDS priorities. If confirmed, I will commit assessing and making any recommendations to ensure the Joint Staff has the capability, capacity and tools to evaluate the Joint warfighting capabilities of the United States, its allies and partners against those of potential NDS priority adversaries.

Question. Do you believe the Joint Staff has, or has access to, the requisite modeling and simulation capabilities and tools to support you, if confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in assessing whether the Combatant Commanders' operational plans can and will achieve the national security objectives identified by the 2022 NDS? Please explain your answer.

Answer. Yes, the warfighting modeling and simulation tools we have help assess and refine war plans in partnership with the Combatant Commands and Service Components. These tools help us determine the warfighting merit of operational plans and explore alternative approaches in pursuit of better warfighting options. It is through these comparative analyses that we better understand and refine operational plans; but none are predictive.

Question. In your view, are the Combat Support Agencies properly designated, structured, and manned to support implementation of the 2022 NDS and execution of the Combatant Commanders' operational plans? Please explain your answer.

Answer. Combat Support Agencies (CSAs) are designated, structured, and manned to support implementation of 2022 NDS and Combatant Command (CCMD) operational plans. As required by Title 10, the CJCS submits biennial assessments to Congress of the responsiveness and readiness of each CSA to support the CCMDs. While each assessment highlights areas for improvement, to my knowledge none have identified major shortfalls that require changes with respect to designation, structure, or manning.

Question. If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose to the missions and responsibilities (including geographic boundaries) of the Combatant Commands, better to implement the 2022 NDS?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the results of the congressionally directed independent review of the Unified Command Plan (UCP), to include recommendations on alternative UCP structures.

Question. If confirmed, what changes or adjustments, if any, would you advise the Secretary of Defense to make in the Department's current implementation of the 2022 NDS?

Answer. I have none at this time but, if confirmed, I will continue supporting the NDS implementation periodic reviews and if I think changes are required then I will advise the Secretary of Defense at that time. Concurrently, I will periodically review the National Military Strategy implementation, which details specific military policies required to meet the guidance contained in the National Defense Strategy.

Question. If confirmed, what would you do if you determine that the DOD cannot meet the demands placed on it by the 2022 NDS?

Answer. If confirmed, I will constantly assess demands and work to ensure our forces are postured appropriately, identify risks, and take steps to mitigate. I will also work closely with allies and partners to advance military interoperability and burden-sharing to help decrease risk globally and strengthen our ability to meet current and future defense challenges.

Question. If confirmed, what revisions or adjustments, if any, would you recommend the Secretary of Defense make to the 2022 NDS as a result of changes in assumptions, policy, or other factors?

Answer. Current Title 10 responsibilities for the Chairman include providing advice relating to global military and strategic and operational integration. If confirmed, my recommendation would be to ensure that the guiding policy documents including National Defense Strategy and Contingency Planning Guidance are aligned and reflective of strategic global integration. By doing this, I can ensure that the National Military Strategy and associated Joint Strategic By doing this, I can ensure that the National Military Strategy and associated Joint Strategic By doing this, I can ensure that the National Military Strategy and associated Joint Strategic

By doing this, I can ensure that the National Military Strategy and associated Joint Strategic

Question. How do you see the role of DOD within a broader whole-of-government effort to compete strategically with near-peer rivals below the level of direct military conflict?

Answer. The DOD performs an essential role in whole-of-government competition with near-peer adversaries through the NDS concept of integrated deterrence and campaigning to achieve enduring advantages. Integrated deterrence and campaigning requires the Department to align its policies, investments, and activities to sustain and strengthen deterrence, tailored to our competitors, and coordinated and synchronized with our interagency partners and allies and partner nations to maximize the effect. At the core of the 2022 NDS is the concept of Integrated Deterrence and Campaigning ranging from our strategic nuclear deterrent to our conventional activities that include annual military exercises, rotational deployments, civil-military engagements, professionalization of partner militaries, and security cooperation activities with our allies and partners. DOD forward presence and operations, activities, and investments deter adversaries to prevent crises from escalating into conflict. DOD also provides necessary support to the diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments of national power, backing those efforts through military diplomacy, strategic messaging, a range of military investments, and when required, the threat of force. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Secretary's guidance and provide advice on how the Joint Force can support a whole of government effort to preserve the peace and ensure security for the Nation and our allies and partners.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BUDGET

Question. In your view, are the programs and resources required to generate the capabilities necessary to implement the 2022 NDS properly prioritized within the Department of Defense? If confirmed, do you believe the Department needs to realign or refocus programs and funding, if at all?

Answer. The FY24 budget is strategy-driven and focused on executing the NDS. I am confident we have the right mix of capabilities and capacity to defend against current and future threats. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Department in aligning resources to strategy.

In its 2018 report that evaluated the previous NDS, the National Defense Strategy Commission recommended that Congress increase the Department of Defense (DOD) base defense budget at an average rate of three to five percent above inflation through the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP).

Question. Do you believe that 3–5 percent real budgetary growth through the FYDP is required to implement the 2022 NDS effectively? Please explain your answer.

Answer. What's more important than a specific percentage of real budgetary growth through the FYDP is ensuring that our annual budgeting cycle closely analyzes operational risk and is aligned to our strategy. Additionally, on-time appropriations enable the Department to execute its strategy with the resources required at the time needed to fulfill national security objectives.

Question. Looking forward, what types of resource shortfalls are likely to hamper the Department's execution of the 2022 NDS and other national defense priorities in your view? How would you address or mitigate these shortfalls, if confirmed?

Answer. The PB24 request adequately resources the Department to execute the 2022 NDS. Where I do see risk is in the possibility of a Continuing Resolution that will delay the appropriations of those resources and our ability to execute them. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Congress and advocate for on-time appropriations so that we may fully capitalize on the resources the American taxpayers are entrusting to us for their national defense.

Question. Section 222a of title 10, U.S. Code, provides that not later than 10 days after the President's submission of the annual defense budget to Congress, each Service Chief and Combatant Commander must submit to the congressional defense committees a report that lists, in order of priority, the unfunded priorities of the armed force or combatant command.

What are your views of this statutory requirement and the utility of unfunded priorities lists?

Answer. The Department relies on several tools to illuminate our joint priorities and develop a budget that is aligned to strategy. While the unfunded priority lists are required by law, they are not the only tool we rely on to build a strategy-informed defense budget.

JOINT OFFICER MANAGEMENT

Question. Do you believe current DOD and Military Service procedures and practices for reviewing the records of officers pending the President's nomination for promotion or assignment are sufficient to enable fully informed decisions by the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President?

Answer. Yes, in my experience as CSAF, the Services evaluate officer qualifications, past performance, future potential, and any available adverse or reportable information, and each service has a rigorous process in place to ensure all decisions are fully informed.

Question. In your view, are these procedures and practices fair to the individual military officers proceeding through the promotion or assignment process?

Answer. Yes. I believe these procedures and practices are fair and reasonable for the officers involved.

JOINT PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION (JPME)

Question. Based on your assessment of the threats facing the United States, now and in the future, what knowledge, skills, and abilities will officers need to succeed in great power competition against the Nation's adversaries?

Answer. Our education and training programs must provide an integrated approach to understanding joint warfighting and our adversaries from accession to senior leader courses for general and flag officers and senior enlisted leaders within the context of a rapidly changing character of war. Future leaders require the knowledge and skills to prepare them for service as joint warfighting leaders, senior staff positions, and strategists who:

- a) Discern the military dimensions of a challenge affecting national interest;
- b) Anticipate and lead rapid adaptation and innovation during a dynamic period of acceleration in the rate of change in warfare under the conditions of great power competition and disruptive technology;
- c) Conduct joint warfighting, at the operational to strategic levels, as all domain, globally integrated warfare, including the ability to integrate allied and partner contributions;
- d) Are strategically minded warfighters or applied strategists who can execute and adapt strategy through campaigns and operations; and
- e) Demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills, interpersonal skills, and effective written, verbal, and visual communications skills to support the development and implementation of strategies and complex operations.

Question. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to enhance DOD's JPME system to ensure that it fosters the education and development of a cadre of strategic thinkers and planners with the intellectual acumen, military leadership proficiency, and sound judgment to lead the joint force in a transregional, multi-functional, multi-domain "Whole of Government" environment?

Answer. If confirmed I will regularly review the program of instruction of each Service's War College, their Staff Colleges, and Senior Enlisted PME. We must develop strategically minded joint warfighters, who think critically and can apply military power creatively to inform national strategy, conduct globally integrated operations, and fight under conditions of disruptive change. To do this, we must create a fully aligned PME and talent management system that identifies, develops, and utilizes, joint warfighters skilled in the art of war and the practical and ethical application of military power.

Question. In your view, to what degree does the Secretary of Defense Strategic Thinkers Program, established by Directive-type Memorandum-19-001, add to the current PME system?

Answer. I think we need to delineate between "strategists"—those who can imagine and write strategy from a blank page, and the "strategically minded"—those who can effectively execute strategy through campaigns and operations. The former are rare and the new Defense Strategic Thinkers Program will help develop such individuals. The NDS language refers to the latter, the development of which is a responsibility of the larger JPME system. The inaugural execution of this program has promise, and if confirmed, I look forward to ensuring its success.

Question. In your view, how could the Department further increase the throughput of the current 10-week, in-residence course required to achieve JPME II accreditation, consistent with the need for training in joint skills in advance assignment to the Joint Staff or a Combatant Command, while enhancing the course's academic rigor?

Answer. I do not currently see a need to increase throughput in the 10-week resident JPME II course. If confirmed, I intend to assess the broader Professional Military Education needs of the Joint Force (from accession to senior leader education) with an eye toward rigor in all academic curriculum. I will seek to ensure the timing and throughput for curriculum align with the needs of the force.

Question. In your view, are there opportunities in JPME to improve STEM cognizance and cyber fluency across the joint force to ensure that leaders understand and can effectively employ technologies to fight and win our Nation's wars?

Answer. Establishing STEM knowledge is foundational to several of our PME institutions—the Naval Post-Graduate School, the Service Academies, and the Air Force Institute of Technology for example. Many of our officers enter service with excellent undergraduate STEM backgrounds. In recent years, all JPME programs have amplified student literacy in cyber topics. The war colleges are increasing the levels of student learning as the integration of the cyber domain in all-domain warfighting becomes more and more profound. Work remains to be done for understanding and integrating disruptive technologies. This will be one of my priorities for PME if confirmed.

Question. In your view, is there a role for JPME in developing basic product management skills across the joint force to ensure that military leaders are proficient in the employment of software and automation in warfighting?

Answer. There is absolutely a role for JPME in preparing our military leaders to understand how to fully realize our warfighting potential using artificial intelligence/machine learning and automation. Currently, JPME prepares our leaders to make sense of the future battlefield through intricate knowledge of how Joint Force fights. Without the professional knowledge our leaders develop through JPME, commanders cannot make use of the tools that automation brings to bear. At the same time, JPME must raise the automation acumen for our leaders to understand the non-physical side of the future battlefield.

LEGAL COUNSEL TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Question. Section 156 of title 10, U.S. Code, requires the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to be selected by a board of officers convened by the Secretary of Defense. To this day, the Chairman's Legal Counsel remains the only joint duty officer selected from among qualified officers of the Armed Forces in this manner.

Do you consider the board selection process required by section 156 to be an effective and efficient process for selecting an officer to serve in this critical joint position?

Answer. Yes, I believe the selection process for the position of the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is an effective, efficient, and equitable means to select an officer for this position from a pool of talented judge advocate leaders across the Services.

Question. What lessons, if any, have been captured from this joint process that could improve the selection board processes used by the Military Services?

Answer. I'm not aware of any lessons that could improve the processes for selection of officers in the military service. The process to select the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was informed by the best practices of all of the Services.

Question. Would you support expanding application of the process employed to select the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to other joint officer positions? Why or why not?

Answer. I do not see a need to expand our selection process to other joint billets. The current, well-established processes used to select general/flag officers to joint positions are sound. First, our process for identifying officers gives the Combatant Commander and the Chairman flexibility. We can select from across the Services (to include the Coast Guard) and the Active, Guard, and Reserve Components to ensure we get the right individual with the appropriate skills and experience. Second, the current process is efficient in that it gives the commander and other senior leaders an opportunity to quickly review a slate of nominated officers and conduct interviews as necessary. Finally, our process is extremely responsive to emerging or unexpected requirements. We can quickly alert the Services to identify eligible personnel, select candidates, nominate them, and have them in position in as little as 90 days, if necessary.

ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Question. The 2022 NDS underscores the importance of existing U.S. alliances and partnerships and considers these relationships our greatest global strategic advantage. Interactions with the Armed Forces of other nations are often conducted at the level of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to strengthen existing U.S. alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage new opportunities for international cooperation—in each Combatant Commander's geographic area of responsibility?

Answer. The National Defense strategy is a call to action for the defense enterprise to incorporate allies and partners at every stage of defense planning. If con-

firmed, I will continue to integrate our highly capable and frontline allies and partners into our planning efforts, operations, activities, and investments. Foreign language capabilities are a key component in allowing for the development of relationships and trust with our foreign allies and partners. Our Foreign Area Officers play a crucial role in achieving the National Defense Strategy objective to strengthen alliances. Including these capabilities in the planning process is key to ensuring integration and interoperability with our allies. I will personally continue to engage in regular dialog with my ally and partner counterparts to understand their strategic concerns and identify areas for cooperation.

If confirmed, I will ensure that our Global Campaign Plans include actions to strengthen alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage new opportunities for international cooperation. The Chairman of the Joint Staff, working in tandem with the Combatant Commands, is uniquely suited to energize our ally and partner networks to respond to such global security challenges. If confirmed, I will engage with longstanding allies, traditional partners, and look to expand relationships with new partners. This will be a priority of mine from day one.

In INDOPACOM, if confirmed, I will focus on modernizing our alliance with Japan by aligning strategic planning and priorities in a more integrated manner, enhancing our combined operating capability and deterrence posture with the Republic of Korea, and deepening our alliance with Australia through investments in posture and interoperability.

In EUCOM, I will continue to build and lead the coalition of allies and partners supporting Ukraine while working alongside our NATO Allies to deter, defend, and build resilience against further Russian military aggression.

In CENTCOM, I will prioritize cooperation with our regional partners that results in their increased ability to deter and defend against Iranian aggression.

In AFRICOM, I will prioritize working “by, with, and through” our African partners to build states’ capacity to degrade terrorist organizations and contribute to security and stability, supporting implementation of the Global Fragility Act.

In SOUTHCOM, I will take specific actions to remove bureaucratic and policy roadblocks in order to strengthen existing alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage opportunities for international cooperation and education.

NORTHCOM is a unique COCOM for partner and allied security cooperation. I will continue to nurture our bilateral relationship with Canada and continue our efforts toward NORAD modernization and improved coordination on security cooperation engagement worldwide to ensure our two countries efforts are complementary. I will also continue to foster the strong mil-to-mil relationship between the United States and Mexico, which has grown substantially under USNORTHCOM, to confront shared challenges.

If confirmed, CYBERCOM, SOCOM, SPACECOM, and TRANSCOM provide additional opportunities to strengthen relationships with allies and partner and leverage new opportunities in cooperation with the geographic COCOMs.

Question. What do you see as the greatest challenges for strengthening existing alliances and partners or building new partnerships, including for building interoperability and developing shared operational concepts? What are the primary tools at DOD’s disposal for addressing these challenges?

Answer. Information sharing is the greatest challenge for strengthening existing alliances and partners, especially when it comes to interoperability and developing shared operational concepts. If confirmed, I will promote a culture of information releasability within the Joint Force and champion to remove barriers to information sharing and technical cooperation with our highly capable and frontline allies and partners. The most effective tool that could be made available to the DoD to build interoperability are carve outs for pre-approval in the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITARs) for our closest and most capable allies.

UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND (AFRICOM)

Question. AFRICOM does not have any assigned forces and, as a result, is required to compete for forces in the global force management process.

What is your assessment of the availability and predictability of forces and capabilities to support the AFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan and other emergency requirements?

Answer. In alignment with the 2022 NDS guidance, AFRICOM has adequate allocated forces in addition to CONUS based regionally aligned forces ready to rotate into the USAFRICOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) to execute operations in support of the AFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan. Additionally, current posture allows for-

ward staging of forces to provide required operational flexibility and a timely response to emergency requirements.

Question. Are there any changes you would implement to the allocation or assignment of forces to AFRICOM, if confirmed?

Answer. Before providing any recommendations for changes to the allocated or assigned forces to AFRICOM, if confirmed, I will consider the Combatant Commander's requirements for forces and risk assessment of the strategic environment on the African Continent within the framework of the 2022 NDS guidance.

The 2022 NDS states that the United States will "accept measured risk, but remain vigilant in the face of other persistent threats, including those posed by ... violent extremist organizations. We will also build resilience in the face of destabilizing and potentially catastrophic transboundary challenges such as climate change and pandemics."

Question. Do you believe DOD has allotted adequate posture and resources to "remain vigilant" in the AFRICOM Area of Responsibility (AOR)?

Answer. Current allocated posture and resources are adequate to "remain vigilant" in the AFRICOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) with in 2022 NDS guidance. However, if confirmed, I will work with the AFRICOM Combatant Commander to evaluate requirements and requests for forces and assess risk based on the rapidly changing strategic environment on the African continent.

Question. What is your assessment of current U.S. approach to strategic competition in the AFRICOM AOR? If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose to DOD lines of effort in support of these strategies?

Answer. The U.S. approach to strategic competition in the AFRICOM AOR is adequate and in line with current NDS guidance. If confirmed, I will consider the Combatant Commander's assessment of the current strategic competition environment before making any recommendations for changes to DOD lines of effort in support of these strategies.

Question. What is your assessment of current U.S. counterterrorism strategies being executed in the AFRICOM AOR? If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose to these strategies?

Answer. I agree with the current strategy to disrupt terrorists in Africa in order to protect the United States Homeland and vital U.S. national interests abroad. USAFRICOM accomplishes this mission primarily by, with, and through African partners, European allies, and multinational organizations. USAFRICOM's approach reaffirms enduring U.S. security commitments while building partner capacity and capabilities toward a long-term goal of these partners conducting sustained operations with minimal U.S. presence and resources. If confirmed, I will consider the Combatant Commander's assessment of the current strategic competition environment before making any recommendations for changes.

Question. What is your assessment of the efficacy of the current United States strategy to compete against Russia and China to be the security partner of choice in Africa?

Answer. The current U.S. strategy focuses on building our partners, working toward shared objectives, operating transparently, promoting good governance, and respecting human rights, while highlighting that Russian and Chinese projects do not adhere to high standards and can come with unseen, sometimes negative, consequences. Our competitive edge lies in the quality of the equipment, training, and other security assistance we provide, and our commitment to relationships based on true collaboration with our African partners, which neither China nor Russia currently supplies.

Increasing the speed of delivery for commonly sought-after equipment, demonstrating our commitment and prioritization of African needs at a high level, and developing positive messaging that will resonate with African leaders' aspirations. I look forward to working with Congress to achieve these goals.

Question. How will you seek to engage with African partners on resiliency efforts as outlined in the 2022 NDS?

Answer. If confirmed, I will build upon existing resilience-related efforts that began after the 2022 NDAA, and that are supported through implementation of the Global Fragility Act. I will look for efficiencies and overlap between Combatant Commands, particularly between AFRICOM, SOUTHCOM, and INDOPACOM, to improve our unity of effort as it relates to challenges posed by climate and environmental change. These efforts foster trust among and are essential to our approach to build allies and partners capabilities to confront these shared are essential to our approach to build allies and partners capabilities to confront these shared

SOMALIA

Question. What is your assessment of current United States national security interests in Somalia?

Answer. Our current National Security Strategy directs a “secure Somalia free from terrorist threat to the United States, its citizens, and U.S. facilities overseas.” These interests are appropriate and drive our internal policies focused on protecting United States persons and assets overseas, while degrading VEO capabilities to execute operations in Somalia and against the continental United States.

Question. What role, if any, do you believe the United States should play in helping Somalia build capable security institutions?

Answer. To pursue our stated national security interests in Somalia, it is critical that the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) have a stable security environment, which is the foundation of a successful democracy. This must be enabled by professional, civilian led, security institutions who are not only tactically proficient, but also well versed in ethics and the rule of law. Our strategy to achieve this is through a “partner-led, U.S.-enabled” approach, where we will work “by, with, and through” our partner nations to ensure U.S. interests are safeguarded. To support this approach, the United States should continue to assist in building the capability and capacity of Somali security institutions to combat violent extremism and expand a stable security environment.

U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND (CENTCOM)

Question. To what extent does achieving United States national security interests in the Middle East require a continuous United States military presence in the region, in your view?

Answer. The National Security Strategy directs the Department to “retain the necessary American military presence in the region to protect the United States and our allies from terrorist attacks and preserve a favorable regional balance of power.” AQAP and ISIS originate in the Middle East, both of whom are responsible for attacks on the United States and our allies. Iran destabilizes the Middle East, threatening regional security through its proxy forces and desire to obtain nuclear weapons. We must maintain an adequate level of United States Military presence to decrease threats against the U.S. Homeland and U.S. interests and to help build indigenous security capability of our regional partners. If confirmed, I will continue to assess the adequacy of U.S. Military presence and make recommendations to support the CENTCOM Commander’s requirements.

Question. How do you view the National Defense Strategy as shaping United States Force posture in the Middle East?

Answer. The NDS force planning priorities of defending the Homeland, maintaining strategic deterrence, and prevailing in conflict all require a well-integrated force. As the Department’s deterrence, and prevailing in conflict all require a well-integrated force. As the Department’s deterrence, and prevailing in conflict all require a well-integrated force. As the Department’s deterrence, and prevailing in conflict all require a well-integrated force. As the Department’s deterrence, and prevailing in conflict all require a well-integrated force. As the Department’s

Question. What opportunities exist for increasing burden-sharing with United States regional and European partners to counter threats emanating from and affecting the CENTCOM AOR?

Answer. Our partners understand that in order to maintain their preferred strategic relationships, they will need to shoulder more responsibility for regional security. For the military, this is best achieved by building partner security forces through U.S. defense item sales and with training.

Coalition partners support Operation INHERENT RESOLVE and opportunities exist for increased burden sharing throughout all aspects of operations: defense, diplomacy, and development. Partner Nations could also share an increased portion of the burden for logistics, training, stabilization, humanitarian, and financial support throughout the broader region.

Question. To what extent do you view the CENTCOM AOR as important terrain for strategic competition?

Answer. With China as our pacing strategic challenge and Russia re-emerging as a strategic concern, the CENTCOM AOR will continue to be vital for strategic competition.

The CENTCOM AOR is the doorway to global energy supply for our allies and partners as well as China.

Multiple CENTCOM AOR locations control the flow of global maritime commerce and are key to China achieving its economically strategic one-belt, one-road initiative.

CENTCOM AOR military access, basing, and overflight enables the Joint Force to operate and project power to ensure regional and global security. These would be critical in times of conflict to rapidly re-supply or deploy the Joint Force as well as counter Chinese or Russian moves.

Question. In your view, how can the United States counter Russian influence in the CENTCOM AOR?

Answer. Countering Russian influence in the CENTCOM AOR relies on the continued capacity and capability of our allies and partners. While Russia continues to build a burgeoning relationship with the Iranian regime, the United States has opportunities to strengthen the capacity of our partners to limit susceptibility to Russia's predatory practices.

Continued efforts in innovation on the battlefield, multi-domain show-of-force exercises like Juniper Oak, and further development of concepts such as the Joint All-Domain Command and Control demonstrate the U.S. as a valuable partner that leverages multi-domain solutions to counter malign actors in the region. We do this in part by offering tailored and quality equipment through foreign military sales that liberate our partners from the predatory nature of Russia's military sales practices. FMS remains an invaluable tool equip, train, and build our partner forces so that they remain interoperable with the United States and our allies. Efforts to streamline the FMS process and make the FMS enterprise more responsive to our partners are critical efforts by the USG.

Question. In your view, can the United States counter Chinese influence in the CENTCOM AOR?

Answer. The United States approach to countering Chinese influence in the CENTCOM AOR relies on sustainable military posture, strengthening partner capacity, enabling regional security integration, deterring and countering threats, and ensuring freedom of navigation and the free flow of global commerce.

The U.S. leverages these strengths to de-escalate tension in the region, and counter malign influence while driving normalization between our partners and allies. The U.S. is postured to sustain its commitments to partners and address security challenges, including those related to the PRC, regardless of Chinese efforts.

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

Question. In your view, what are the current United States strategic interests in Afghanistan?

Answer. The United States has a vital national interest to prevent terrorist groups from using Afghanistan as a base for planning and executing attacks against the United States Homeland, U.S. citizens, and our interests and allies abroad. The United States must continue engagement with partner countries and support ongoing humanitarian assistance efforts to promote stability in the region. Our foreign military sales to partners in the region deliver quality military capability that outcompetes with Chinese equipment at every benchmark. FMS remains an invaluable tool equip, train, and build our partner forces so that they remain interoperable with the U.S. and our allies. Efforts to streamline the FMS process and make the FMS enterprise more responsive to our partners are critical efforts by the USG. The United States also intends to honor its commitment to help Afghans who stood by us during our military engagement come to the United States under available legal pathways.

Question. In your opinion, is the United States adequately postured to conduct effective over the horizon counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan? Please explain your answer.

Answer. Yes, the Joint Force remains organized to effectively conduct regional counterterrorism without U.S. Military Forces on the ground in Afghanistan. We leverage intelligence capabilities and partnerships to maintain understanding of terrorist activities in and emanating from Afghanistan. Since the withdrawal of United States Forces from Afghanistan, the United States has continuously refined its CT posture to maximize understanding of VEO operations and intentions, and we stand ready to take actions to disrupt any threats to our Homeland or interests abroad should it be required. We leverage multiple capabilities to maintain an understanding of enemy networks in Afghanistan. Key capabilities include Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance aircraft, human intelligence networks, and a coalition of partners in and beyond the region.

Question. In your opinion, has the Taliban shown the willingness and capacity to undertake counterterrorism efforts against ISIS? Against al Qaeda?

Answer. The Taliban has taken aggressive action against ISIS affiliates in Afghanistan. The United States Government continues to press the Taliban to meet their commitment to the Doha Agreement and prohibit any terrorist organization

from planning attacks from Afghanistan, including the remnants of Al Qaeda in the region.

Question. What do you assess to be the strategic relationship between the United States and Pakistan? Do you view that relationship as having changed as a result of the transition of forces from Afghanistan in August 2021? If so, how?

Answer. The United States military maintains a constructive relationship with Pakistani counterparts to counter extremist threats and promote regional stability. The withdrawal of United States troops from Afghanistan did not change the strategic rationale for our relationship with Pakistan.

Question. If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to United States relations with Pakistan, particularly in terms of military-to-military relations?

Answer. My objective would be to preserve the defense relationship between the United States and Pakistan in areas of mutual interest. We need to maintain military-to-military ties to address concerns and remain focused on regional stability and counterterrorism efforts.

SYRIA AND IRAQ

Question. What is your assessment of the current threat posed by ISIS?

Answer. ISIS was territorially defeated in March 2019. Since then, ISIS has worked to recruit and reconstitute its forces and capabilities. It has failed to do so. This failure is directly attributable to the ongoing efforts of the Operation INHERENT RESOLVE mission, our coalition partners, including the Syrian Democratic Forces and Iraqi partners who execute most of the C-ISIS mission. If the constant pressure of the C-ISIS efforts were to subside then I would expect to see an ISIS resurgence and increase in threat. ISIS still maintains its financial network, communications network, recruiting apparatus, and satellite cells globally. ISIS also espouses an ideology which remains strong with the party faithful, and this ideology still poses a threat that, without relentless pressure, could cause ISIS to resurge once again.

Question. What is your understanding of the current United States strategy and objectives in Syria?

Answer. The United States military mission in Syria remains the enduring defeat of ISIS and we continue to work by, with, and through our partners and allies. The current administration has identified four policy priorities to meet the U.S. objective for a political settlement to the conflict as envisioned in UNSC Resolution 2254:

- Sustaining the United States and coalition campaign against the Islamic State;
- Supporting local cease-fires;
- Expanding humanitarian access;
- Pressing for accountability and respect for international law while promoting human rights and nonproliferation, including through targeted sanctions imposition.

Question. In your view, should United States troop levels in Syria be tied to the achievement of certain conditions on the ground? If so, and if confirmed, what conditions would you factor into your recommendation to the Secretary of Defense on future troop levels in Syria?

Answer. The operational environment in Syria remains uncertain and dynamic. United States Forces have drawn down to a residual presence in Syria to maintain counterterrorism and security operations. If confirmed, any potential future troop level or capabilities changes would have to be assessed based on numerous variables to include regional security objectives, the existing and projected security environment, and sustaining the necessary relationships and partner force capabilities to prevent an ISIS resurgence and secure our enemy's enduring defeat.

Question. What is your understanding of current United States strategy and objectives in Iraq?

Answer. The United States strategy has sought the enduring defeat of ISIS and rebuilding of independent Iraqi Security Forces. To achieve these ends, the Coalition is currently helping the Iraqi Security Forces to consolidate gains, improve their military and security capability, and evolve into a more professional and representative force that is capable of countering an ISIS insurgency. The Iraqis have made great gains over the last few years. Now, with the newly formed Government of Iraq, we are continuing to advise, assist, and enable relationship with the mutually agreed goals of securing Iraq's borders, achieve sovereignty over its territory, economic self-sufficiency, and an independent security apparatus which can protect the people of Iraq.

Question. What steps would you recommend for continuing to normalize security assistance to the Iraqi Security Forces in the coming years?

Answer. If confirmed, I would assess a number of factors before making a recommendation to support enduring normalized security assistance to the ISF. These factors would include:

- Acknowledging Iraq's sovereignty and emphasizing the collaborative nature of the partnership.
- Transitioning to less Coalition assistance and increasing the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I) some of the Operation INHERENT RESOLVE advising roles, in addition to the more conventional security cooperation duties such as Foreign Military Sales, bilateral exercises, and International Military Exchange Training programs.
- Full normalization of OSC-I with robust permanent manning and access to stable, reliable funding streams that support long-term United States national security interests in Iraq.

IRAN

Question. What is your assessment of the current military threat posed by Iran?

Answer. Iran is the United States' most formidable conventional and unconventional threat in the region. Its primary military capabilities are missiles, naval, and unconventional forces. Iran has developed a growing arsenal of UAS, to include one-way-attack UAVs. Iran has the region's largest surface-to-surface missile (SSM) arsenal, including both ballistic and cruise missiles and mobile launchers. Some of the SSMs have a range of up to 2,000 kilometers. Iran's Navy is capable of only a limited menu of operations, but it is the Arabian Gulf's preeminent naval force and features many small boats and naval mines to complicate adversary freedom of movement in a conflict. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps—Qods Force (IRGC-QF) maintains ties to Shia groups across the region to advance Iran's interests. Proxies give Iran unconventional options for operations in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and globally. The IRGC-QF also has longstanding bonds with select Sunni groups, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad, HAMAS, and the Taliban. Regular Iranian ground forces continue to focus on internal security and territorial defense, while also deploying limited numbers to Iraq and Syria. Iranian military leaders probably recognize they could not defeat a modern advanced military, but they could impose significant cost.

Question. In your opinion, are United States Military Forces and capabilities currently deployed to the Middle East adequate to deter and if necessary, respond to threats posed by Iran?

Answer. Through an approach of "integrated deterrence" and growing relations with our allies and partners, the Joint Force maintains a posture adequate to deter and respond to Iranian aggression. Our strength in the region is built on our partnerships, expanding those partnerships, and our ability to move forces rapidly in a time of crisis.

Question. If the current situation vis-a-vis Iran continues to escalate, what off-ramps exist for "dialing down" the tension, in your view?

Answer. The Joint Force is postured to support military options for the President if tension causes an escalation with Iran, however, I defer to Secretary Blinken and the Department of State for any realistic diplomatic off-ramps.

U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND (EUCOM)

Question. The 2022 NDS highlights the importance of support for "robust deterrence of Russian aggression against vital United States national interests, including our treaty allies."

Is the current posture of U.S. Forces in the EUCOM AOR sufficient to support the NDS? Please explain your answer.

Answer. The U.S. Forces in EUCOM, reinforced by CONUS-based troops and alongside NATO, are prepared to execute NDS objectives and defend the Alliance against Russian aggression, should the situation dictate. However, there is no scenario in which the U.S. would act alone. The situation in Ukraine has been the greatest test of NATO cohesion and the Alliance has shown remarkable unity and resolve, a message that has resonated around the world with friends and adversaries alike.

Question. In light of Russia's unprovoked aggression toward Ukraine, do you assess a need to modify or enhance United States posture and investments under the European Deterrence Initiative?

Answer. The multi-year investments under European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) to increase our presence, participate in training and exercises, enhance our prepositioned materiel and supporting infrastructure, and build partner capacity have paid dividends toward our readiness, interoperability, and capability to rapidly

project power. This was demonstrated at the onset of the conflict in Ukraine when large United States formations were able to flow into Europe with ease, draw material, and integrate with existing C2 structures alongside the alliance. I foresee maintaining the pace of this initiative as it alleviates logistical burdens, enhances our responsiveness, and demonstrates our resolve to the alliance. The most impactful investment of EDI has been the United States' ability to draw from Prepositioned Stock Europe (APS-2) for timely delivery of material security assistance to Ukraine. Future and continued multi-year investments under EDI will ensure the United States remains responsive to our own National Security interests and those of our NATO allies and regional partners.

Question. In your assessment, does the United States have sufficient air and missile defense capability and capacity to defend critical infrastructure in EUCOM, such as command and control locations and air bases, against cruise missile attack?

Answer. First, the DOD has sufficient air and missile defense capability in the EUCOM AOR. However, in my view, the capacity is lacking in that it is not currently deployed in sufficient numbers to defend EUCOM's critical infrastructure against cruise missile attacks in large salvos. U.S. military capabilities, however, including Integrated Air and Missile Defense have improved in recent years through the European Deterrence Initiative and the Department will continue to invest in capabilities that further increase the survivability and resilience of the joint force and its command-and-control functions in EUCOM.

Question. What is your assessment of the deepening relationship between Russia and China, and how, is at all, should we modify our approach to such convergence?

Answer. On 4 February 2022, Presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin signed a joint statement, declaring their two countries shared a friendship with "no limits." Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United States has observed no discernible change in Beijing and Moscow's strategic partnership even as the international community has united to impose costs on Russia. While China does not openly criticize Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Beijing does openly blame NATO and supports the Russian war effort through economic, diplomatic, public support, and non-lethal military means. We must reinforce the norm against territorial conquest, as a key element of preserving global stability. While the security challenges presented by Russia and China are different, our best defense against a deepening Russia-China relationship is investing in multinational alliances and bilateral relationships with like-minded countries to foster and propagate our shared values and demonstrate the strength of democracies.

NATO ALLIANCE

Question. The 2022 NDS details how we will "collaborate with our NATO allies and partners to reinforce robust deterrence in the face of Russian aggression."

In your view, how important to U.S. strategic interests is the U.S. commitment to its obligations under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty?

Answer. The North Atlantic Treaty is very important to U.S. strategic interests. The U.S. must meet its treaty obligations as agreed upon in the Washington Treaty of 1949 (also called the North Atlantic Treaty). NATO is the strongest alliance in history, and it is as critical to our strategic interests and to ensuring the security of our citizens today as at any time since its founding almost 75 years ago. In the current contested security environment, North American and European allies must continue to stand as one, a united NATO against the threats we face. Our and our allies commitment to article 5 underpins NATO unity. It is the linchpin of deterrence and defense against adversaries threatening the United States Homeland and our vital interests in Europe. Putin thought he would defeat Ukraine quickly and expected his war would undermine NATO. The opposite occurred. NATO is stronger, more united, and better prepared. NATO's strength is our mutual trust, commitment, and cohesion to collectively deter threats or respond to attacks. This was reaffirmed at the 2022 Madrid Summit and enshrined in the 2022 (8th) NATO Strategic Concept.

Question. What do you view as the essential strategic objectives of the NATO Alliance in the coming years and what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges in meeting those objectives?

Answer. At the 2022 Madrid Summit, the alliance reaffirmed its essential strategic objectives in its Strategic Concept, agreed upon by Allied leaders. Namely, they reaffirmed NATO's three core tasks: Collective Defense, Cooperative Security, and Crisis Management. I'm aligned with these objectives and in my view, the greatest challenge the alliance faces is its aligned with these objectives and in my view, the greatest challenge the alliance faces is its aligned with these objectives and in my view, the greatest challenge the alliance faces is its aligned with these objectives

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NATO's nuclear policy states, "The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. NATO's goal is a safer world for all; the alliance seeks to create the security environment for a world without nuclear weapons." This point was most recently reaffirmed within the alliance's 2022 Strategic Concept, adopted at the Madrid Summit.

Question. Do you endorse the goals of the NATO nuclear policy? In your view, should NATO remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist?

Answer. Yes. NATO's nuclear capabilities date to the founding of the alliance and remain the core of the alliance's deterrence and defense policy and strategy today.

Question. Do you believe that the forward deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe is an essential component of NATO's nuclear posture?

Answer. Yes. As long as NATO is committed to remaining a nuclear alliance, it is important for the U.S. to maintain nuclear weapons forward deployed in NATO countries. These forward-based weapons contribute to U.S. extended deterrence, enhance assurance of our NATO allies, and demonstrate allies' willingness to share defense burdens.

UKRAINE

Question. What is your assessment of the key lessons learned from United States engagement with and support for Ukraine dating back to 2014? Are there particular elements that you believe will be critical for DOD to institutionalize so we are able to replicate successes and avoid potential missteps?

Answer. Russia's war on Ukraine has shown the criticality of alliances and partnerships, both within Europe and globally. Investing in alliance and partnerships now pays dividends when events call for a coordinated, international response, to address violation of national sovereignty in violation of the United Nations Charter, as Russia has in Ukraine. We must continue to work with allies and partners to deepen and strengthen our cooperation, which we have always done in areas of mutual interest and in a spirit of mutual respect.

The NDS highlights the need to develop defensive anti-access, area denial (A2/AD) capabilities in the European AOR.

Question. In your assessment, does the DOD currently have a mature joint concept of operations and the necessary capabilities in sufficient capacity to mitigate the challenge of Russian A2/AD capabilities? J5

Answer. Yes, the U.S., working with our allies and partners, maintains the most effective fighting force in the world, and we are prepared to achieve our national security objectives against any adversary, though not without risks. To maintain the necessary capabilities in sufficient capacity, we must continue to assess the threat posed by Russia, continue to update NATO defense plans, and continue to modernize force structure across the alliance.

Question. If not, what additional capabilities or capacity are required in Europe to ensure United States Forces are able to defend against Russian capabilities and achieve operational freedom of maneuver at decisive points?

Answer. We continually assess our global force posture to ensure we have appropriate capabilities in place to address the current and projected situation. I believe the systems and processes we have in place are ensuring our force posture in Europe is sufficient to achieve our current national and alliance security objectives in the theater.

U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND (INDOPACOM)

China

Question. The 2022 NDS describes the People's Republic of China (PRC) as "the most comprehensive and serious challenge to United States national security" and states "The PRC seeks to undermine United States alliances and security partnership in the Indo-Pacific region, and leverage its growing capabilities, including its economic influence and the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) growing strength and military footprint, to coerce its neighbors and threaten their interest."

Is the current posture of U.S. Forces in the Indo-Pacific region sufficient to support the NDS? Please explain your answer.

Answer. The Joint Force is modernizing its Indo-Pacific posture to support the NDS. This includes the establishment of 5th Generation fighter squadrons, the stationing of a Marine Littoral Regiment in Okinawa, rotational U.S. Army Multi-Domain Task Forces, and other initiatives.

Question. In your assessment, what are the priority investments DOD could make that would implement the NDS and improve the military balance in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. The Department works closely with INDOPACOM and our allies and partners in the region to ensure we are making investments that advance NDS priorities, close Combatant Commanders priority gaps, and improve integrated deterrence efforts across the AOR. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to advance investments that improve the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and address priorities discussed in INDOPACOMs required NDAA reports to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Question. What are the key areas in which each Military Service must improve to provide the necessary capabilities and capacity to the Joint Force to prevail in a potential conflict with China?

Answer. The Joint Staff is leveraging and implementing the Joint Warfighting Concept that builds upon emerging concepts of each Service to address potential future conflict with China. These ideas and methods are a roadmap for U.S. Forces, empowering us to shape and prepare the Joint Force for the changing character of war. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Service Chiefs to continue these efforts and will keep the committee apprised.

Question. What is your view of the purpose and relative importance of sustained United States military-to-military relations with China?

Answer. Our military-to-military relationships around the world are centered on reducing risk and preventing crises. Military-to-military engagements with China are designed to maintain peace and stability in the region. When China and the PLA operate in a manner consistent with international norms and standards, the risk of miscalculation and misunderstanding is reduced. With this in mind, bilateral military engagements with China should resume and include high level visits, policy dialogs, and functional exchanges centered on reinforcing the procedures necessary to reduce risk and prevent and manage crises.

Question. Should the United States revisit or change its “one China” policy, in your view?

Answer. The United States “One China” Policy based on the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), Three United States-China Joint Communiqués, and Six Assurances to Taiwan has maintained cross-strait peace, stability, and deterrence for over fifty years. I share the commitment of leaders within this administration to sustaining this long-standing, effective policy.

Question. In your view, how should United States joint concepts of operations, force posture, and investments adapt to address China’s military modernization?

Answer. We can adapt joint concepts and force posture by enhancing interoperability among branches of the military and with regional allies and partners to bolster deterrence capabilities. Additionally, we should focus investments on advanced technologies, such as cyber defense, space-based assets, and unmanned systems, that can help maintain a competitive edge. Carefully assessing force posture in the Indo-Pacific region and ensuring appropriate presence can deter aggression while maintaining stability.

Question. What should the United States do, both unilaterally, and in coordination with allies and partners, to counter the increasing challenge posed by China in the South China and East China Seas?

Answer. To counter the challenge posed by China, the United States must continue to participate in developing the economies, governance, and security of allies and partners in the region. In turn, as part of the whole of government effort, the Joint Force continues to support and develop the capabilities and capacity of our allies and partners through foreign military sales such as the Advanced Capabilities Program to support South China Seas claimant nations acquisition of asymmetric capabilities to monitor and defend their Exclusive Economic Zones and counter grey zone activities. Additionally, the Joint Force builds partner interoperability through multilateral and bilateral exercises such as SUPER GARUDA SHIELD, BALIKATAN, and KEEN SWORD.

Question. What is your current assessment of the risk of a critical logistics failure in any conflict with China?

Answer. Any conflict with China poses formidable challenges to the joint logistics enterprise. Joint Force leadership understands that a critical logistics failure could lead to the failure of the United States to achieve its national security objectives and they are actively working to mitigate this risk. If confirmed, I will continue our Department’s efforts to ensure that logistics challenges inherent to any conflict with China are addressed in operational concept development, access, basing and over-flight efforts, and resourcing.

Question. What is your assessment of China's increasing military presence overseas, including its base in Djibouti and other infrastructure projects across the Indian Ocean?

Answer. China is a strategic competitor that uses economic and security outreach in return for access to strategic locations, natural resources, and markets. Over the past decade, China has injected considerable financing across the Indian Ocean region, offering significant loans to strategically located countries such as Djibouti and Sri Lanka. Chinese interests include expanded access to Africa's mineral and other natural resources, opening markets, and naval facilities, any of which places United States influence and access to the region at risk. China's first overseas naval base in Djibouti near a strategic maritime chokepoint, for example, poses challenges for all international partners.

Question. The ability of U.S. ground forces to hold at risk adversary ships and aircraft; intercept missiles aimed at our ships, airfields, ports and other fixed facilities; and provide electronic warfare and communications support for our air and naval forces could enable the United States to present adversaries with our own "anti-access/area denial" (A2/AD) challenge.

What should be the role of ground forces in creating an A2/AD challenge for adversaries within the First Island Chain in the Indo-Pacific? What specifically should be the role of the Army?

Answer. Multi-Domain Operations require ground forces to contribute to the Joint Force's penetration and disintegration of adversary A2/AD systems. The Army has, and should continue to maintain critical roles in intelligence, cyber, space, electromagnetic warfare, long continue to maintain critical roles in intelligence, cyber, space, electromagnetic warfare, long continue to maintain critical roles in intelligence, cyber, space, electromagnetic warfare, long

Question. Do you believe the current ground force posture in INDOPACOM is adequate? If not, what would you recommend to bolster it?

Answer. I believe our joint force posture planning in the Indo-Pacific is sufficient to deter aggression, maintain peace and security, ensure a rules-based international order, and enable our ability to rapidly respond to regional contingencies and crises. However, we must maintain pace as the regional security landscape evolves and strategic competition intensifies. If confirmed, I will assess and continue efforts with allies and partners to modernize agreements to improve the Joint Force posture and access regarding Australia, the Philippines, and Japan.

Question. Do you support the Defense Posture Realignment Initiative (DPRI), including the realignment of some United States marines from Okinawa to Guam and the buildup of facilities at other locations?

Answer. The governments of the United States and Japan have discussed and aligned their respective defense strategies through various venues to respond to the increasingly severe security environment. To respond to this situation and strengthen the positioning of the U.S. Forces in Japan, the governments of the United States and Japan agreed to make necessary force posture adjustments during this past January's 2+2 Ministerial meeting, which upheld the main tenets of the 2012 realignment plan. If confirmed, I will take the required steps to support these force posture initiatives, in alignment with the 2012 plan, that will strengthen United States Force posture in Japan by making it more versatile, resilient, and mobile.

Question. What are the strategic implications of China's rapid modernization and expansion of its nuclear arsenal, and what approach should the United States take to address those implications, in your view?

Answer. Given China's nuclear trajectory, we will soon find ourselves faced with two nuclear peer adversaries. We must begin preparing for this challenge now. To do so, I believe we must continue executing our current nuclear modernization programs, evaluate sufficiency of current programs of record to fill any potential deterrence gaps, and engage China in discussions on strategic stability issues and arms control.

Question. In your view, with the rapid development in both quantity and quality of Chinese nuclear capabilities, does United States nuclear posture, and nuclear doctrine, need to change from its current construct based on a single near-peer nuclear strategic competitor to a new framework based on two near-peer nuclear strategic competitors? If so, how?

Answer. I believe our strategy must be prepared to evolve with the changing threat environment. If confirmed, I will work with key stakeholders to assess any changes required to our nuclear doctrine and posture to account for the changing threat environment.

Question. As Chinese aggression and nuclear capabilities both increase, do you assess that we have adequate military and national security crisis communication

channels with senior Chinese leadership to avoid or at least mitigate the threat of rapid strategic escalation?

Answer. DOD's defense contacts and exchanges with the PRC prioritize crisis prevention and management, risk reduction, and limited cooperation in areas where national interests align to advance a constructive, stable, results-oriented defense relationship with the PLA. Our competitive relationship with the PRC requires we maintain regular communication channels to prevent crisis and establish pathways for timely communications now so we can communicate with the PLA should a crisis occur. Attempting to establish those pathways once a crisis begins is too late. I support increased dialog that enables us to challenge PRC behaviors that are inconsistent with the free and open international order, gain insight into China's strategic intent, manage differences, and cooperate in areas where national interests align.

TAIWAN

Question. How do you assess the current cross-strait relationship between China and Taiwan, and how can the United States help prevent miscalculation on either side?

Answer. I'll echo the statements of senior leaders across the Department and administration: deterrence across the Taiwan Strait is real and strong. The most important thing we can do to sustain the status quo is to remain committed to our long-standing, effective policy on Taiwan.

Question. How do you assess the current military balance across the Taiwan Strait?

Answer. As indicated in our annual China Military Power Report (CMPR), China has been modernizing its military capabilities and investing in advanced weapons systems. These include aircraft carriers, anti-ship missiles, submarines, ballistic missiles, and cyber capabilities. The PLA has the ability to project power throughout the region and conduct operations near and around Taiwan. Taiwan's military capability and capacity, although growing, is much smaller in comparison to China's military.

Question. What do you believe should be the priorities for United States military assistance to Taiwan?

Answer. Pursuant to the Taiwan Relations Act and the 2023 Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act (TERA), the United States has multiple authorities to provide Taiwan with the defense articles and services necessary to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Priorities include providing Taiwan with the arms necessary to defend itself via foreign military sales and foreign military financing, as well as non-material support, to include capacity building, international military education and training and security cooperation. The Department has established a Senior Integration Group to find ways to accelerate capability delivery to established a Senior Integration Group to find ways to accelerate capability delivery to

Question. Do you think Taiwan is making appropriate investments in its defensive capabilities and if not, what changes would you recommend?

Answer. The Department remains focused on Taiwan's acquisition and integration of asymmetric capabilities and warfighting concepts, commensurate with our understanding of the PRC threat. Taiwan understands the PRC threat and is committed to improving its ability to defend itself. It has increased its defense budget and implemented significant defense reforms, including acquisition of necessary asymmetric capabilities.

Question. Some have argued that the United States should explicitly State that we would respond militarily to any Chinese use of force against Taiwan as a means to deter such actions. In your view, what would be the benefits and risks of such a policy change?

Answer. Under our One China Policy, we oppose any unilateral attempts to change the cross-Strait status quo by either side, and we expect cross-Strait differences to be resolved by peaceful means. We do not seek conflict with the PRC and are committed to maintaining open lines of communications to responsibly manage our competition under the One China Policy and in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act.

Japan

Question. What is your assessment of our military-to-military relationship with Japan?

Answer. The United States-Japan alliance is the cornerstone of our Indo-Pacific Security Strategy. It facilitates forward basing of our most advanced military formations and capabilities. This year is an inflection point as our national security and defense strategies are more closely aligned than ever before. With our shared goal

of a new era of alliance modernization, I strongly support Japan's updated national security policies including decisions to increase defense spending and acquiring counterstrike capabilities.

Question. In late 2022, Japan signaled a significant change in its defense posture with the release of a new National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and the Defense Buildup Program.

In your view, how can the United States best support Japan's defense transformation in line with its strategic documents?

Answer. There is important alignment between Japan's National Defense Strategy and the vision and priorities outlined in the U.S. National Defense Strategy, both of which underpin continuing bilateral efforts to modernize the alliance, bolster integrated deterrence through an adjusted posture laydown in Japan, and address evolving regional and global security an adjusted posture laydown in Japan, and address evolving regional and global security

Republic of Korea

Question. How would you describe the value to United States national security interests of the United States—Republic of Korea alliance?

Answer. For nearly 70 years, the United States-ROK alliance has been a core pillar of the U.S national security architecture in Northeast Asia. The alliance has successfully deterred the DPRK from large-scale conflict since 1953 and plays an integral role in managing regional security dynamics between South Korea, Japan, and China. The United States—ROK Alliance has also strengthened our collective security, economic ties, and societal relationships. Considering the unprecedented number of DPRK provocative ballistic missile launches in 2022 and 2023, the Alliance is even more critical to our national security interests.

Question. Do you believe the transfer of wartime operational control from the United States to the Republic of Korea should be conditions-based? If so, and if confirmed, what conditions would you recommend that the Secretary of Defense delineate as the threshold for transfer of control?

Answer. Yes, the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) should be condition-based. The United States and the ROK already have a plan in place that serves as the roadmap for OPCON transition. This conditioned-based plan ensures that prior to official transfer, the ROK has the required capabilities, and that the security environment is also conducive for the ROK to assume the lead of the United States-ROK combined command. If confirmed, I will review the conditions outlined within the existing plan before making any recommendations.

Question. In your view, are there additional steps that DOD could take to improve United States and allied defenses against North Korea's missile capabilities, including through trilateral cooperation between the United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan?

Answer. The United States, allies, and partners are currently well postured and ready to respond to DPRK threats. We are, however, working on strengthening trilateral cooperation between the United States, Japan, and Republic of Korea to better deal with the challenges posed by North Korea's growing nuclear weapons and missile programs. We are working on greater trilateral cooperation in the areas of integrated air and missile defense, intelligence sharing, joint training and exercises, and technology cooperation including cybersecurity, and electronic warfare. We are also pursuing initiatives that seek to build greater integration among regional partners in addition to trilateral cooperation.

Australia

Question. What is your assessment of our military-to-military relationship with Australia?

Answer. Australia and the United States have over 100 years of "mateship" and have been Allies for over 70 years. Australia is the Indo-Pacific "Fight Tonight" ally that provides significant defense integration for the United States. Expansion of United States-Australia force posture initiatives in the areas of air, land, maritime, and logistics enables exercises, activities, and further opportunities for regional engagement, including for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief response efforts. Australia clearly identifies the Alliance with the United States as its "single most important relationship." United States Force Posture in Australia, combined development of defense industry, logistics, and manufacturing, and improvements in information and technology sharing are all signs of the unwavering United States-Australia Alliance.

In 2021, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States announced the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) partnership with the objective of

helping Australia to acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines and increasing collaboration on a range of advanced technology initiatives.

Question. What are your views of the AUKUS partnership?

Answer. The historic AUKUS partnership announced on September 15, 2021, breaks new ground by bringing together three highly capable allies to take on the evolving current and future security challenges and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region. This partnership will enhance our combined military capabilities, strengthen deterrence, and forge a more stable balance of power in the region for generations to come. AUKUS elevates all three nations' industrial capacity to produce and sustain interoperable nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines and advanced capabilities and contributes to global security and stability in our priority theater, the Indo-Pacific.

Question. In your view, are there improvements, clarifications, or enhancements that need to be made to effectively implement the AUKUS partnership as intended?

Answer. AUKUS requires robust, novel information sharing and technology cooperation among the three allies. For AUKUS to succeed as intended, we must reform prohibitive policies and our approach to defense and military technology exports to improve the FMS process. In working with the State Department and other interagency partners, the DOD supports drafting new legislation to streamline export controls for AUKUS project areas and related bilateral defense trade. The most effective method for DOD to increase information sharing and technology cooperation is pre-approval in the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) for our closest and most capable allies. This legislation will help build expeditiously the capacity of the Australian submarine industrial base and advanced capabilities of the three nations.

The Philippines

Question. What is your assessment of our military-to-military relationship with the Philippines?

Answer. The Philippine-United States Alliance remains ironclad and has stood the test of time of over 70 years since our 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. Our military-to-military relationship remains a key pillar of this alliance, and under the 2014 United States-Philippines Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) our combined training, exercises, and interoperability between our forces is making our alliance stronger and more resilient and will accelerate modernization goals of our combined military capabilities. The announcement of four new EDCA locations shows recent progression in our bilateral defense relationship.

India

Question. What is your assessment of our military-to-military relationship with India?

Answer. India is a strategic partner to the United States. Our military-to-military relationship is robust and increasing in scope and sophistication. If confirmed, my strategy would be to continue to bolster the Major Defense Partnership with India by expanding our existing bilateral military-to-military dialogs and defense industrial and technology cooperation.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or "Quad" between the United States, Japan, India, and Australia is designed to uphold the international rules-based order, ensure freedom of navigation, promote democratic values, improve information sharing, and enhance technological collaboration.

Question. What are your views on the Quad and, in your view, how can it be more effectively utilized as a multilateral platform for addressing challenges in the Indo-Pacific region?

Answer. The Quad has emerged as a significant forum for mobilizing a collective commitment to peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific among like-minded partners. Members are increasingly willing to address security challenges, especially in the maritime domain. The Quad offers a platform to ensure Maritime Domain Awareness, transparency, and resilience across the greater Indo-Pacific. Quad member states, while increasing cooperation amongst themselves, bring significant benefit to non-member countries.

U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND (NORTHCOM)

Question. What threat, if any, do Russian and Chinese activities in the Arctic pose to United States interests?

Answer. Both Russia and China have increased their desires to exploit the opportunities of the Arctic. Russia has very clearly stated its claims over the Arctic region, to include the right to regulate Arctic waters, exceeding the authority permitted under international law, with the intent to enforce this through military

power. The PRC does not yet have an ability to project significant military power into the Arctic, but seeks to increase its influence there through an expanded slate of economic, diplomatic, scientific, and military activities, including its “Polar Silk Road”, with goals of constructing research facilities, and ensuring its access to new sea lanes and natural resources. Over the last decade, the PRC has doubled its investments, focusing on critical mineral extraction, and expanding scientific activities to conduct dual-use research with intelligence or military applications in the Arctic.

Defense of the Homeland

Question. What measures should be taken to ensure the integrity of U.S. airspace against incursion by foreign powers?

Answer. The United States must continue to invest in the sensor architecture needed to keep pace with competitors seeking to hold the United States at risk. Our competitors are developing capabilities that can evade the currently employed sensors. Against the continually evolving threat, new sensors, both terrestrial and space-based, are critical to maintaining airspace awareness, enabling effective defense, and ensuring the necessary situational awareness for national leadership. These new sensors, in conjunction with the current expansive network of airspace surveillance systems, will ensure our continued ability to detect threats from the surface to space. We are and will remain postured to respond to threats to the Homeland and must continue to invest in solutions for maintaining the integrity of our airspace.

The 2022 National Defense Strategy lists as one of the Department’s top priorities “Defending the Homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by” the People’s Republic of China.

Question. In your view, how have the challenges for Homeland defense changed as we compete strategically with China and Russia? Does the United States need to adjust its approach to Homeland defense to meet these evolving challenges?

Answer. The security environment has certainly changed, and the Joint Force is changing with it to defend the Homeland against the serious threat posed by the PRC, while continuing to account for the acute threat posed by Russia. The recently released National Defense Strategy reiterated that the Department’s number one priority is Homeland defense. The department is now, and will continue to evaluate, how best to protect the Homeland through a layered defense, building resilience in our capabilities and force, and building capabilities that enhance deterrence against any adversary’s belief they can achieve their goals by striking the Homeland.

Countering Illicit Trafficking by Transnational Criminal Organizations

Question. What is your assessment of the threat to U.S. security interests from the illicit trafficking across the United States-Mexico border by transnational criminal organizations?

Answer. The threat to United States National Security posed by illicit trafficking across the United States-Mexico border extends beyond traditional challenges and directly impacts public health and safety. Countering illicit drug trafficking is a whole-of-government effort that the Joint Force supports intelligence and with through detection and monitoring in support of interagency and Federal law enforcement partners.

Question. What recommendations, if any, would you have for strengthening DOD security cooperation with Mexico to address the threat from illicit trafficking by transnational criminal organizations?

Answer. Mexico is a vital partner in North America’s unified defense approach. The Mexican military prefers to engage with the Joint Force on traditional military missions and not internal security. The Mexican military partners with United States Federal law enforcement agencies to counter illicit trafficking inside Mexico. The Joint Force will continue our work and cooperation with Mexico to enhance domain awareness in the common defense of North America.

U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND (SOUTHCOM)

Question. What is your assessment of the nature and importance of security and stability in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility (AOR) for U.S. security interests?

Answer. Security and stability in the SOUTHCOM AOR directly impact U.S. security interests due to its geographic proximity and close economic, and cultural ties. Importantly, most of our partners and allies in the SOUTHCOM AOR are democracies with shared values on the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, and climate. Unfortunately, transnational threats, economic hardship, and malign foreign influence are eroding peace and security, weakening democratic institutions, and creating vacuums of power for malign actors to expand their influence. When

our neighbors are suffering from insecurity, repercussions are felt in the United States.

Question. What is your assessment of the threat to U.S. security interests from the expanding influence of Russia, China, and their proxies in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

Answer. There is no doubt that China is expanding its influence in the SOUTHCOM AOR. While most of the expansion has been economic and trade investment, China is also investing heavily in natural resource exploitation, 5G, energy, space, and critical infrastructure. Military expansion by China in the region has not been pronounced; although, they have increased their security cooperation and military exchanges. Of note, two countries in the region (Honduras and Nicaragua) have switched their diplomatic relations from Taiwan to China in the last 2 years, with only 6 (of 12 worldwide) regional countries (Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) continuing diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Answer. Russia continues to rely on its few allies in the region like Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela for influence and access. Both China and Russia have influential conventional and social media outlets in the AOR which allow them to spread their propaganda effectively to wide audiences. Additionally, if the U.S. is not investing in the region, countries will look for other sources of investment.

Question. If confirmed, what recommendations, if any, would you have for addressing the growing challenges from Russia, China, and their proxies to security and stability in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The U.S. must remain the trusted partner in the region. We must acknowledge Western Hemisphere countries' economic situation and not present them with an "either or" scenario. Countries can have constructive relationships with both the United States and China, while we must highlight the known dangers and disadvantages of investing with China. Additionally, if confirmed, I will recommend that the interagency remove bureaucratic and policy roadblocks in order to strengthen existing alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage opportunities for international cooperation and education in our hemisphere.

Detainee Treatment and Guantanamo Bay Naval Station

Question. Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in Army Field Manual 2-22.3, Human Intelligence Collector Operations, issued in September 2006 and DOD Directive 2310.01E, Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated August 19, 2014, and required by Section 1045 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92)?

Answer. Yes, I do support the existing standards and those outlined in the updated DOD Directive 2310.01E, "DOD Detainee Policy," dated March 15, 2022.

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure that DOD detainee operations and interrogations comply strictly with these standards?

Answer. If confirmed, I will do my duty to ensure that all DOD policies and plans related to intelligence interrogations, detainee debriefings, and tactical questioning comply with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the Army Field Manual on Interrogations.

Question. What concerns do you foresee with meeting the standards of health care for the detainees at the Guantanamo detention facility as that population ages?

Answer. I do not have concerns implementing the Secretary of Defense's policy on Medical Support for Detainees as outlined in DOD Instruction 2310.08E, "Medical Program Support for Detainee Operations," Effective: September 5, 2019, Change 1 Effective: August 25, 2021.

Cuba

Question. Under what conditions would you recommend the establishment of military-to-military engagement between the United States and Cuba?

Answer. Any military engagement with Cuba will be a political decision. The United States seeks a stable, prosperous, and free country for the Cuban people. If confirmed, I will support and provide advice on the United States Government pursuit of limited—engagement with Cuba that advances our national interests and empowers the Cuban people while restricting economic practices that disproportionately benefit the Cuban government or its military, intelligence, or security agencies at the expense of the Cuban people.

Venezuela

Question. What is your assessment of the current impact of the situation in Venezuela on regional security and stability?

Answer. The situation in Venezuela is having a significant negative impact on regional security and stability. Venezuela is in the midst of a humanitarian, political,

and economic crisis with food shortages and malnutrition, increasing poverty, widespread power outages, and increasing insecurity. Due to the dire internal situation, millions of Venezuelan citizens have left, with millions of immigrants and refugees stressing the support systems in neighboring countries. Colombia alone has accepted 2.5 million Venezuelan refugees. The vacuum of security created by ineffective governance and corrupt military and police systems has led to an increase in violent crime and transnational criminal organization power and influence, which has also spilled across the Venezuelan borders.

Colombia

Question. What is your view of the United States-Colombia relationship and the potential for expanding bilateral security cooperation?

Answer. Last year, we celebrated 200 years of United States-Colombian relations, and I am happy to report that the United States-Colombia relationship remains strong. We share many priorities and objectives with the Colombian government, and there is potential for expanding bilateral security cooperation along areas like border security; drug trafficking; peace plan implementation; women, peace, and security; climate change; and democratic institution building.

U.S. SPACE COMMAND (SPACECOM)

Question. The United States is increasingly dependent on space, both economically and militarily—from the Global Positioning System on which many industrial and military capabilities rely, to the missile warning systems that underpin U.S. nuclear deterrence. Our great power competitors—China and Russia—are engaged in a concerted effort to leap ahead of United States technology and impact U.S. freedom of action in the space warfighting domain.

In your view, does the 2022 NDS accurately assess the strategic environment as it pertains to the domain of space?

Answer. Yes. Intensifying strategic competition presents a serious threat to U.S. national security interests, including in space. We must be prepared to deny a potential adversary the ability to employ space-enabled attack capabilities that can hold our Joint Force at risk.

Question. In your view, what will “great power competition” look like in space and to what extent do you view China’s and Russia’s activities related to the space domain as a threat or challenge to United States national security interests?

Answer. Russia and China continue to improve their space weapons capabilities and better integrate space, cyberspace, and electronic warfare into both offensive and defensive military operations. They both have counter-space assets on the ground and in orbit today that will continue to be developed, exercised, and integrated into war plans. These increased capabilities will continue to threaten and challenge U.S. national security interests.

Question. How would you assess current DOD readiness to implement the 2022 NDS and U.S. strategic objectives as they relate to the domain of space?

Answer. DOD is taking significant steps to implement our NDS and national objectives in space. U.S. Space Command is working to sustain our advantages in space, engage with allies and partners, and ensure that space remains a free and open domain.

The Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA established the Space Force as the fifth U.S. military service.

Question. In your view, how has integration of space capabilities into joint planning and warfighting changed as a result of the establishment of the Space Force?

Answer. Space Force has become a great enabler to our joint planning and warfighting by dramatically improving the integration of space capabilities throughout our processes within DOD and across the Joint Force. Space Force continues to deliver trained space warriors and capabilities to maintain U.S. advantages in space.

Question. What is your view of the role, if any, of maintaining space capabilities in the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces to support joint planning and operations?

Answer. The Reserve component is integral to our space operations and joint planning activities. Army National Guard and Air National Guard and Reserve units deliver critical space capabilities to the Joint Force. Assuming the current model continues, this role will only grow as the Space Force matures.

Question. In your view, does the Space Force have sufficient readiness reporting practices and systems to support the joint force?

Answer. Yes. Space Force adequately maintains the readiness of space capabilities, including personnel and equipment, to allow USSPACECOM in coordination with the other Combatant Commands to plan and execute global space operations,

missions, and activities in the space and terrestrial domains which fully support the joint force.

The Chief of Space Operations is responsible for maintaining the readiness of space capabilities, including personnel and equipment, and the Commander, SPACECOM, is responsible for planning and execution of global space operations, missions, and activities in the space and terrestrial domains.

Question. What is your assessment of our defensive and offensive space capabilities to protect U.S. and allied space assets and terrestrial operations?

Answer. DOD will defend our national security interests from the growing scope and scale of counterspace threats. We will assure critical space-based missions by accelerating the transition to more resilient architectures and by protecting and defending critical systems against counterspace threats; strengthen the ability to detect and attribute hostile acts in, from, and to space; and protect the Joint Force from adversary hostile uses of space.

Question. What is your assessment of the current State of training and testing of offensive and defensive space capabilities?

Answer. We must build the infrastructure, processes, and procedures to make sure the Joint Force, and especially the U.S. Space Force guardians have the capabilities they require, whether it's a test and training infrastructure, simulators that can replicate adversary threats, and the interactions you would get with multiple units working together to solve operational challenges.

Question. Should there be a conflict in space or a related domain, what are your views on the importance of unity of command as compared to unity of effort between DOD and Intelligence Community assets, both in space on the ground?

Answer. The DOD and Intelligence Community each have distinct responsibilities and authorities in space. When it comes to protecting and defending our space capabilities, however, the two organizations must be in lock-step. USSPACECOM is our key element to integrate DOD and IC organization. It serves as the mechanism to provide not only unity of effort for DOD and IC assets in defense of our on-orbit assets, but to serve as a single command charged with the preservation of critical national capabilities with both military and civil objectives while taking advantage of DOD and IC unique authorities.

Question. In your view, how could SPACECOM exploit commercial and other less expensive launch options to allow for more rapid replenishment and on-orbit employment of vital warfighting systems, while minimizing the risk of mission failure?

Answer. Operationally responsive replenishment capability is a priority for the Department. The rapid growth of commercial space in cheaper launch and proliferated satellite constellations is very promising. U.S. Space Force, Defense Advanced Research Projects, and a number of defense organizations are working to take advantage of the opportunities we see in the commercial market. If confirmed, I will work with the Service Chiefs to ensure that warfighter requirements are met, regardless of the solution.

U.S. CYBER COMMAND (USCYBERCOM)

Question. United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) continues to be hobbled by serious readiness shortfalls. This problem is the result of multiple factors, including the demanding technical skills required for key work roles in the Cyber Mission Forces and the lack of prioritization of the cyber mission within the military departments.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to address this persistent readiness problem?

Answer. I fully support the 2023–2027 DOD Cyber Workforce (CWF) Strategy signed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. Kathleen Hicks, which sets the foundation for how the Department will foster a cyber workforce capable of executing the Department's complex and varied cyber missions. The strategy enables the Department to prioritize retaining highly skilled cyber talent by closing workforce development gaps.

If confirmed, I will support implementation of the CWF Strategy in coordination with the DOD Chief Information Officer (CIO), the Joint Staff, United States Cyber Command, and the Services to focus Department efforts on cyber-related human capital initiatives in support of the 2022 National Defense Strategy. This would include surging capabilities through our Reserve components and an initiative to maintain connections with servicemembers and DOD civilians who have separated allowing them to retain their security clearance gain access to additional professional development opportunities. Additionally, I would support USCYBERCOM's execution of its service-like authorities and roles, such as enhanced budgetary control, and acquisition authorities.

Question. What are your views on the appropriate model for ensuring that the cyber mission is adequately resourced and prioritized?

Answer. The Director of the National Security Agency is “dual-hatted” as the Commander of USCYBERCOM. The administration last year established an independent review of the dual-hat arrangement led by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford. The review found that the dual hat arrangement provided substantial benefits for both organizations and the Nation. I, as the nominee to be the CJCS, believe this arrangement to be an effective model to ensure a high level of collaboration and mutual support between USCYBERCOM and NSA.

Question. The Director of the National Security Agency is “dual-hatted” as the Commander of USCYBERCOM. The administration last year established an independent review of the dual-hat arrangement led by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford. The review found that the dual hat arrangement provided substantial benefits for both organizations and the Nation.

Do you agree with the conclusions of the recent review led by General Dunford on behalf of the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence?

Answer. Yes. The review’s findings were compelling and clearly articulated the organizational synergies gained and unity of effort granted to the Director of the National Security Agency/Commander USCYBERCOM through the Dual-Hat arrangement. Our experiences since 2018 demonstrated that we can work at the speed or relevance, with informed interagency support, to best serve our national security interests.

Question. The Director of National Intelligence’s annual unclassified threat assessment for Fiscal year 2023 warns that “If Beijing feared that a major conflict with the United States were imminent, it almost certainly would consider undertaking aggressive cyber operations against U.S. Homeland critical infrastructure and military assets worldwide. Such a strike would be designed to deter U.S. Military action by impeding U.S. decisionmaking, inducing societal panic, and interfering with the deployment of U.S. Forces.” It appears that China is not deterred from conducting widespread cyber attacks on United States critical infrastructure and it is unlikely that the National Cyber Mission Force would be able to block such attacks.

If direct defense in cyberspace against cyber attacks on U.S. critical infrastructure by a near-peer adversary is unlikely to be successful, how would you propose deterring such attacks if not by threatening some form of in-kind retaliation?

Answer. Deterring such attacks relies on the implementation of the National Defense Strategy and the concept of integrated deterrence. If confirmed, I would provide advice on how best to utilize all instruments of national power across all domains and working with allies and partners. While the U.S. is not constrained to answer a cyber-attack with a cyber response, the Department will continue to campaign in and through cyberspace to generate insights about malicious cyber actors, as well as defend forward to disrupt and degrade these actors’ capabilities and supporting ecosystems. Additionally, DOD will work with its interagency partners, leveraging all available authorities to enable the cyber resilience of U.S. critical infrastructure and counter threats to military readiness.

Question. Most activities taking place in the physical world are reflected in the digital domain and captured in some form. Increasingly, the actions of significant import are not simply reflected in cyberspace but are carried out in and through the cyber domain. Congress remains unsatisfied with DOD’s lack of visibility, understanding, and ability to operate effectively in this information environment.

Do you think that the Department can plan and conduct effective information operations (IO), intelligence collection, and military cyber operations in the information environment without comprehensive understanding of the cyber-social terrain in key regions of the world?

Answer. We acknowledge that understanding the cyber-social terrain in key regions of the world is critical to conducting effective military operations and believe that good understanding requires a whole-of-government approach. While the DOD has unique capabilities in this space, we often collaborate with Department of State, the intelligence community, and other executive branch agencies to develop a holistic understanding of the information environment. If confirmed, I will endeavor to collaborate with our interagency partners to improve the Department’s capabilities, work with our intelligence community to develop specific requirements and training to improve intelligence support to operations in the information environment, and continue updates to information forces tactics, techniques, and procedures to take advantage of the latest developments in both academia and private industry.

Question. What are your views on how, if confirmed, you could improve the management of the collection and analysis cyber-social terrain data in support of the planning and execution of DOD’s IO, intelligence, and cyber operations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure DOD intelligence and analytic processes are aligned to support the unique requirements of information and cyber operations. The volume of data related to cyber-social terrain is immense and the variables within the data are complex. Necessarily, the DOD analytic community is consistently refining its ability to identify variables of importance to help drive decisionmaking and allow the Joint Force to be responsive, agile, and effective.

Russia has conducted ambitious and aggressive cyber-enabled information operations against the United States and our European allies aimed at influencing election outcomes, and undermining democracy and collective security. Following the 2016 election, the U.S. election system and networks have been designated as critical infrastructure. Other adversary nations now also pose threats to the integrity of our elections and democracy.

Question. General Nakasone, Commander of United States CYBERCOM and Director of the National Security Agency has testified to Congress that election security is a “no fail” enduring mission for both organizations. Do you concur with that judgment?

Answer. Yes. Defending the election infrastructure is a whole of government responsibility to include State and local agencies. Each has roles and responsibilities that can enable the protection of technical infrastructure from foreign interference. This is critical to ensuring faith and confidence in the fundamental tools of democracy. The Federal Government provides support to State governments in fulfilling their elections security responsibilities, as appropriate with applicable law. The DOD and the IC must work with allies and interagency partners to detect and disrupt foreign malign cyber activity.

U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND (TRANSCOM)

Question. In your view, what is the role of TRANSCOM in supporting implementation of the 2022 NDS?

Answer. TRANSCOM is the engine that propels the 2022 NDS by ensuring the viability of deterrence options and providing our national leadership with strategic flexibility. TRANSCOM ensures rapid response anywhere in the world by conducting globally integrated mobility operations, leading the Unified Command Plan (UCP)-directed Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise, and providing the enabling capabilities to project and sustain the Joint Force in support of National Objectives. Additionally, TRANSCOM's role as the Bulk Fuel Single Manager will drive global synchronization across the Joint Petroleum Enterprise (JPE) for posture, planning, execution, and capabilities in support of combatant command requirements and national security objectives.

Question. What is your understanding of how TRANSCOM balances both organic and privately owned sealift equities to support the NDS?

Answer. TRANSCOM leverages the US-owned commercial ocean carrier industry to provide sealift in competition, crisis, and conflict. This capability is augmented by Reserve fleets comprised of vessels with secure, encrypted communication and navigation capabilities that are not available in sufficient numbers in the active U.S.-owned commercial industry. The organic sealift fleet can be used to access areas of increased risk that are restricted to contracted commercial vessels. TRANSCOM balances long-term strategic requirements against crisis response using the partnership of organic and contracted sealift to assure strategic power projection.

Question. In your view, should there be a central lead or global manager for contested logistics within the department?

Answer. As the global integrator, the Joint Staff is positioned to synchronize the Department's efforts regarding contested logistics. The Joint Staff works with the Services to align their investments in infrastructure, force design, and posture, and supports the Combatant Commanders as they engage with allies and partners.

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (SOCOM)

Question. In your view, what is the role of U.S. Special Operations Forces in supporting the implementation of the 2022 NDS?

Answer. SOF campaign globally and across domains to strengthen and sustain deterrence, supporting DOD's integrated deterrence and campaigning activities. SOF operations, activities, and investments can undermine adversary confidence that their aggression will succeed, shaping their decisions, and enhancing deterrence. The access, placement, and influence generated by SOF's long-term commitments to building partner capacity and improving interoperability provide expanded, low-cost options to gain awareness, shape the operating environment, and present adversaries with multiple dilemmas. SOF remain ideally suited to identify a competitor's

coercive activities in the “gray zone” and counter them with deliberate, credible options while managing escalation.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC))

Question. Section 922 of the fiscal year 2017 NDAA empowered the ASD(SOLIC) to serve as the “service secretary-like” civilian official with responsibility for the oversight of and advocacy for special operations forces. Among other reforms, the law defined the administrative chain of command for SOCOM as running through the ASD(SOLIC) to the Secretary of Defense for issues impacting the readiness and organization of special operations forces, special operations-peculiar resources and equipment, and civilian personnel management.

What is your view of the role of the ASD(SOLIC) in promoting civilian control over the military?

Answer. In my view, civilian oversight and control of the military is critically important to the Department of Defense and our Nation. ASD(SOLIC) exercises oversight, authority, direction, and control with respect to the special operations-peculiar administration and support of USSOCOM, including the readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. The role of ASD(SOLIC) is important for both SOF oversight and advocacy, and vital for the health and readiness of U.S. special operations forces. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening this relationship and coordination.

Question. What is your understanding of the organizational and administrative relationship between ASD(SOLIC) and the Commander of SOCOM?

Answer. ASD(SOLIC) is the principal staff assistant and civilian advisor to the USD(P) and the Secretary of Defense on Special Operations and low intensity conflict matters. The principal duty of the ASD(SOLIC) is the overall oversight of Special Operations activities within the Department of Defense, including USSOCOM. Section 167 of Title 10 places the ASD(SOLIC) in the administrative chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander, USSOCOM to exercise authority, direction, and control with respect to the special operations-peculiar administration and support of USSOCOM, including the readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. If readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. If readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. If readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. If readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. If

Section 127e and Section 1202 Activities

Question. Section 127e of title 10, U.S. Code, authorizes U.S. special operations forces to provide support (including training, funding, and equipment) to regular forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations for the purpose of combatting terrorism. Section 1202 of the NDAA for fiscal year 2018 authorizes U.S. special operations forces to provide similar support to forces or individuals supporting or facilitating irregular warfare operations.

What is your assessment of the national security utility of each of these authorities in the current strategic environment?

Answer. I see both authorities maintaining their utility for the foreseeable future. Terrorism and violent extremism remain a persistent threat to U.S. interests and our Homeland. A key challenge that we face is striking the right balance with our national security priorities to ensure we don’t overcorrect away from counterterrorism and lose the last 20 years of hard-won experience that we’ve gained. The authority provided by Section 127e is ideal to strike this balance effectively, it allows us to meet our counterterrorism goals of shifting the burden of operations to partners, reducing risk to U.S. persons, all at a sustainable cost that allows the U.S. to concurrently focus on developing new technologies and processes for conventional conflict.

Question. Section 1202 authority funds indirect action against non-terrorist threats, including State actors. It is a highly useful tool for enabling irregular warfare operations in support of the National Defense Strategy emphasis on expanding the competitive space to deter and defeat coercion and aggression by revisionist powers and rogue regimes.

If confirmed, what criteria would you apply to the evaluation of proposals for the use of each of these authorities, with a view to mitigating the risks associated with the conduct of counterterrorism and irregular warfare activities below the level of traditional armed conflict?

Answer. Section 127e authority, or its predecessor Section 1208, has existed since 2005, and over the years, the Department has developed effective criteria to ensure foreign forces do not conduct escalatory or inappropriate actions. Section 1202, while

modeled after the successful Section 127e authority, requires a careful assessment of benefits versus risk with respect to competition against adversaries below the level of armed conflict. Both programs involve comprehensive selection, screening, and vetting procedures for partner forces to ensure compliance with the laws of armed conflict. If confirmed, I will continue the high degree of scrutiny and oversight, in conjunction with the Department, to ensure these programs advance our aims while reducing risk of compromise or escalation.

Question. What is your understanding of the extent to which partner forces nominated to receive support under these authorities are vetted and monitored for human rights concerns, counterintelligence threats, and other potentially derogatory or disqualifying information?

Answer. I am committed to upholding the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and protecting the Nation against threats. While the Leahy laws, Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act and Section 362 of Title 10, do not apply to Section 127e or Section 1202, activities under these programs must comply with the LOAC and are closely monitored. The establishment of a new Section 127e or Section 1202 activity requires a detailed description of the activity including counterintelligence and force-protection screening, as well as a description of the steps taken to ensure that the recipients of support have not engaged in human rights violations.

U.S. STRATEGIC COMMAND (STRATCOM)

Nuclear Policy

Question. The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reaffirmed long-held American doctrine that includes limiting the use of nuclear weapons to “extreme circumstances” and the need to maintain the Nation’s nuclear triad of land-, sea-, and air-based capabilities.

201. How does the 2022 NPR fit within the framework of the 2022 NDS, in your view?

Answer. I believe the 2022 NPR appropriately reinforced decades of stability in U.S. nuclear policy even as it seeks to incorporate nuclear deterrence in the broader integrated deterrence framework from the 2022 NDS.

Question. What is your understanding of the role of nuclear weapons and the importance of nuclear deterrence to U.S. national security and the defense of allies?

Answer. As stated in the 2022 NDS and 2022 NPR, our nuclear mission undergirds and is foundational to all our defense priorities and it remains indispensable to our national security. In a dynamic security environment, a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent is foundational to broader U.S. defense strategy and the extended deterrence commitments we have made to allies and partners.

Question. Do you agree with the assessment of the past five Secretaries of Defense that nuclear deterrence is DOD’s highest priority mission and that modernizing our Nation’s nuclear forces is a critical national security priority? Please explain your answer.

Answer. Yes. Nuclear weapons pose the only existential military threat to the Homeland, and ensuring the U.S. maintains credible and effective nuclear forces is critical to deterring nuclear-armed adversaries. Our ability to execute the nuclear deterrence mission underpins our ability to successfully conduct other DOD operations in support of our national security interests.

Question. What are your views on deterrence now that the United States facing the prospect of simultaneously deterring two nuclear-armed peer competitors in Russia and China?

Answer. We are facing heightened nuclear competition with Russia and the pace and scope of the PRC’s nuclear expansion will present new strategic dilemmas, but I do not believe that fundamentally changes how deterrence works. By maintaining credible and effective United States nuclear forces, we seek to deter aggression from both Russia and China.

Question. What is your understanding of how Russia and China have expanded and modernized their nuclear force capabilities?

Answer. China is rapidly expanding their stockpile of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, while Russia is expending limited resources to modernize their strategic nuclear forces and maintain a large stockpile of tactical systems. While Russia remains the most capable and diverse nuclear rival, China’s increasing capability is a growing threat to the United States and our allies and partners.

Question. In your view, do these capabilities pose an increasing threat to the United States and its allies?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you believe Russia has or is willing to employ nuclear coercion as a means of advancing its military and foreign policy goals?

Answer. Yes, based on what we've already observed, I believe Russia has already attempted multiple times to coerce Ukraine and United States partners and allies into submitting to Putin's objectives. Therefore, we must continue to be prepared to respond to further irresponsible behavior by Russia.

Question. Do you agree with DOD's assessment that China intends to double or triple the size of its nuclear arsenal over the next decade?

Answer. Yes, over several years, we have seen China make substantial investments in its nuclear arsenal that are expected to significantly expand PRC's nuclear weapons stockpile, their means of delivery, and overall strategic deterrence capabilities. These investments are ongoing, are expected to continue, and are consistent with the PRC's stated goal of improving their forces to that of a "world-class military."

Question. Do you believe that as China completes its build out of a triad of delivery platforms it will adhere to the full meaning of "no first use"?

Answer. No. China's lack of transparency and refusal to engage in meaningful dialog while expanding both scale and scope of nuclear forces increases uncertainty over China's intentions.

Question. What do you see as the major changes in the threat landscape between the 2010, 2018 and 2022 Nuclear Posture Reviews?

Answer. The threat environment has grown increasingly complex since 2010, and even since 2018. I believe China's rapid military expansion and modernization, to include its nuclear forces, represents the most significant change in the threat landscape since the 2018 NPR.

Question. Do you support the U.S. nuclear force structure recommended by the 2022 NPR? If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to that force structure?

Answer. Yes. The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) affirmed the U.S. commitment to full-scope modernization of our nuclear forces, including all three legs of the U.S. strategic triad, dual-capable fighter aircraft, and nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) systems. If confirmed, I will examine whether additional options for the President are warranted to address any exploitable "gap(s)" in our deterrence capabilities.

Question. Do you believe U.S. extended nuclear deterrence assurances are effective in reassuring allies that they do not need to pursue their own nuclear arsenals to ensure their national security?

Answer. Yes. We recognize growing concerns about nuclear and missile developments in the PRC, North Korea, and Russia, and are committed to strengthening deterrence in ways that are responsive to changes in the regional security environment. Toward that end, we will work with allies and partners to ensure an effective mix of capabilities, concepts, deployments, exercises, and tailored options to deter and, if necessary, respond to coercion and aggression.

Question. Do you believe that the risk of nuclear proliferation will increase if U.S. allies lose confidence in our extended nuclear deterrence assurances?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What is your understanding of the State of U.S. nuclear forces, its global nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) architecture, and the supporting weapons sustainment and production capabilities within the National Nuclear Security Administration?

Answer. Although our nuclear forces and existing NC3 architecture are safe, secure, and effective, we have greatly exceeded their intended design life, and they are showing their age. Deferred modernization has removed margin and there is no longer room for delay. This is further challenged by atrophy in both the DOD industrial base for nuclear delivery platforms and NNSA production capabilities and infrastructure, some of which date back to the Manhattan Project.

Question. Do you agree that modernizing each leg of the nuclear triad and the Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons complex is a critical national security priority?

Answer. Yes. Maintaining the nuclear triad is of vital national importance to deter adversaries, assure allies and, if necessary, achieve military objectives. However, the delivery platforms and nuclear warheads of each leg of the nuclear triad are near end-of-life and require replacement with modern capabilities. Fielding modern nuclear weapons requires the recapitalization of the DOE/NNSA nuclear weapons production infrastructure that was largely abandoned and at has largely atrophied since the end of the cold war.

Question. Do you believe the current program of record is sufficient to support the full modernization of the nuclear triad, including delivery systems, warheads, and infrastructure?

Answer. The existing nuclear force was designed in the last decades of the cold war when the U.S. faced a very different threat environment. While the current program of record is sufficient to modernize the existing nuclear force, that plan is increasingly challenged to succeed in a timely manner. If confirmed, I intend to consult key stakeholders to understand whether we should pursue additional capabilities for our nuclear forces and enterprise.

Question. The previous Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with the current Vice Chairman, the Chief of Naval Operations, and several Combatant Commanders have stated that they support the continued development of a nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile as a means of addressing Russia's advantages in theater-range nuclear weapons, managing escalation in a potential conflict with China, and enhancing assurance to United States allies. Do you agree with these views?

Answer. I believe we must maintain a range of strategic military options and capabilities to present to the President. If confirmed, I will be able to more fully review how we can continuously improve our ability to deter and, if deterrence fails, restore deterrence, against our nuclear adversaries. I am aware of differing perspectives regarding the nuclear armed sea launched cruise missile. If confirmed, I will analyze the arguments for and against this program and will provide my military advice to the Secretary and President.

Question. What are your ideas for working across the Joint Force to mitigate the risk that all three legs of the nuclear triad will "age out" simultaneously at the end of the 2020's?

Answer. I agree with the 2022 NPR direction for DOD and the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA) to develop and implement a risk management strategy to identify, prioritize, and recommend actions across the portfolio of nuclear programs. This is essential for monitoring the overall health of the nuclear deterrent as we sustain current capabilities and transition to modernized systems.

Question. Do you believe a nuclear "No First Use" or "Sole Purpose" policy would be appropriate for the United States? Please explain your answer.

Answer. No. As the 2022 NPR concluded, a No First Use or Sole Purpose policy would result in an unacceptable level of risk in light of the range of non-nuclear capabilities being developed and fielded by competitors that could inflict strategic-level damage to the United States and its Allies and partners.

Question. In your view, does the Stockpile Stewardship Program provide the tools necessary to ensure the safety and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile without testing? If not, what tools are needed?

Answer. Yes, the rigorous Stockpile Stewardship Program has developed the computational and experimental tools needed to certify the current stockpile without the need for full-scale nuclear weapons testing. However, fielding modern nuclear forces would benefit from enhanced computing and experimental capabilities, including an enduring exascale computing and experimental facilities to certify weapons in hostile environments. Continued support for the National Laboratories is crucial for the viability of the Stockpile Stewardship mission.

Question. Do you perceive utility in the work of the Council on Oversight of the National Leadership Command, Control, and Communications System? Please explain your answer.

Answer. Yes, there is utility in the work of the Council and its various governance forums. The utility lies in unifying efforts across the Department for sustaining and modernizing senior leader, nuclear command and control, and continuity of government communications.

Arms Control

Question. What are your views of the New START Treaty, taking into account Russia's recent actions to suspend participation in the Treaty?

Answer. To date, New START has contributed to bilateral stability by limiting the offensive strategic arms it addresses. However, New START does not address Russia's large and growing arsenal of non-accountable nuclear weapons and novel nuclear systems. In addition, Russia's violations of the New START Treaty, and its claimed suspension of the treaty, greatly undermine the viability of the treaty. Mutual compliance with New START would strengthen the security of the United States, our allies and partners, Russia, and the world.

Question. What do you see as the major challenges for negotiating a follow on treaty with Russia, and would you support United States participation in such a negotiation?

Answer. I support diplomatic efforts that contribute to national security and in particular this effort to pursue arms control agreements capturing the full scope of

Russian nuclear capabilities, including their non-strategic nuclear weapons and novel nuclear systems that are not currently the subject of arms control agreement. Any such agreements must be verifiable, enforceable, and enhance the security of our Nation and our allies and partners. Russia's noncompliance with many arms control arrangements—including the New START Treaty, Treaty on Open Skies, and INF Treaty—casts a shadow over and creates challenges for any potential negotiations that would lead to a follow-on agreement to replace the New START Treaty when it expires in February 2026.

Question. What are your views on the asymmetry in the number of non-strategic weapons between Russia and the United States and should they be accounted for in any follow-on treaty?

Answer. I am concerned by Russia's approximately 2,000 non-strategic nuclear weapons that are not numerically constrained by any arms control treaty. They should be accounted for in any follow-on treaty with Russia.

Question. What are your views on missile defense and nuclear arms control with either Russia or China?

Answer. The increasing capabilities of peer and near-peer nuclear states demonstrates the importance of missile defense and the need for continued investment. As important and if not more so, the United States will continue to rely on strategic deterrence—underwritten by a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal—to address and deter large intercontinental-range, nuclear capable missile threats to the Homeland from Russia and China.

Question. In your assessment, how would delaying or canceling current nuclear modernization plans and programs affect our arms control negotiation leverage with near-peer and peer competitors?

Answer. Delaying or canceling current nuclear modernization plans and programs on a unilateral basis would reduce our strategic deterrence and arms control leverage with Russia and China.

Question. What do you see as the major challenges for any nuclear risk reduction or arms control negotiations with China?

Answer. China continues to deny it is conducting a crash nuclear buildup and reject calls for even modest nuclear risk reduction measures. China needs to be more transparent about its nuclear forces. Any such agreement with China must be verifiable, enforceable, and enhance the security of our Nation and our allies and partners. I expect transparency, verification, and the security of our Nation and our allies and partners. I expect transparency, verification, and

Missile Defense

Question. The United States enjoys a measure of protection against ballistic missile threats from rogue nations like North Korea and Iran, but the threat from Russian and Chinese ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missiles against United States forces, allies, and the United States Homeland continues to grow. The 2022 Missile Defense Review (MDR) codified existing policy on missile defense and endorsed follow-on actions to improve U.S. capability.

What are your views on the relationship between missile defense and nuclear deterrence?

Answer. I agree with and support the 2022 Missile Defense Review's assertion that our missile defense system is designed to deter aggression from rogue states. We rely on a whole-of-government effort to defeat missile technology for all adversaries while raising the threshold of escalation by maintaining a credible kinetic defense. The increasing capabilities of peer and near-peer nuclear states will challenge our limited kinetic missile defenses, however, our nuclear deterrent continues to underpin our missile defense efforts.

Question. If confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, what would be your priorities for U.S. missile defense capabilities for the Homeland?

Answer. If confirmed, my priorities would be aligned with priorities set by the Missile Defense Review for Homeland missile defense. The first priority remains protecting the Homeland from an adversary ICBM attack. The Ground-Based Mid-course-Defense system contributes directly to the U.S. deterrence strategies for rogue State ICBM threats to the Homeland and would defend against an ICBM attack. Per the NDS, another key priority remains defense of the Homeland against cruise missile threats. We must continue to modernize and develop both Active and passive defense capabilities that enhance protection of the Homeland against cruise missile threats.

Question. Do you support a cruise missile defense of the Homeland?

Answer. Yes. The Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force and NORTHCOM have been working on a comprehensive plan to strengthen our Homeland against air and cruise missile threats in the continental United States, Hawaii,

Alaska, and Guam. We're taking a hard look at the changing threat environment as we transition away from a focus on violent extremists and returning our attention to states with greater reach with advanced missile systems. The Missile Defense Review prioritizes the examination of Active and passive defense measures to decrease the risk of any cruise missile strike against critical assets, regardless of origin.

Question. Do you believe the United States ground-based interceptor fleet is appropriately sized to address potential ICBM threats from North Korea or other rogue nations?

Answer. The Joint Requirements Oversight Council and the Missile Defense Executive Board review this requirement every year. Our current fleet of Ground Based Interceptors is adequate against the existing North Korean threat, and our planned upgrade to the Next Generation Interceptor and modest increase to the number of interceptors in the fleet should be sufficient to defeat a limited attack. If confirmed, I will support continuing these annual reviews to assess and required changes in the ground-based interceptor fleet.

Question. In your view, do you believe missile defense policy should be limited to countering only rogue nations, such as North Korea and Iran?

Answer. I support the Missile Defense Review stipulation that the United States maintains the right to defend itself against attacks from any source, but GMD is neither intended for, nor capable of, defeating large and sophisticated ICBM, air, or sea-launched ballistic missile threats from PRC or Russia. Our strategic deterrence addresses these threats.

Question. If so, what role do you believe integrated air and missile defenses should play in defending limited areas and defeating smaller scale cruise or hypersonic glide missile attacks by larger threats, such as Russia and China?

Answer. The Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force and NORTHCOM have been working on a comprehensive plan to strengthen our Homeland against air and cruise missile threats in the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, and Guam. The Department will continue to develop Active and passive defenses against regional hypersonic missile threats and pursue a persistent and resilient sensor network to characterize and track all hypersonic threats, improve attribution, and enable engagement. Integrated air and missile defense of the Homeland is vital to our resiliency at home and to our ability to project power abroad in support of allies and partners.

Question. Do you support the Next Generation Interceptor?

Answer. As North Korean ballistic missile threats to the United States Homeland continue to evolve, the United States is committed to, and I support improving the capability and reliability of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system. This includes development of the Next Generation Interceptor to augment and eventually replace the existing Ground-Based Interceptors. In addition to the GMD system, the United States will leverage and improve its full spectrum of passive and Active missile defeat capabilities, complemented by the credible threat of direct cost imposition through nuclear and non-nuclear means, to continue to counter North Korean missile threats to the Homeland.

Question. Do you support the Next Generation Interceptor eventually replacing the existing 44 ground-based interceptors?

Answer. In support of the Homeland missile defense mission, continuous modernization and modest expansion of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system will remain an essential element of our comprehensive missile defeat approach. I support replacing the existing Ground-based Interceptors with Next-Generation Interceptors, expanding the arsenal of interceptors, and leveraging the full spectrum of current and emerging missile defeat capabilities supports this approach and hedges against future uncertainty in missile threats against the Homeland.

Question. What are your views on the advisability of building a second Homeland missile defense site on the eastern coast of the United States?

Answer. Currently, the Ground-based Missile Defense (GMD) sites in Alaska and California provide protection of all the United States against both North Korean and any future Iranian intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) threats. This protection will be strengthened as the Next Generation Interceptor comes online later this decade. At this time, there is no operational requirement for a strategic missile defense site on the eastern coast. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor advances in adversary capabilities, and if necessary, will assess the feasibility of enhancing our protection to ensure our defenses remain strategically worthwhile.

Question. What is your understanding of U.S. capabilities for defending against maneuvering hypersonic glide vehicles?

Answer. Maneuvering missiles, such as hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV), present a challenge to existing defensive systems because they can travel on unpredictable

flight paths at low altitudes making them difficult to track using standard terrestrial radar systems. If confirmed, I will continue to seek out asymmetric means of defeating hypersonic threats to create cost imposition within the framework of integrated deterrence.

Question. Recently, the Missile Defense Agency indicated that the Glide Phase Interceptor program for hypersonic defense would not reach initial operational capability until after 2035. Do you believe this timeline is sufficient to meet current and anticipated hypersonic threats?

Answer. The United States would always prefer capabilities delivered sooner rather than later. I will ensure we work closely with MDA and other stakeholders to prioritize and continually look to create efficiencies within these efforts. I appreciate the GAO report from June 2023 that examines counter-hypersonic capabilities such as the Glide Phase Interceptor and the Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor. Hypersonic glide vehicles delivered by missile boosters are an emerging and existing threat that pose new challenges to missile defense systems. Consequently, the continued investment in development of long range and resilient sensor technologies and capabilities, to include those that could support a space sensor network, is essential for tracking and engaging advanced missile threats. When mature, intercepting in the glide phase would become part of the overall Department strategy for hypersonic defeat; however, we will continue to seek many types of detect, track, and defeat solutions, to include terminal solutions, Active and passive solutions, kinetic and non-kinetic solutions.

Question. Do you support a space-based sensor layer for improved tracking and targeting of advanced threats such as hypersonic missiles?

Answer. Yes, space-based sensors can monitor, detect, and track missile launches from locations almost anywhere on the globe unimpeded by the constraints that geographic limitations impose on terrestrial sensors. Active U.S. missile defense will require advanced technologies to provide greater efficiencies for U.S. Active missile defense capabilities, to include space-based sensors and boost-phase defense capabilities. The exploitation of space provides a missile defense posture that is more effective, resilient, and adaptable.

Question. What are your views on the efficacy of boost-phase intercept and space-based intercept or directed energy programs?

Answer. I assess that the efficacy of boost-phase intercept, space-based intercept and directed energy programs is still an open question. While these concepts have great potential, the Department is exploring how to best resolve the challenges associated with developing and fielding these capabilities. For example, prototype directed energy weapons are, or are in the process of, being tested and fielded against small Uncrewed Aerial Systems (sUAS) and on an experimental basis for defense against cruise missiles, although the systems are neither space-based nor for boost-phase intercept. There will be challenges in creating these programs on the scale to provide robust coverage of threat areas, and if confirmed I will remain involved in operational discussions with senior Department leadership to ensure a thorough examination of these concepts.

Question. Has DOD developed and implemented operational concepts, plans, and policies appropriate to the governance and utilization of such programs? What would you do to address this issue, if confirmed?

Answer. In line with the Joint Warfighting Concept, the DOD continues to evolve with the threats that our Homeland and warfighters face every day. To that end, the DOD must continue to parallel assessments and updates of our acquisition and development processes with employment and governance policies to ensure our warfighters retain the strategic and tactical competitive advantage. If confirmed, I will remain involved in operational discussions with senior Department leadership to ensure a thorough examination of these materiel concepts and their governance processes.

Question. The United States is currently developing a missile defense architecture to better support the protection of United States citizens and forces on Guam. What is your understanding of the status of this effort, and its operational importance to the United States in the Western Pacific?

Answer. As part of the United States Homeland, the protection of Guam is critical to the U.S. National Defense Strategy, and the Department has been focused on this subject and it is a Department priority. IAMD of Guam has been designated as a Joint Special Interest Acquisition Category (ACAT) ID Program.

Electronic Warfare and Spectrum Operations

Question. How capable do you believe Russia and China to be in electronic warfare?

Answer. Russia recognizes electronic warfare is a critical capability with great significance on the battlefield. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, there were indications that Moscow was expanding their strategic and operation echelon capabilities, fielding new EW systems, and ensuring these were integrated with their ground forces at multiple command levels. These assets are intended to disrupt US/NATO's ability to conduct ISR, communicate, and exercise command and control. Western forces operating in the vicinity of Russian forces should anticipate electromagnetic interference.

China anticipates EW will be a critical capability in any future conflict. The importance of this capability is highlighted by Beijing's 2015 military re-organization that resulted in the creation of the Strategic Support Force (SSF). The SSF is directly subordinate to the Central Military Commission and is tasked with providing EW, cyber, and space capabilities in support of military operations. EW elements are also integrated at Theater operational levels with each of the subordinate service elements.

Question. Has DOD adequately integrated electronic warfare into its joint concepts and operational plans?

Answer. This is a work in progress, and the biggest block to doing this is a mindset shift. Often we think of electromagnetic warfare as a supporting effort to enable some other weapon system or capability. In modern warfare, electromagnetic warfare may be the main effort to achieve the desired strategic effects, especially in the pre-conflict phase where we ideally deter a fight from happening in the first place. Our joint concepts and operational plans are progressing toward this reality, but I think we have room for improvement.

Question. What major issues attend the United States' conduct of joint electronic warfare operations, especially at the relevant combatant commands?

Answer. Electromagnetic warfare operations are dynamic. U.S., allied, partner, and adversary capabilities in the electromagnetic maneuver space are constantly changing, which creates perpetual challenges to get the right capability to the right warfighter at the right time to be operationally relevant against the right threat.

Question. Do you support a Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Center at U.S. Strategic Command?

Answer. Yes. U.S. Strategic Command is the operational lead for electromagnetic spectrum operations across the Joint Force. The Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Center will increase the command's capabilities in this role.

Question. Does the DOD adequately conduct joint Tier One exercises utilizing adversary level electronic warfare?

Answer. No. Our Combatant Commanders recognize the critical importance of electronic warfare and prioritize the objectives of their Tier One exercises accordingly, tailored to the threats within their geographic or functional areas of responsibility, but frequently the objectives of the exercise and limited threat replication capabilities overcome the realism of the exercise. Electronic warfare continues to evolve rapidly, and we must forecast and preemptively update our training to remain dominant. Our Joint Warfighting Concept emphasizes the importance of the electromagnetic spectrum and provides a unified approach to shape joint force exercises. A live, virtual, constructive (LVC) simulation environment will be essential in this effort. If confirmed, I will ensure the Joint Staff issues guidance on the realism of the training events.

Question. What is your opinion of training ranges for electronic warfare?

Answer. Current training ranges need to evolve to capture the evolving warfighting environment. Investments have been made through Service live, virtual, constructive (LVC) test and training programs that can enable a more robust and realistic threat battlespace environment. Continued investment is necessary to ensure live ranges can meet and exceed requirements for the high-end fight in the future.

Question. Do you believe our systems are adequately protected from adversary electronic attack?

Answer. It depends on the adversary, but against our most advanced adversaries, the Joint Force would likely face challenges protecting itself from electromagnetic attack. There are two factors that contribute to these challenges. Over the past few decades, the Joint Force has lost some muscle memory defending against electromagnetic attack by conducting operations within a permissive electromagnetic spectrum. Over the same period, operations within this spectrum have changed significantly while our most advanced adversaries have done their best to rapidly evolve. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that we continue to invest in additional capabilities in the electromagnetic spectrum.

Question. Does DOD have adequate simulation capability to experiment with and test joint electronic warfare concepts, in your view?

Answer. No. Based on identified gaps in simulation capabilities we are modernizing training infrastructure to include joint live, virtual, and constructive capabilities that provide space, terrestrial, and cyber-based electronic warfare simulation for use in Joint experimentation, testing, and training.

Question. Spectrum is a vital asset in the conduct of electronic warfare—what is your opinion on the DOD use of the S band for spectrum operations and potential impacts on its loss—please be specific in citing examples.

Answer. Spectrum is a vital asset in the conduct of electronic warfare—I recognize that spectrum is a precious resource and that our national economic prosperity and position as a global leader in technology innovation has vital dependencies, however, we must ensure, first and foremost, that we preserve and protect our vital National Security and operational readiness equities.

Proposals for DOD to share or vacate the S band may result in setting the DOD back several decades compared to near peer adversary nations and result in significant financial costs. Vacating this band is not an option, and no decision should be made prior to the current study is completed and reviewed. I and the Joint Chiefs of Staff appreciate deliberate efforts to preserve and develop spectrum as a vital national resource and look forward to helping ensure that we are mindful of the national security implications and unique Joint Force operational requirements are clearly understood and preserved.

SECURITY COOPERATION AND ARMS TRANSFERS

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you recommend, if any, to ensure that the Department of Defense is taking a strategic approach to its security cooperation with allies and partners?

Answer. The Joint Force executes the NDS which is strategically focused on security cooperation with allies and partners. Through the Combatant Command activities with allies and partners, we will build, and exercise force elements needed in crisis, conflict, or stabilization, such as infrastructure, logistics, command and control, dispersal and relocation, information sharing, and mobilization. If confirmed, I will ensure security cooperation activities remain foundational to U.S. national security interests and to our collective ability to maintain access and address the challenges we will face globally.

Question. What is your understanding of DOD's role in the foreign military sales and arms transfer process? In your view, what are the greatest challenges for DOD in fulfilling this role in a timely and effective manner?

Answer. The role of DOD in Foreign Military Sales is to effectively execute the FMS programs in coordination with Department of State, the Defense Industry and other government agencies. There are many challenges in executing an FMS case from inception to construction, through initial delivery, training and then maintenance and support. Last year the Department conducted an extensive review of FMS processes, policies, and practices to identify potential improvement to the system. That review produced tangible identify potential improvement to the system. That review produced tangible identify potential improvement to the system. That review produced tangible identify potential improvement to the system. That review produced tangible

Question. Is DOD appropriately organized, trained, and resourced to execute security cooperation and foreign military sales effectively? If not, and if confirmed, what changes to defense security assistance organizations, training, and processes would you recommend?

Answer. The DOD is appropriately organized and trained to execute security cooperation and foreign military sales effectively, but these are areas we must continuously adapt and improve. Similarly, resources are always limited and take strategic planning to effectively execute security cooperation and foreign military sales. If confirmed, I will fully support the Continuous Process Improvement Board that the Department has established as an enduring body to improve speed and transparency of the foreign military sales process. Additionally, I will ensure the Joint Force organization and training continues to be refined to optimally support the National Defense Strategy.

CONTESTED LOGISTICS

Question. Who do you believe acts as the lead for contested logistics in how both efficiencies are created and executed to support the NDS?

Answer. As the global integrator, the Joint Staff is positioned to synchronize the Department's efforts regarding contested logistics. The Joint Staff works with the

Services to align their investments in infrastructure, force design, and posture, and supports the Combatant Commanders as they engage with allies and partners.

Question. Do you believe the Department of Defense needs to identify a single service or entity to act as the global contested logistics manager?

Answer. At this time, I do not. As the global integrator, the Joint Staff is positioned to synchronize the Department's efforts regarding contested logistics. The Joint Staff works with the Services to align their investments in infrastructure, force design, and posture, and supports the Combatant Commanders as they engage with allies and partners. If confirmed, I will continue to assess any changes in how global contested logistics is managed.

Question. What is your current assessment for how the Department of Defense views contested logistics when it comes to both war games and operational planning?

Answer. The Joint Warfighting Concept and supporting concepts have focused the Department's attention on the contested logistics problem set. Logistics was once considered an enabling function and now it is clearly a pacing function. Today, wargamers are concentrating on the logistics challenges posed by the current environment and incorporating outcomes from joint logistics wargames into higher level wargames that merge all warfare domains.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

Question. Many DOD officials, including previous Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have advocated for accession to the Law of the Sea Convention.

Do you support United States accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea?

Answer. Yes. Like my predecessors, I support joining the Convention. Being a party to the Convention enhances the United States' security posture by reinforcing freedom of the seas and rights vital to ensuring our global force posture. The Convention provides legal certainty in the world's largest maneuver space.

Question. In your view, what impact, if any, would United States accession to the Law of the Sea Convention have on emerging maritime disputes, such as in the South China Sea and in the Arctic?

Answer. Acceding to the Convention would strengthen our credibility and strategic position on issues pertaining to these regions. While we do not take sides in the various territorial disputes in the South China Sea, we do have a national security interest in ensuring disputes are resolved peacefully, that countries adhere to the rule of law, and that all nations fully respect freedom of the seas. However, we undermine our influence by not signing up to the same rule book which we ask other countries to accept. As for the Arctic, the other Arctic coastal nations (Russia, Canada, Norway, and Denmark (Greenland)) understand the importance of the Convention and are in the process of utilizing the Convention's procedures to establish the outer limits of their extended continental shelves (ECS) in the Arctic. The United States has a significant ECS in the Arctic Ocean but cannot avail itself of the Convention's mechanisms to gain international recognition of its ECS. Acceding to the Convention would put our rights in the Arctic on a treaty footing in order to more fully and effectively interact with the other Arctic Council nations who are parties to the Convention, as well as strengthen our position on freedom of navigation in this increasingly important region.

COOPERATIVE THREAT REDUCTION (CTR) PROGRAM

Question. The CTR Program, which has focused historically on accounting for, securing, and eliminating cold war era weapons of mass destruction and materials in the states of the former Soviet Union, has expanded its focus to other countries. In addition, the CTR Program is widening its focus to biological weapons and capabilities, including biological surveillance and early warning, and encouraging the development of capabilities to reduce proliferation threats as well as working with host nations to secure stockpiles of dangerous pathogens at their high containment laboratories.

What are your views on the efficacy of the CTR Program?

Answer. The CTR program has consistently provided capabilities for allies and partners to reduce or eliminate their WMD stockpiles, secure their WMD facilities, and secure their borders against trafficking of WMD and related materials. CTR has unique attributes to include multi-year funding structure, rapid response capabilities, and authorities to directly engage with ally and partner civilian and military entities, making it a highly effective tool to address current and emergent WMD threats.

Question. Notwithstanding the use and proliferation of chemical weapons documented recently in Libya and Syria, about 60 percent of CTR resources are allocated to biological programs.

Do you believe this shift in focus to biological programs accurately reflects the current threat?

Answer. Yes. CTR had already begun to focus on biological programs before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the lessons learned during the worldwide response to the pandemic validated the need for continued engagement with our allies and partners to assist them in bolstering their biological surveillance and detection capabilities and securing their biological facilities.

Question. If confirmed, specifically what would you recommend to ensure the CTR program is capable of meeting its mission to roll back the threat of weapons of mass destruction?

Answer. If confirmed, I will emphasize collaboration with Department stakeholders and interagency partners to ensure CTR program activities align with our Biodefense Strategy, Countering WMD Strategy, and Combatant Commander Countering WMD priorities.

DOD AUDITABILITY

Question. The Department of Defense has invested significant effort and dollars in preparing its financial information for annual audit reviews. However, the 2022 DOD-wide financial audit again resulted in a disclaimer of opinion.

If confirmed, what specific actions would you take or direct to improve DOD auditability?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with our partners to address issues identified in the 2022 audit:

- Prioritization of resources toward obtaining a clean audit opinion
- Enhanced focus on leadership accountability toward reaching target audit goals
- Employing automated processes to enhance financial system outputs and reliability

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you recommend to inculcate auditability as a command leadership responsibility, and not just default to a financial management community?

Answer. If confirmed, I will take steps to inculcate auditability as a responsibility of leaders at every level through emphasis on audit priority areas, partner collaboration for a strong financial management strategy, and developing a comprehensive audit roadmap with a clear vision for achieving a clean audit opinion.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION

Question. U.S. superiority in key areas of innovation is decreasing or has disappeared, while our competitors are engaging in aggressive military modernization and advanced weaponry development. DOD has identified 14 critical technology areas in which investment to develop next generation operational capabilities is imperative. These areas include: hypersonics; future generation wireless technology; advanced materials; integrated network systems-of-systems; directed energy; integrated sensing and cyber; space technology; quantum science; trusted artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy; microelectronics; renewable energy generation and storage; advanced computing and software; human-machine interfaces; and biotechnology. Much of the innovation in these technologies that could prove suitable for national defense purposes is occurring outside of the traditional defense industry.

What do you see as the most significant challenges (e.g., technical, organizational, or cultural) to DOD's development of these key technologies, or gaining access to such technologies from the commercial marketplace?

Answer. As I understand it today, the leading challenges include the adequate protection of our intellectual property, insufficient integration between the public and private defense-related industries required to bridge the valley of death in support of technology transition, and risk aversion that leads to a lack of agility in the development of key technologies.

Question. How well do you think those Department investments in these technologies are appropriately focused, integrated, and synchronized across all Military Departments and Agencies?

Answer. There continues to be room for improvement in this area. Each Military Department and Agency has its own priorities, but it is imperative that we focus and synchronize our efforts. If confirmed, I will work diligently with Congress, the Department, and our Allies and Partners to ensure that we build an interoperable future Joint Force.

Question. In addition to the technologies identified in the 2022 NDS, are there other technology areas in which you believe DOD must invest to ensure that the United States maintains its technological superiority in the long-term?

Answer. The 14 critical technology areas represent investments necessary to maintain technological superiority in the long-term and achieve NDS priorities.

Question. What efforts is DOD making to identify new technologies developed commercially by the private sector and apply them to national security and warfighter purposes?

Answer. DOD has multiple initiatives within the defense research enterprise that are specifically focused on identifying commercial technologies that are currently in the private sector but have potential uses for national security and warfighter purposes. Examples include the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), AFWERX, Army Futures Command, and NavalX which are all focused on accelerating technology interface.

Question. One of the main objectives of the defense research enterprise is to develop advanced technologies that will be of benefit to the warfighter. In this regard, it is critical that technologies quickly transition from the development phase into testing and evaluation and ultimately into a program of record for the deployment of capability to the warfighter.

What are the challenges you perceive to effectively transitioning technologies from research programs into programs of record or deployed capabilities?

Answer. Effectively transitioning technologies from a research program to a program of record can be difficult because it requires significant cooperation and alignment across the R&D, acquisition, requirements, and resourcing processes.

Question. How can the operational experience of the warfighter better be integrated into the research and development process? Are there appropriate places to interject warfighters in the interaction between the DOD research and engineering community and the private sector?

Answer. Warfighters need to be actively involved in the research process, incorporating their operational experience, so that we can bridge the gap between research and practical application. This will ensure that their operational experience is effectively incorporated into decisionmaking processes, research efforts, and technology development, ultimately leading to solutions that better meet their needs. Additionally, integrating experimental capabilities into exercises allows a more rapid feedback approach for the researchers while also preparing the force for emerging capabilities. We should also continue to leverage and increase warfighter interaction with innovation focused organizations such as SOFWERX and AFWERX that help to close the gap between DOD R&D and industry.

Question. If confirmed as Chairman, what specific steps would you take to ensure that the warfighter is benefiting more quickly and directly from research being performed across the defense research enterprise?

Answer. My approach, if confirmed, would be to increase experimentation with emerging technology inside joint exercise venues thereby exposing more of the Joint Force early in the development phase of promising prototypes. Diverse teams comprised of warfighters, technologists, transition agents, all working together to better understand operational concepts, employment options, and desired outcomes could shorten evaluation and adoption timelines, and provide more operational context for the research enterprise. By actively involving warfighters in the research process and incorporating their operational experience, we can bridge the gap between research and practical application, resulting in solutions better suited to meet the warfighter's real-world challenges.

Question. If confirmed, what would you do to increase the interaction between DOD labs and the private sector, and between DOD labs and the rest of the DOD innovation enterprise to include the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, the Strategic Capabilities Office, the Defense Innovation Unit, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency?

Answer. The Joint Force relies on advanced technologies to outpace the threat. Accelerating innovation is a known challenge; however, the Department has implemented several key pilot initiatives to transition emerging technologies into warfighting capability. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and innovation enterprise to break down barriers and drive open dialog among stakeholders to enable timely transition of critical capabilities into the hands of the Joint Force.

Question. What steps should the Department take to ensure that the foreign technical talent that we educate and support remains in here in the United States and commits to working on our high-priority national missions to maintain our technological superiority?

Answer. The Joint Force relies on advanced technologies to outpace the threat. Accelerating innovation is a known challenge; however, the Department has imple-

mented several key pilot initiatives to transition emerging technologies into warfighting capability. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and innovation enterprise to break down barriers and drive open dialog among stakeholders to enable timely transition of critical capabilities into the hands of the Joint Force.

Question. How could we leverage our defense labs and DOD research funding programs to overmatch Chinese efforts by providing resources and facilities to attract technical talent to stay and work in the United States?

Answer. A primary way to attract and retain technical talent within the United States is to expand our defense labs to partnerships with universities and small businesses around the country. Our ability to tap into the intellectual capital of the American people, their innovative ideas, and our production capacity, has made, and will continue to give, the U.S. military competitive advantage.

JOINT ACQUISITION

Question. What are your views regarding the effectiveness of joint acquisition programs, especially in delivering integrated and interoperable solutions for the Department and which programs would you consider to be candidates for joint development and acquisition?

Answer. Developing, procuring, delivering, and sustaining our Nation's needed joint warfighting capabilities and capacity requires the continued successes of joint acquisition programs. For example, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle program provides the Joint Force with needed current capabilities. Integrated and interoperable solutions are particularly important for the future all-domain warfighting environment. If confirmed, I will look for other opportunities to pursue joint development and acquisition programs to address joint warfighting requirements.

Question. What are your views on joint, enabling or cross-cutting capabilities that may not be treated as acquisition programs, such as JADC2? Do you have sufficient authority to advocate or direct the services to ensure there are no seams in planning or execution of such efforts?

Answer. In the current global security environment, the United States military faces agile adversaries who increasingly seek to undermine our strategic and operational strengths by impeding, and where possible, denying our command and control (C2) capabilities. The ability of the U.S. Military to regain and maintain information and decision advantage through non acquisition programs such as JADC2 must remain a top priority for the Department. CJCS has full authority to advocate for Combatant Command and services' capabilities and if confirmed, I will use the granted authorities and assess whether additional authorities are required to assist the Combatant Commands and services with planning to foster joint capability and manage Joint Force development. I will continue to partner with OUSD (A&S) to strengthen planning and execution to enable integrated, end-to-end mission capability.

Question. If confirmed, what role would you assign to yourself in ensuring that joint acquisition priorities are given full and fair consideration in Military Service budget processes?

Answer. If confirmed, I will provide my military advice to the Secretary of Defense on all matters, including the formulation of the budget. The Chairman's Program Recommendation (CPR) provides the Chairman with a formal mechanism to communicate statutory military advice on programs and budget issues, to include joint acquisition priorities.

Question. Do you believe that the combatant command's role in the acquisition process is sufficient to ensure that they can get needed capabilities fielded to them in a timelier manner? If not, are there other tools or authorities needed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the JROC continues to seek and consider input from the Combatant Commanders. Combatant Commanders serve as advisors to the JROC. Combatant Commanders serve a critical role in developing requirements and addressing capability gaps. The Combatant Commanders specifically identify risk and what is hindering the accomplishment of their Global Campaign Plan objectives via their Integrated Priority List, the Annual Joint Assessment, and the Capability Gap Assessment processes. If confirmed, I see my role as an integrator between the needs of the Combatant Commanders, the realities of Service budgets, and the priorities of DOD leadership.

JOINT REQUIREMENTS OVERSIGHT COUNCIL (JROC)

Question. The JROC is vested with the responsibility to assess joint military capabilities; establish and approve joint performance requirements that ensure interoperability between military capabilities; and identify new joint military capabilities based on advances in technology and concepts of operation.

How would you assess the effectiveness of the JROC in establishing joint requirements for submission to the DOD acquisition process?

Answer. The JROC recently incorporated a top-down approach to concept-driven, threat-informed, capability development. The JROC is using the Joint Warfighting Concept as the starting point to establish requirements from a joint perspective. This changed process is still nascent and it is too early to accurately determine effectiveness.

Question. In your view, have recent acquisition reforms that shifted authorities to the Military Services affected the JROC's ability to assess joint performance requirements? If so, how?

Answer. No. The Joint Performance Requirement (JPR) guidelines enable the JROC to delegate authorities where appropriate to support a streamlined and responsive system that retains the ability of the JROC to meet statutory responsibilities. The Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) manual was revised to address these shifting authorities. JCIDS specifies the JROC's oversight of the streamlined joint performance requirements enabled through the existing rapid capabilities development programs. Additionally, the JROC works closely with the complementary capability development processes further supporting interoperability and special authorities.

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the JROC has the authority and information it needs to execute its statutory functions?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring the JROC remains flexible, adaptable, and postured to ensure joint interoperability.

THE JOINT CAPABILITIES INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS (JCIDS)

Question. The JCIDS process was established to address overlap and duplication in Military Services' programs. JCIDS is intended to provide the information the JROC needs to identify the capabilities and associated operational performance requirements needed by the joint warfighter.

Is the JCIDS process effective in providing the information the JROC requires to anticipate both the current and the future needs of the joint force?

Answer. Yes. JCIDS is flexible and adaptable, allowing it to transform to meet emerging needs of the joint force. The recent incorporation of a top-down approach allows the JROC to holistically look at joint force needs across time horizons that are threat-informed and joint concept-driven.

Question. How would you, if confirmed, drive the development and articulation of future joint concepts from which each Military Service's concept development, requirements generation, and acquisition processes will derive? Does DOD have the requisite analytic capabilities to develop and assess future joint concepts, and the associated capabilities and force structure?

Answer. The Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) began under GEN Milley's tenure and is in its third iteration. The JWC provides an overarching approach to describe how the joint force will fight in a future conflict and aligns Service concepts. If confirmed, I would continue refining the JWC and using it to drive development of supporting and Service concepts, requirements generation, and acquisition processes.

Yes. I believe DOD has the requisite analytic capabilities to develop and assess future joint concepts, capabilities, and force structure.

Question. How have recent acquisition reforms, including the implementation of rapid acquisition pathways in which requirement are not generated via JCIDS, affected the ability of the JROC to identify and advocate for joint requirements?

Answer. Recent acquisition reforms, including the implementation of rapid acquisition pathways have not affected the JROC's ability to identify and advocate for joint requirements. The JROC's top-down approach linked to Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) publication, and adoption of the capability portfolio management review (CPMR) process enabled it to continue to advocate for joint requirements. However, if confirmed, I will continue to work with the Joint Chiefs to ensure that Service controlled initiatives are not stove-piped or duplicated, and that all strive to present joint integrated solutions.

Question. With increasing emphasis on how to leverage commercial, dual use technologies to support national security needs, do you have the access to expertise and interchange you need to assess and integrate an understanding of the commercial technology marketplace into the requirements generation process?

Answer. Increasingly yes. Initiatives at the Department level such as the Defense Innovation Unit, Service rapid acquisition operations, and programs such as the Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer are providing increased access into the commercial technology spaces. The Deputy Secretary of Defense's current Innovation Steering Group will also drive the Depart-

ment to continue to better take advantage of its opportunities in the area of commercial, dual technologies and incorporate these efforts into the requirements generation processes.

Question. In your view, what is the appropriate role of Combatant Commanders in the JCIDS process? If confirmed, how would you improve the effectiveness of the process in identifying both the near-term and long-term needs of the Combatant Commander?

Answer. Combatant Commanders serve as advisors to the JROC when matters related to their area of responsibility or function are under consideration. Combatant Commanders serve a critical role in identifying capability gaps to inform development of near-and far-term solutions. The Combatant Commanders specifically identify risk and what is hindering the accomplishment of their Global Campaign Plan objectives via the Annual Joint Assessment and the Capability Gap Assessment processes. The Urgent Acquisition pathway allows for the Combatant Commander to raise issues for acceleration. If confirmed, I will ensure the JROC continues to seek and consider input from the Combatant Commanders.

Question. Do you believe that today's JROC and JCIDS processes are sufficient to identify where opportunities for multi-Service collaboration exist, or where programs could or should be modified to take advantage of a related acquisition program?

Answer. Yes. JROC and JCIDS processes are flexible and adaptable. The JROC, and through its subordinate bodies and working groups, provide forums for all Services to collaborate on joint requirements.

Question. Do you have any recommendations for changes to the structure, authority, or processes of the JROC or the JCIDS?

Answer. Not at this time. However, if confirmed, I will continue to assess the structure, authority, and processes of the JROC and JCIDS to bring forward any recommendations.

Question. The streamlined middle-tier acquisition authorities enacted in Section 804 of the fiscal year 2016 NDAA seek to speed fielding of advanced technologies and systems by waiving the JCIDS process.

What do you perceive as the downsides of not using the formal JCIDS process?

Answer. JCIDS was created to ensure joint interoperability, so avoiding JCIDS could put the onus of joint interoperability on the proposing Service. JCIDS, along with providing interoperability review, and providing enterprise awareness of capability development effort, supports the fulfillment of the Title 10 requirements to review, assess, and prioritize Joint Force Capabilities. Early identification of interoperability and potential redundancy is key to ensuring we get capability development right, early on avoiding delay in fielding to the Joint Force.

Question. What is your opinion of the initial efforts in using 804 authorities?

Answer. I am pleased to see the depth and breadth of activities looking to accelerate the delivery of warfighting capabilities to the field. If confirmed, I will continue to work with stakeholders to evaluate the use of 804 authorities and provide feedback as necessary.

Question. One of the challenges facing many acquisition programs—ranging from weapons systems to business systems—is unrealistic and unfeasible technical requirements.

What best practices can the Department employ to generate realistic and technically feasible requirements, particularly in sophisticated, rapidly evolving technical areas such as cybersecurity, hypersonics, and artificial intelligence?

Answer. The DOD requirements process must be informed by the results of its rapid prototyping authorities such as Section 804 to ensure requirements are realistic and feasible. Additionally, to the maximum extent possible, the DOD should require its systems to be open and modular to minimize upgrade costs as technology continues to rapidly evolve, especially in areas such as cybersecurity, hypersonics, and artificial intelligence.

Question. If confirmed, what actions would you take to strengthen or support the technical knowledge, capabilities, and talent management of personnel responsible for requirements generation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support efforts by OUSD (A&S) and the Defense Acquisition University to develop training programs for DOD personnel with the responsibility for developing requirements.

TEST AND EVALUATION

Question. A natural tension exists between the goals of major defense acquisition programs to reduce cost and accelerate schedule and the need to ensure perform-

ance meets requirements and specifications—the objective of the test and evaluation function.

Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe it appropriate to procure weapon systems and equipment that have not been demonstrated through test and evaluation to be operationally effective, suitable, and survivable?

Answer. The Department has a robust T&E program that identifies a tailored plan for each program based on its unique specifications and intended operational environment. I don't see any circumstances where it would be appropriate to not conduct some level of testing of weapons and/or equipment before fielding.

Question. Do you think the current operational test and evaluation system also provides for the flexibility to assess commercial technologies that might be acquired or fields by DOD through means or processes that are not traditional acquisition programs of record?

Answer. The operational test and evaluation system is designed to test major defense programs or items/components of a weapon system, equipment, or munitions under realistic combat conditions. I do believe the current operational test and evaluation system provides the flexibility to assess commercial technologies.

Question. Are you satisfied with DOD's test and evaluation capabilities, including the test and evaluation workforce and infrastructure of the Military Services? In which areas, if any, do you feel the Department should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?

Answer. Yes. The DOD possesses robust test and evaluation capabilities. I have observed areas where the Joint Force could advance. Emerging technologies in cyber, space, AI and quantum computing are potential growth areas and may require new test and evaluation capabilities.

Question. If confirmed, how would you approach your relationship with the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, particularly in light of the independence and direct reporting relationships and responsibilities accorded the Director in law?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to build a close working relationship with the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, to maximize the lethality, sustainability, and survivability of the Joint Force.

Question. If confirmed, how would you approach your relationship with the Director, Developmental Test and Evaluation and the Director of the Test Resource Management Center (TRMC), both of which sit within the office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering?

Answer. The Joint Staff maintains strong relationships OSD R&E across the board. Our Force Development and Capability Development communities have close working relationships with OUSD(R&E). The Joint Warfighting Concept and the Capability Gap Assessment inform alignment and prioritization of R&E initiatives to address our most pressing challenges and gaps. If confirmed, I would approach my relationship with Director of OT&E and Director of TRMC in the same collaborative manner to find ways to share resources and information while accelerating opportunities to drive new capabilities into the Joint Force.

DOD READINESS

Question. How would you assess the current readiness of the DOD Components—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—to execute the 2022 NDS and Combatant Commanders' associated plans?

Answer. I am confident that we can protect the Homeland, meet our alliance commitments, and maintain a competitive advantage over any potential adversary. Through stable and adequate levels of funding we are working to improve readiness and modernization across the force considering the geostrategic environment and threat in order to increase our lethality, flexibility, and resilience.

Question. What is your assessment of the risk the Combatant Commands and the Combat Support Agencies have accepted in regard to their readiness to execute the operational plans associated with the 2022 NDS?

Answer. Exercising strategic discipline to continuously calibrate Joint Force weight of effort between campaigning and rapidly building warfighting advantage to deter now and reduce future risk is the central premise of the 2022 NDS and NMS. With stable and adequate levels of funding we have been able to address risk in force readiness and are restoring capability to respond to contingencies. The Joint Force must balance risk between its ability to deter our adversaries through operational campaigning and prioritizing Service modernization efforts to achieve superiority in multiple domains. This is not done without challenges and/or tough choices. Our competitive advantage has eroded over time because of two decades of continuous operations, an advancing threat, and exacerbated by continuing resolutions. With sustained, predictable, adequate, and timely funding we can continue to im-

prove readiness, build the future force that maintains our competitive advantage, and decrease risk.

Question. If confirmed, specifically what actions would you recommend to restore full spectrum readiness in all DOD Components—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—and on what timelines?

Answer. If confirmed, my actions will center on continuing our current efforts to address joint readiness and further develop the warfighting capabilities needed to defend the Nation in the future. We face very real and significant challenges today, and we must continue to adequately invest in the future. To address this dynamic, we need to provide the Joint Force the required capabilities and capacity through sustained and predictable funding, to maintain a robust exercise program, and to continued talent management improvements over the course of several years to maintain our qualitative and quantitative competitive advantage.

OPERATIONAL ENERGY AND ENERGY RESILIENCE

Question. The Department defines operational energy as the energy required for training, moving, and sustaining military forces and weapons platforms for military operations, including the energy used by tactical power systems, generators, and weapons platforms. On the battlefield of the future, warfighters will need exponentially more energy with rapid recharge and resupply over longer operating distances. The quality of electricity will matter too—the DOD's vehicles, sensors, robots, cyber forces, directed energy weapons, and artificial intelligence will be controlled by systems sensitive to fluctuations in voltage or frequency.

If confirmed, are there actions you can take to harness innovations in operational energy and link them with emerging joint operational concepts?

Answer. The need for large volumes of Operational Energy remains one of the Department's greatest logistical burdens and largest vulnerabilities especially in a contested environment. In line with the National Defense Strategy, we will prioritize energy demand reduction and the adoption of technologies that reduce logistics requirements in contested or austere environments. Through the implementation of the Joint Warfighting Concept, we are seeking innovative capabilities to address key operational problems. Operational energy innovations contribute to offsetting those problems and are being examined in wargames, tested in field experiments, and integrated into joint exercises.

Question. In what specific areas, if any, do you believe DOD needs to improve the incorporation of energy considerations in strategic planning processes?

Answer. In my view, DOD can improve the incorporation of energy considerations in the following specific areas:

- Continue to assess Combatant Command posture and readiness annually. These reviews can highlight where energy considerations may be overlooked within the strategic planning process.
- Ensure that our Joint concepts and operational plans are fully informed of risks associated with contested logistics and threats to the assured delivery of energy.
- Align our force development and design efforts with appropriate risks to energy supportability and required posture.

If confirmed, I will work with the Joint Staff to include requirements for joint force energy supportability and demand reduction in recurring strategic guidance and endorse energy efficiency, water conservation, use of renewable energy, and emerging technologies throughout strategic planning processes.

Question. How can DOD acquisition systems better address requirements related to a military platform's use of energy?

Answer. Energy supportability is one of the four mandatory Key Performance Parameters (KPPs) required for all Department programs. The Joint Staff conducts an energy supportability analysis for all requirements documents when the JROC designates the energy KPP as a Joint Performance Requirement. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Joint Staff's role in prioritizing energy supportability for new capabilities.

Question. If confirmed, are there actions you can take to prioritize energy resilience and mission assurance for DOD, including acquiring and deploying sustainable and renewable energy assets to support mission critical functions, and address known vulnerabilities?

Answer. Energy resilience is part of every assessment performed on existing critical infrastructure. If confirmed, I will ensure the identification, vulnerability assessment, and risk mitigation of mission critical assets remain a Joint Staff priority.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS

Question. The environmental and health effects associated with exposure to Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have long been a major concern for Congress, DOD, military families, and communities in the vicinity of military installations.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to address PFOS/PFOA contamination on DOD installations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Department's commitment to addressing DOD's PFAS releases as quickly as possible in a deliberative, holistic, and transparent manner. I understand that DOD is conducting assessments of PFAS use and potential release at 707 installations and National Guard locations. I will support the PFAS Task Force in those efforts and support the Department's commitment to protect the health of its servicemembers, their families, and the communities in which DOD serves.

Question. If confirmed, what would be your approach to addressing the health concerns of servicemembers and their families regarding alleged exposures to potentially harmful contaminants on U.S. military installations and in the context of performing military duties?

Answer. I support DOD's priority to quickly address risks to human health from drinking water impacted by PFAS releases. If confirmed, I would continue and build upon the actions already underway to address servicemember concerns including streamlining processes by which housing residents can raise health concerns to leadership, testing of DOD-owned water sources at all installations, site cleanup, supporting research to determine potential health effects from exposure, and ongoing action by our health providers to document and treat issues, as appropriate. Ultimately, our servicemembers and their families should not have to worry about their health while living in homes on U.S. Military installations or when performing their military duties.

READINESS AND RESOURCE IMPACTS FROM EXTREME WEATHER

Question. In 2017, three hurricanes resulted in over \$1.3 billion in damage to military installations across the U.S. In 2018, extreme weather events caused roughly \$9 billion in damage at Tyndall Air Force Base, Camp Lejeune, and Offutt Air Force Base.

How would you assess the readiness and resource impacts on DOD from recent extreme weather events?

Answer. The impacts are significant by disrupting operations and damaging critical infrastructure. Based on the severity of the event, the cost creates a strain on our finite resources and forces tough decisions if not supplemented with additional funding. These extreme weather events impact infrastructure related to mission execution and disrupts scheduled training for operational and supporting units. The combination of which creates challenges to maintain readiness. The impacts can also extend to family support issues. The loss of affected services, housing, schools, and exchange services for example, is an inconvenience that can affect servicemember mission focus, morale, and retention.

Question. Based on these readiness and resource impacts, do you believe it necessary to use more resilient designs in DOD infrastructure?

Answer. Yes. As we design, site, and build future infrastructure, we should take advantage of emerging information on changing conditions and engineering standards to reduce the impacts of extreme weather and changing climate. If confirmed, I will continue supporting ongoing DOD actions to implement appropriate planning and design standards that account for extreme weather events, projected sea level rise, and other climate change impacts.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Question. Since September 11, 2001, collaboration—both analytical and operational—between DOD and the Intelligence Community has grown increasingly close. On one hand, seamless collaboration is vital to an effective and rapid response to non-traditional threats, and bringing together the strengths of the full spectrum of defense and intelligence capabilities can generate more effective solutions to complex problems. On the other hand, without effective management and oversight, such collaboration risks blurring distinct agency missions, authorities, and funding, as well as creating redundant lines of effort.

In your view, are there aspects of the current relationship between the Department and the Intelligence Community that should be re-examined or modified?

Answer. The Department and the IC have developed a great relationship that has led to some remarkable collaboration in identifying and analyzing adversaries and threats. As we face near-peer competitors, this collaboration needs to increase to maintain our competitive edge.

If confirmed, I am interested in exploring improvements in information sharing, leveraging industry lessons learned, and the development and integration of emerging technologies to keep ahead of our adversaries. This includes quickly developing and integrating artificial intelligence, machine learning, cyber, big data for warfighting, multi-level security, and collection capabilities.

INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE (ISR) CAPABILITIES

Question. Demand for ISR of every kind has grown exponentially in recent years, largely due to the enhanced situational awareness and targeting capabilities they afford commanders. Almost all of the geographic Combatant Commands have validated ISR requirements that are not being met.

What is your assessment of DOD's current disposition of ISR assets across the Combatant Commands?

Answer. ISR asset allocation to Combatant Commands is aligned with National Defense Strategy priorities. The current ISR asset allocation is a result of a deliberative planning process and can be adjusted to meet emergent Combatant Command needs.

Question. What do you perceive as the most concerning shortfalls in both the capability and availability of ISR assets?

Answer. Demand for ISR has and will likely always outpace supply. The Services continue to deploy ISR forces at the maximum sustainable capacity with nothing held in reserve. Simultaneously, evolving adversary capabilities are driving a deliberate move toward higher capacity modernized ISR systems. This would include developing tools to take advantage of space-based ISR and publicly available information.

Question. What is your assessment of current service efforts to develop increased capabilities?

Answer. The DOD is in the process of modernizing ISR capabilities by investing in platforms, sensors, and communication networks that will operate at greater capacity in high-threat and denied environments. The Department's focus on space, cyber, and other domains will produce survivable and resilient ISR capabilities for the future Joint Force.

Question. How does increased demand square with Services' plans to divest many of the platforms providing ISR to the Combatant Commanders?

Answer. The DOD needs to divest of legacy ISR platforms in order to invest in robust survivable ISR capabilities that will provide sensing and targeting at speed in a highly contested environment against a peer adversary. The investments in space-based ISR will provide greater collection capacity and access for the Combatant Commands particular in a denied environment. The Department will remain vigilant to ensure Combatant Commanders are appropriately resourced as new ISR systems are fielded.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Question. Despite significant efforts by the Military Services over the past decade to enhance their prevention of, and response to sexual assaults, including measures to care for victims and hold assailants accountable, the current data continues to show increasing prevalence of sexual assault and unwanted sexual conduct, primarily for female servicemembers aged 17 to 24. These findings echo reports this year of increases in the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault at the Military Service Academies.

Do you believe the policies, programs, and resources that DOD and the Military Services have put in place to prevent and respond to sexual assault, and to protect servicemembers who report sexual assault from retaliation, are working? If not, what else must be done?

Answer. The Department remains committed to the well-being of our servicemembers and we must continue to invest in prevention and response resources to prevent harmful behavior. As a leader I am determined to create an environment where each servicemember is treated with value, dignity, and respect. I will continue to support efforts to address chain of command accountability and prevent retaliatory behavior.

The Independent Review Commission's on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC) recommendations are instrumental in the Department's efforts to produce meaningful change; however, the results of these efforts are not yet observable in Force-wide

assessments. I am committed to seeing these changes through and will be prepared to identify additional actions or adjustments as the IRC recommendations are implemented.

Question. If confirmed, what specific role would you establish for yourself in preventing sexual harassment in the armed forces and in the DOD civilian workforce?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Service Chiefs to continuously evaluate and refine prevention and response policies to improve oversight and accountability.

I will emphasize that Joint Force readiness depends on the readiness of our servicemembers and readiness is most prevalent in cohesive units with empowered chains of command. I will emphasize the imperative to continue improving the military's ability to cultivate healthy command climates and stop harmful behaviors before they occur. Finally, I will ensure leaders and servicemembers have access to the existing resources and those being implemented as result of Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC) like the climate assessments and the prevention workforce. Sexual assault and harassment have no place in the DOD, and harmful to building a cohesive team.

Question. Do you perceive that you need additional authorities from Congress to improve the Department's programs to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault?

Answer. I believe we have sufficient authorities to implement the remaining IRC recommendations. I will always support continually evaluating our efforts to prevent sexual harassment and assault, while working with partners in Congress on these issues.

Question. The most recent report on the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment at the Military Service Academies revealed disturbing levels of sexual harassment in particular, placing the Service Academies among the poorest performing military units in incidents of harassment, suggesting an environment conducive to sexual assault and other misconduct.

What is your reaction to this report, and what actions would you propose to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment at the Service Academies?

Answer. I am deeply troubled by this information about what has been occurring. The behaviors highlighted in that report have no place at the Academies, let alone the Force writ large.

The Superintendents' leadership in this space is critical in changing course. Much of their solution set is to implement the recommendations of the Secretary's Independent Review Commission. These recommendations focus on changes that help work toward the positive, professional climates we not only expect but demand in the military.

The Secretary of Defense recently directed onsite evaluations of the Service Academies designed to identify gaps and best practices in command climate and the prevention of harmful behaviors. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Austin, the Services, and the Service Academies' leadership to address the forthcoming recommendations from those evaluations and continuously evaluate and refine prevention and response policies to improve oversight and accountability.

I plan to stay fully engaged with Service leadership to ensure leaders create environments where our future leaders can live and learn in a culture of dignity and respect.

ACTIVE AND RESERVE COMPONENT END STRENGTH

Question. In the face of historic recruiting challenges, Active force end strength continues to shrink across all military services except the Space Force.

What aggregate Active end strength do you believe is necessary to meet the demands placed on the Military Services by the 2022 NDS and associated operational plans?

Answer. The strength requested in the FY24 budget submission represents manpower requirements across the services and supports the direction of the 2022 NDS. The services remain committed to "quality over quantity". This budget seeks to meet this critical challenge today, tomorrow, and into the future by providing resources to support the National Defense Strategy.

Question. In your view, do the Reserve Components serve as an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or both? In light of your answer, should the Reserve Components be supported by improved equipment, increased training, and higher levels of overall resourcing for readiness going forward?

Answer. The Reserve Component is an integral part of the total force. The Reserve Component serves as both an operational and strategic reserve. The Reserve Component deserves to train on and operate the best equipment possible in order

to execute their key role. Training standards for the Active and Reserve components should be the same.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Question. As mandated by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and the Fiscal Year 2013 NDAA and Fiscal Year 2014 NDAA, do each of the Military Service's policies and processes appropriately accommodate the religious practices of individual servicemembers, in your view? (Chaplain)

Answer. Yes. Each of the Services recognizes the importance of religious liberties and accommodation for servicemembers, not only in support of their fundamental human rights but also to support broader Service cultures of spiritual fitness, readiness, diversity, tolerance, and inclusion. The existing Service policies ensure that each request for religious accommodation is reviewed on a case basis, considering the full range of facts and circumstances relevant to each specific request, and analyzing these against the compelling governmental interest of mission accomplishment to find the least restrictive means to accommodate.

Question. In your view, would a more comprehensive Department-wide policy on religious accommodation promote consistency and uniformity across the services? (Chaplain)

Answer. No. Each of the Service policies on religious accommodation is already in compliance with the Department of Defense Instruction on Religious Liberty in the Military Services, providing a foundational consistency and uniform processes. There is also a need for Service-specific deliberation. Mission requirements can differ between Services, to include differences in Service culture related to unit cohesion, order, and discipline. The current practice provides foundational consistency and uniform processes across Services while also allowing for Service-specific considerations. It should be maintained.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND FAMILY READINESS

Question. The Committee remains concerned about the sustainment of key quality of life programs for military families, such as family advocacy and parenting skills programs; childcare; spouse education and employment support; health care; and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) services such as Commissary and Military Exchange stores.

If confirmed, what quality of life and MWR programs would you consider a priority?

Answer. The Department of Defense has a sacred obligation to take care of our servicemembers and their families. Quality of Life is fundamental to recruiting and retaining the all-volunteer force today and in the future. The most important aspects of servicemember quality of life are economic stability, first rate medical care, improved housing, spouse employment, and childcare.

I will continue to encourage the advancement of MWR programs and community partnerships that both promote well-being while also adapting to the current demands of our servicemembers. These programs include outdoor recreation, sports and fitness, and child development and youth programs. If confirmed, I will unite with the Service Chiefs to promote and sustain effective quality of life programs to meet the needs of our servicemembers and their families.

Question. What factors would you consider in assessing which MWR programs are ineffective or outmoded and thus potentially suitable for elimination or reduction in scope?

Answer. The maintenance and the development of effective quality of life programs is a priority for our servicemembers and their families. If confirmed, I would work with the Service Chiefs and look primarily at usage metrics, benefit, cost, and servicemember and family feedback. These programs are critical recruiting and retention tools and must be adequately resourced to ensure a resilient force.

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure that support related to mobilization, deployment, and family readiness is provided to Army Reserve and National Guard families, as well as to Active Army families who do not reside near a military installation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Service Chiefs to ensure the needs of family members, both Active and Reserve Component, of mobilized and/or deployed servicemembers are met. As the Department continues to emphasize Total Force policies, programs such as the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, Military One Source, community partnerships, and others that address challenges unique to military service are vital in developing and sustaining resilience among servicemembers and their families.

MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM REFORM

Question. Section 702 of the Fiscal Year 2017 NDAA, as modified by Sections 711 and 712 of the Fiscal Year 2019 NDAA, transferred the administration and management of military hospitals and clinics from the Military Departments to the Defense Health Agency (DHA), a Combat Support Agency. Additionally, Section 732 of the fiscal year 2019 NDAA required the development of joint force medical capabilities that meet the operation planning requirements of the combatant commands.

In your view, in the aggregate, how many military medical providers and what medical capabilities, are required to support the Combatant Commanders' operational plans associated with the 2022 NDS?

Answer. The National Defense Strategy contains globally integrated medical requirements of rapidly aggregating medical capabilities during conflict, moving casualties in a contested environment, and expanding military trauma centers in the Homeland to care for casualties. Our medical force of roughly 180,000 will be close to fully employed to execute and sustain operational plans for a large-scale overseas conflict. Our medical force does require additional surge medical capacity within medical centers of the Department, as well as leveraging partnerships with Veterans Health Administration and National Disaster Medical System to execute Homeland contingency plan requirements. As we design a future medical force, the Military Health System needs to prioritize efforts to meet these globally integrated requirements and enable air, land, and sea platforms to deploy agile medical capabilities worldwide. If confirmed, I will work across DOD and with Congress on these efforts.

Question. In your view, do military medical providers across the Military Departments possess today the critical wartime medical competencies required to save the lives of servicemembers injured in combat or contingency operations?

Answer. Yes. I believe the joint medical force possesses the competencies necessary to save lives in a kinetic environment, as evidenced by their performance in overseas contingency operations over the last 20 years. As we continue to lose personnel with combat casualty care experience, it is imperative that we invest in the workforce to generate critical wartime medical professionals in our military medical centers and hospitals. The Department must also leverage partnerships with Veterans Health Administration, Health & Human Services, and National Disaster Medical System, and in private sector partnerships to treat complex care patients in peacetime and sustain the competency and capacity to recover combat casualties in wartime. Additionally, we must embed medical capabilities far forward to increase survivability in a contested, degraded, and contaminated wartime environment of the future.

Question. In your view, are the Services adequately supporting DHA by assigning to MTFs the appropriate number of military medical providers in the specialties needed at the MTFs?

Answer. The Department is working to invest in the healthcare workforce that includes the Services' military medical providers and Defense Health Agency civilian medical providers to improve primary and specialty care access in our MTFs. We continue to assess the adequacy of military medical providers in the MTFs and their overall readiness. Additional military and civilian workforce in the MTFs improve access to care for 9.6 million beneficiaries, improves readiness and maximizes education programs for our medical professionals, and mitigates the rising costs to provide care in the civilian network. If confirmed, I will work across DOD and with Congress on these efforts.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Question. On May 17, 2022, Secretary Austin established the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC) to conduct a comprehensive review of clinical and non-clinical suicide prevention and response programs across the force.

If confirmed, what specific role and tasks would you establish for yourself and for the Joint Staff in implementing the SPRIRC's recommendations?

Answer. The health, safety, and well-being of our Force is a top priority for the Department. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Department's efforts in addressing suicide in the military. I support the on-going strategies to encourage help-seeking behavior, minimize stigma, and increase visibility and access to necessary resources and communication tools. The Department is firmly committed to preventing suicides in our Joint Force because one suicide is one too many.

I support the rapid implementation of the ten (10) recommendations outlined in Phase 1 of the SecDef's 16 March 2023, Next Steps on Suicide Prevention in the

Military memo and will support any follow-on recommendations that are approved for implementation.

Question. If confirmed, specifically what would you do to ensure that sufficient suicide prevention and mental health resources are available to deployed servicemembers, as well as to servicemembers and their families at home station?

Answer. The Services have been providing leadership guidance on how to build resiliency in the force. This is supporting an environment of trust and cohesion that's foundational in suicide prevention. Commanders and leaders at all levels must have the required training and resources to identify and treat all health requirements in garrison and deployed environments. Embedding mental health resources and capabilities within deploying units has been very well received and had a positive impact. I support the Services and their efforts to recruit and retain mental health providers and other related entities in support of our servicemembers and their families.

MENTAL HEALTH

Question. DOD has made great strides in reducing the stigma associated with help-seeking behaviors, but many servicemembers, especially senior leaders, remain concerned that their military careers will be adversely affected should their chains of command become aware that they are seeking mental or behavioral health care. At the same time, the military chain of command has a legitimate need to be aware of physical and mental health conditions that may affect the readiness of the servicemembers under their command.

In your view, does DOD effectively bridge the gap between a servicemember's desire for confidentiality and the chain of command's legitimate need to know about matters that may affect individual servicemember and the unit readiness?

Yes, I believe DOD has made significant changes to bridge the gap between servicemembers' desires and the chain of command's legitimate need to know. We continue to assess how we can help those who struggle with complex issues, while still ensuring the readiness and lethality of the force. Mental health is health, and we need to optimize every aspect of the Warfighter and their families. I fully support servicemembers and their families seeking mental health care.

SERVICE OF TRANSGENDER PERSONS

Answer. Each of the Service Chiefs has testified before this Committee that in their personal experience, the service of transgender individuals in their preferred gender has had no negative impact on unit or overall military readiness.

In your personal experience, has the service of transgender individuals in their preferred gender had any negative impact on unit or overall military readiness?

Answer. I am not aware of any significant impacts to unit readiness based on transgender persons serving in the Air Force.

Question. What would be the impact on readiness of requiring the separation of all transgender soldiers currently serving in the military? Please provide specific data to support your view.

Answer. Any reduction in ready and fully deployable servicemembers that meet all standards associated with military service would presumably have an effect on readiness.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

Question. In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testi-

mony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee? Please answer yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, Federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

MISSILE DEFENSE POLICY REVIEW

1. Senator HIRONO. General Brown, I am concerned that the last Missile Defense Review did not adequately clarify U.S. policy toward defense of the Homeland from peer adversary missiles that could be thought of as existing below the threshold that would warrant a nuclear response. Do you think the next missile defense policy review should include greater detail on U.S. policy for defense of the Homeland from all types of missiles, including hypersonic and cruise missiles, from all likely adversaries?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I will continue to support policies and subsequent reviews which strengthen defense of the Homeland. That said, the 2022 MDR does address defense of the Homeland from a variety of missile systems, and the Department continues to make progress in creating a force design that spans all integrated air and missile defense. The 2022 MDR directs the Department to continue developing and fielding defenses against hypersonic weapons and uncrewed systems in addition to developing the next generation of ground-based midcourse interceptors. It also stipulates that systems designed for regional defense can and will be used to defend the Homeland against attacks from any adversary and any direction, while accurately stating that our missile defense systems are designed to counter ICBM threats from rogue nations like North Korea.

SHIP, SUBMARINE, AND INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

2. Senator HIRONO. General Brown, the best way to get more operational ships this decade is to maintain our existing fleet better and faster. To successfully get ships and submarines out of maintenance periods on time requires a sustained, long-term effort to re-vitalize our public shipyards. Will you ensure the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP) remains a point of focus for the Department of Defense (DOD) and receives the funding it requires?

General BROWN. The Department is thankful for the support Congress has shown the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP), a once-in-a-generation optimization of our Nation's public shipyard infrastructure. SIOP is a key enabler for the naval component of Joint Force readiness. If confirmed, I will focus on ensuring SIOP is adequately resourced and the entire Joint Force remains ready and lethal.

3. Senator HIRONO. General Brown, the majority of the piers and wharves at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard are unable to be used for significant pier-side maintenance because of structural vulnerabilities. How does this disrepair impact the capabilities of the Joint Force and its ability to execute operational plans?

General BROWN. Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard pier and wharf degraded status has some impact on capabilities of the Joint Force and its ability to execute operational plans. Potential effects of the degraded pier infrastructure include reduced maintenance capacity, resulting in delays or limitations to crucial repairs, maintenance, and modernization work on naval vessels, longer turnaround times for ships requiring servicing and limited berthing space impacts capacity to manage the flow of ships in and out of the shipyard for maintenance, refitting, or other operational requirements. It also impacts the readiness of naval vessels, affecting the availability of ships offered to the Joint Force. The limitations have also forced some of the workload to shift to other facilities. This creates additional strain on maintenance facilities, potentially leading to increased congestion, longer wait times, and decreased overall efficiency in support of the Joint Force's operational plans.

4. Senator HIRONO. General Brown, in your role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, will you provide the necessary supervision to ensure the individual Services adequately prioritize and maintain their infrastructure?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I will work with OSD and the Services to advocate for the infrastructure investments necessary to meet the needs of the Joint Force.

5. Senator HIRONO. General Brown, how do you weigh the recapitalization of DOD infrastructure with the acquisition of new platforms and weapons systems when making budget-based decisions?

General BROWN. Infrastructure is a key enabler to both readiness and lethality. The State of our infrastructure contributes to how we take care of our people and supports a ready and capable force. Balancing infrastructure recapitalization costs with new acquisition of systems is not a binary decision. Careful analysis of required capabilities and infrastructure recapitalization are factors considered as part of the total ownership cost of operating the force.

ACQUISITION POLICY

6. Senator HIRONO. General Brown, most people agree the way DOD acquires new systems is flawed. I have heard combatant commanders do not have enough input into a process that is far too slow and directs money into too concentrated an industrial base. Do you believe the Pentagon should re-evaluate the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process with an eye toward getting the combatant commanders what they need faster?

General BROWN. Combatant Commanders serve a critical role in identifying capability gaps to inform development of near-and long-term solutions. JCIDS is one of several requirements identification pathways within the Department of Defense Acquisition process. If confirmed, I will continually evaluate the JCIDS process and other supporting processes focused on making improvements to meet Combatant Command requirements in a timely manner.

CLIMATE RESILIENCY

7. Senator HIRONO. General Brown, Typhoon Mawar is going to end up costing DOD multiple billions of dollars in damages to installations in Guam. The tragedy of the storm highlights the importance of climate resilient construction as a cost saving measure and as a readiness requirement while showing the dangers of relying too heavily on single locations for DOD operations. How would you, if confirmed, work to improve the resiliency of DOD installations and quantify the risks commanders incur as a result of climate change?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I will continue to support ongoing Department of Defense efforts to address installation resiliency, including actions to implement appropriate planning and design standards to account for extreme weather events, projected sea level rise, and other climate change effects.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ANGUS S. KING, JR.

NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION

8. Senator KING. General Brown, how will you ensure oversight of all critical DOD nuclear modernization program components, including the aging infrastructure, the recovering industrial base, and maintaining and growing the critical workforce?

General BROWN. The newly established Nuclear Deputy's Management Action Group (NDMAG) and separate NC3 DMAG provide a governance structure for Deputy Secretary and Vice Chairman level oversight to identify and manage nuclear opportunities and risks. If confirmed, I intend to stay fully engaged in ensuring a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent as we transition to modern systems.

9. Senator KING. General Brown, what is your biggest concern in terms of nuclear modernization—LGM-35A, B-21, Long-Range Stand-off Weapon, B-52, NC3 modernization?

General BROWN. The Department has made significant investments in the modernization of our nuclear platforms and our NC3 systems. These programs underpin Strategic Deterrence and are key to meeting the National Defense Strategy priority of deterring strategic against the United States, and our allies and partners. Although our nuclear forces and existing NC3 architecture are safe, secure, and effective, we have greatly exceeded their intended design life. Deferred modernization, coupled with emerging threats to our nuclear forces and NC3 enterprise, has removed margin and there is no longer room for delay. This is further challenged by atrophy in both the DOD industrial base for nuclear delivery platforms, NC3 systems, and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) production capabilities and infrastructure. If confirmed, I will continue to focus on the execution of these modernization programs and ensure they remain a safe, secure, and effective deterrent to our adversaries.

10. Senator KING. General Brown, how can we ensure the LGM-35 Sentinel isn't the next F-35?

General BROWN. The complexity and challenges of the LGM-35 Sentinel program are unique for this once in a generation recapitalization. The LGM-35 Sentinel is a complex system of systems requiring an industrial base for nuclear delivery platforms and warheads that have significantly atrophied over the past three decades. The DOD, in collaboration with our interagency and industry partners, will continue to actively manage schedule pressures by identifying opportunities and risk mitigation efforts to ensure a smooth Minuteman III to Sentinel transition.

11. Senator KING. General Brown, are these programs funded properly in the 2024 President's Budget?

General BROWN. The 2024 President's Budget continues to fully fund our nuclear enterprise and NC3 modernization programs to provide a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent consistent with the National Defense Strategy.

12. Senator KING. General Brown, what should our nuclear posture be to best deter competitors along the continuum of conflict?

General BROWN. I believe the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review accurately lays out how the United States should best posture itself to deter competitors across the spectrum of conflict. Nuclear weapons pose an existential military threat to the United States and our allies and partners. Maintaining the nuclear triad is of vital national importance to deter adversaries, assure allies and, if necessary, achieve military objectives through integrated deterrence. We must also work with allies and partners to diversify our posture and broaden the scope of our cooperation, adding complexity to our competitors' military planning and execution.

13. Senator KING. General Brown, how are you developing our intellectual capital in deterrence theory?

General BROWN. Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) opportunities ensure that our Joint Force understands deterrence principles and offers specializations in strategy and deterrence theory to strengthen intellectual capital within the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize and advocate for JPME while partnering with National Laboratories, NGO's, and academic institutions to leverage their invaluable contributions on deterrence theory and strategic issues.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SECURITY POLICY

14. Senator KING. General Brown, after reading Secretary Lloyd Austin's most recent update on the DOD's security policy, I noticed a focus on vetting and personnel practices. However, there was no mention of efforts to integrate upgraded technology to detect potential data exfiltration attempts. My belief is that such technology is the surest way to prevent incidents like last winter's. Are any steps being taken in this direction?

General BROWN. Yes. The DOD is implementing a data-security methodology based on Zero Trust principles to ensure that DOD networks remain resilient by integrating technology that delivers access control, sensing, and monitoring of our networks and weapon systems, while enabling the detection of and response to cybersecurity events. Partners across the Department have already started to develop, test, and integrate critical technology that will enhance our ability to limit the damage of malicious cyber actors and insider threats; however, we must scale these efforts and continue to look for technological advances to prevent further incidents. If confirmed, I will prioritize and advocate for the Department's implementation of critical sensing and monitoring solutions and work with key partners such as OUSD A&S, U.S. Cyber Command, the DOD CIO, and others to ensure the resiliency of our networks and data.

15. Senator KING. General Brown, there appears to be a notion shared among top military officials that security clearances and access are an administrative problem. The last two incidents have shown that that is not the case. Do you see security clearances and access as an administrative problem?

General BROWN. This is first and foremost a leadership issue. Leaders at all levels have a responsibility for ensuring the adherence to security program policies and procedures. If confirmed, I will continue to work with OSD, the Service Chiefs, and other stakeholders to ensure our senior leaders continue to optimize and improve their personnel vetting programs remaining adaptive to societal norms, changes in threat landscapes, and evolving technologies.

MENTAL HEALTH AND TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RESOURCES

16. Senator KING. General Brown, what will you do in this position to ensure Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is being leveraged to its fullest extent and we are returning our servicemembers into society happy, healthy, and ready to contribute to society?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Services to ensure that TAP remains a leadership priority. Additionally, I will work with the Department to ensure TAP remains evolutionary, adapting to meet the needs and goals of our Servicemembers, families, and the modern workforce.

GAPPED GENERAL/ADMIRAL BILLETS ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

17. Senator KING. General Brown, how will the absence of confirmed combatant commanders and service chiefs affect the overall readiness of the military?

General BROWN. The absence of confirmed leadership impacts the entire chain of command. The absence of confirmed Combatant Commanders and Joint Chiefs limits the ability of our leaders to make authoritative decisions and undermines trusted relationships with our allies and partners. It influences the progression of careers at all levels, which creates negative effects across the Joint Force.

18. Senator KING. General Brown, how does it impact the retention of servicemembers and their families?

General BROWN. Servicemembers and their families are subject to the corresponding uncertainty and unpredictability, particularly in the areas of childcare, housing, education, and spouse employment. Due to the uncertainty and unpredictability, servicemembers and their families miss opportunities that best support their family needs at the next location and/or endure additional financial impacts waiting to transition. This creates conditions that may cause our members and families to seek greater stability elsewhere versus continuing to serve. We face increasing risk of losing talent because of these challenges.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

CHINA'S COERCIVE ACTIVITY TOWARD TAIWAN

19. Senator ROSEN. General Brown, we are all acutely aware of the threat China poses in the cyber domain. China has used Taiwan as a testing ground for its cyber capabilities, and recent cyberattacks have forced Taiwan to harden their defenses. Moreover, China is closely monitoring the outcome of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in an effort to apply lessons learned to a potential invasion of Taiwan.

That's why this Congress I introduced, with Senator Rounds and Congressman Gallagher, bipartisan legislation to expand American military cybersecurity cooperation with Taiwan. This legislation has been included in both the House and Senate versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2024.

If confirmed, how would you work to expand military-to-military cybersecurity cooperation with Taiwan to strengthen their deterrent capabilities and raise the cost of escalation for China?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I will continue to work with United States Cyber Command to assess vulnerabilities and understand Taiwan's cyber requirements to strengthen their deterrent capabilities and raise the cost of escalation for China.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

20. Senator WICKER. General Brown, how do you define the term "equity" as it relates to racial diversity?

General BROWN. It is the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including those who belong to underserved communities and minority groups.

21. Senator WICKER. General Brown, in your view, is there any difference in meaning between "equity" and "equal opportunity"?

General BROWN. I believe there are sometimes differences in policy and common use, but I believe we seek a common outcome: That, all servicemembers, regardless of background, should be afforded the same opportunities to excel based on merit and their qualification.

22. Senator WICKER. General Brown, what evidence would you provide that demonstrates the benefits of the numerous Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion positions hired in the Department of Defense in the last several years?

General BROWN. The Department needs to attract all those willing to serve in order to remain a global leader, deter war, and ensure national security. Individuals hired into these positions ensure the Department's implementation and compliance with laws and policies that attract, retain, and advance the best talent our Nation has to offer. Having the best talent ensures the Department will be able to outthink, outmaneuver, and outfight any adversary or threat.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TRANSGENDER SERVICE POLICIES

23. Senator WICKER. General Brown, should a servicemember who objects to being forced to share intimate living quarters with a transgender servicemember be accommodated with a change in his or her living situation?

General BROWN. It is important to have an environment where all individuals feel welcomed, valued, and safe. There are opportunities to review our policies, approaches, and obtain feedback to see what we can improve with regards to personal privacy. We work to ensure all members have safe and appropriate living quarters.

24. Senator WICKER. General Brown in your view, what effect to good order and discipline is the likely result if servicemembers are forced to live with a transgender servicemember against their will?

General BROWN. Commanders at all levels are responsible for the morale, welfare, good order, and discipline of the unit while fostering a command climate of dignity and respect. Commanders at all levels have this responsibility no matter the situation. As with any issue that affects good order and discipline, servicemembers can and should address any concerns they have through their chain of command.

25. Senator WICKER. General Brown, how are female servicemembers supposed to know if a transgender woman (biological male) has changed his Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) gender marker and thereby has official permission to use the female facilities?

General BROWN. By DOD policy, servicemembers are responsible for meeting military standards and will use berthing, bathroom, and shower facilities associated with their gender marker in DEERS. As this policy is implemented, we want to be respectful of all servicemembers and their privacy. There are opportunities to review our policies, approaches, and obtain feedback to see what we can improve. If there is any concern, servicemembers can and should address concerns through their chain of command.

26. Senator WICKER. General Brown, if confirmed, will you provide general (non-personal) information about suicide ideation and completion rates among persons di-

agnosed with gender dysphoria, and data regarding mental health visits associated with gender dysphoria, since January 2021?

General BROWN. As Secretary Austin stated: mental health is health, and the health, safety, and well-being of our force is a top priority for the Department. If confirmed, I will work collaboratively within existing authorities to provide a response to these inquiries.

27. Senator WICKER. General Brown, if confirmed, will you also provide costs and data on non-deployable days for persons undergoing or completing gender transition?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I will work collaboratively within existing authorities to provide a response to these inquiries.

DRAG SHOWS IN THE SERVICES

28. Senator WICKER. General Brown, do you agree with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's recent memorandum ending drag queen performances on military bases, and, if confirmed, will you continue that policy?

General BROWN. I agree with this policy. Hosting these types of events in federally funded facilities is inconsistent with regulations regarding the use of Department resources. Although I don't set or decide policy, if confirmed, I will follow the policies set by the Department.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM COTTON

KC-46

29. Senator COTTON. General Brown, the U.S. military is in a joint exercise this week, Juniper Oak 23.3 in Israel. The exercise involves United States and Israeli aircraft including the KC-46 and Israeli fighter aircraft. It is our understanding that the Israeli aircraft will not be practicing refueling with the U.S. KC-46 while this exercise is ongoing. The United States has already agreed to sell the KC-46 aircraft to Israel but has not allowed Israeli planes to refuel from a United States KC-46 or allowed Israeli pilots to fly the refueling aircraft itself. Why are Israeli jets not refueling with United States Air Force KC-46?

General BROWN. Juniper Oak concluded as of 12 July. The KC-46 was part of this exercise and did provide some training and familiarization to the Israelis regarding the USAF platform as they prepare to purchase their own. However, the Israelis did not conduct refueling from the KC-46 because they have not yet had a chance to conduct training and certification with this specific platform. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is actively planning KC-46 training and exchange programs with the Government of Israel and will execute such programs on a timeline, and in a manner, that is mutually agreeable between the DAF and Israeli Air Force (IAF).

30. Senator COTTON. General Brown, do you believe that that this exercise is key to building a deterrent capability with a key U.S. ally in the region?

General BROWN. The Juniper Oak series of exercises, which began this past January, has been tremendously beneficial in building our security relationship and interoperability with the Israelis in our mutual effort to deter competitors in this region.

31. Senator COTTON. General Brown, why has training not yet begun?

General BROWN. The Department of the Air Force is actively planning KC-46 training and exchange programs with the Government of Israel and will execute such programs on a timeline, and in a manner, that is mutually agreeable between the DAF and Israeli Air Force (IAF).

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MICHAEL ROUNDS

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM THREATS

32. Senator ROUNDS. General Brown, in 2022, then Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), General Kenneth McKenzie, said "The growing threat posed by [unmanned aircraft system (UAS)] systems coupled with our lack of dependable, networked capabilities to counter them is the most concerning tactical development since the rise of the improvised explosive devices in Iraq."

Given the volume of UAS strikes we are seeing in the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as what we have seen employed in the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR) against U.S. and partner nations, are you concerned about the growing use of UAS and their use against U.S. infrastructure and interests at home and around the world?

General BROWN. Yes, I am concerned. UAS technology is evolving and proliferating rapidly. We continue to develop capability and capacity to defend against these threats in all environments. The war in Ukraine demonstrates the adaptive, lethal, and relatively inexpensive attributes of these systems. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to develop, procure, and field this mission essential defense capability.

33. Senator ROUNDS. General Brown, what is your operational assessment of the Department of Defense's capability to defend installations and critical infrastructure against UAS threats, to include UAS swarms?

General BROWN. Defending against the rapidly evolving UAS threat set presents both a capacity and capability challenge. The Department is developing effective capability to defend against UAS swarms and other threats. Nonetheless, we have a capacity challenge in ensuring the hundreds of DOD installations and critical infrastructure locations have that necessary capability. As we continue to develop these systems, the Department will work to fund and field them as efficiently and effectively as possible.

34. Senator ROUNDS. General Brown, what current directed energy capabilities, to include high power microwave, has the Department of Defense fielded or has in development to defeat the growing UAS and UAS swarm threat?

General BROWN. The Department has a wide array of developing and deployed capabilities. High power microwave is one form of directed energy, as are high energy lasers. The Department has made great strides in ensuring these capabilities are suitable for operation. Programs such as the Army's Palletized High Energy Laser (P-HEL), Navy's High Energy Laser with Integrated Optical-dazzler and Surveillance (HELIOS), or Air Force's Tactical High Power Operational Responder (THOR), are designed to defeat the UAS and swarm threats and change the cost imposition of force protection. If confirmed, I will continue to support the development, fielding, and integration of novel solutions such as directed energy.

35. Senator ROUNDS. General Brown, what efforts is the Department of Defense taking to rapidly field new counter-UAS technologies, including directed energy systems such as high power microwave?

General BROWN. I support the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering designation of directed energy as a Critical Technology Area. Additionally, the Joint Counter-small UAS Office (JCO) has transformed our research and development processes to field such capabilities effectively and efficiently. These focus areas, paired with Service-led efforts to integrate new technology into platforms, concepts, and warfighting tactics, are critical to ensuring that the United States retains its competitive advantage.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JONI K. ERNST

THREAT ASSESSMENT

36. Senator ERNST. General Brown, in your advance policy questions, you said the State of deterrence in the Taiwan Strait is "real and strong," yet senior leaders have said that an attack on Taiwan could come as soon as this decade. How do you evaluate that threat, and what factors influence your assessment?

General BROWN. This assessment is based on our military readiness and unmatched ability to conduct joint operations, our long-term relationships with global allies and partners, and knowing that the PRC understands an invasion would be extraordinarily complicated and costly for an untested force. However, China is still pursuing the development of the PLA into a more credible force for a potential cross-strait contingency.

PARTNER ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY

37. Senator ERNST. General Brown, would you agree that DOD security assistance programs should systematically and rigorously evaluate the capacity of partner forces to absorb U.S. defense articles and services? Please explain.

General BROWN. Yes. Our Security Cooperation efforts are informed by analysis of partner nations' absorptive capacity. For security assistance to have its intended effect, the partner force must be able to employ and sustain it effectively. As such, the Department uses a standard framework for evaluating the capabilities and performance of security cooperation program recipients. The Learning and Evaluation Agenda for Partnership Framework includes a variety of evidence-building activities to support the assessments.

38. Senator ERNST. General Brown, would you agree that partner forces should have the capacity to absorb U.S. defense articles and services within operationally relevant timelines to deter potential threats? Please explain.

General BROWN. Yes. Last year the Department conducted an extensive review of FMS processes, policies, and practices, which produced tangible recommendations to improve the system and reduce burdens. The Department has also established a Continuous Process Improvement Board to monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

DEFENSE PLANNING

39. Senator ERNST. General Brown, how would you mitigate modernization risk across the Services, with each modernizing at the same time?

General BROWN. It will be important to balance modernization risk across Service portfolios and the operational risk in meeting Combatant Command requirements. If confirmed, I expect to use sound analysis and effective communication across DOD, between the Services, and Combatant Commands to ensure the right mix of capability and capacity for our warfighters to campaign and win, both today and tomorrow, with a modernized force.

40. Senator ERNST. General Brown, how would you strike the right balance between the near-term readiness demand signal from global combatant commanders and future modernization, including by accepting measured risk?

General BROWN. The Joint Force must balance risk between its ability to deter our adversaries through operational campaigning and prioritizing Service modernization efforts to achieve superiority in multiple domains. If confirmed, I will use sound analysis and effective communication to strike the right balance between current readiness and modernization. With sustained, predictable, adequate, and timely funding we can continue to improve readiness, build the future force that maintains our competitive advantage and decrease risk.

41. Senator ERNST. General Brown, how would you strike the right balance between maintaining extant force structure and modernization?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I would use sound analysis and effective communication to inform recommendations and decisions regarding the extant force structure and modernization. The 2022 NDS and supporting strategic documents establish the framework for the Services to strike the right balance and field sufficient and capable forces to meet requirements. With sustained, predictable, adequate, and timely funding we can continue to maintain sufficient force structure and build the future force that maintains our competitive advantage and decreases risk.

42. Senator ERNST. General Brown, how will you approach Congress about making necessary divestments to support modernization?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I will focus on how the Joint Force is balancing current force structure with urgent need to modernize and pace the growing threat from China and the acute threat Russia poses to the United States and our allies and partners. As we look to our most significant challenges, we must divest vulnerable capabilities that can no longer be affordably modernized or maintained to provide credible combat power. I will have candid and open communication with Congress ensuring the Joint Force has the required capabilities based on the threat while managing transition risk between divestments and bringing new advanced capabilities online.

COUNTER-UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

43. Senator ERNST. General Brown, does DOD require additional investment or authorities to accelerate fielding of Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) to pace the threat of adversary UAS? Please explain.

General BROWN. PB24 requests \$1.2B to address Counter small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-sUAS) requirements. The JROC iteratively reviews the Joint Counter-small UAS Office's (JCO) efforts to develop and field the capabilities for the

Joint Force to address this threat. The JCO also advocates for accelerated capability development and adjustments to authorities to keep pace with the evolving threat. If confirmed, I will ensure we continue to explore, develop, and provide recommendations that could further enhance our posture, either through investment or authorities, in this key capability area.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED BUDD

FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

44. Senator BUDD. General Brown, do you believe that the current joint force posture provides adequate fighter aircraft coverage worldwide to meet combatant commander requirements? Please answer this question as it relates to current obligations in peacetime, in 2027, and in the event of supporting an operation plan (OPLAN).

General BROWN. We continually assess our global fighter aircraft posture in response to regional and global threats to ensure the force is best positioned to carry out the Nation's priorities. That includes the prioritization of Combatant Command requirements across various environments and time horizons to provide adequate fighter coverage for present operations and modernization recommendations for future operations. Where requirements exceed available capacity, the Department develops plans to mitigate these shortfalls with preferred sourcing options, ally and partner contributions, the reallocation of fighters from lower priority missions, and modernization recommendations. If confirmed, I will continue assessments to inform recommendations regarding Joint Force capability and capacity to address current and future requirements.

45. Senator BUDD. General Brown, if confirmed, what will you do to adjudicate combatant commander requirements for fighter aircraft with limited resources that will be even more severely strained if the Department is allowed to divest the F-15 fleet as planned?

General BROWN. The Department uses management and assessment processes that review and adjudicate fighter levels across all combatant commands to balance risks globally. If confirmed, I will use these processes to inform my recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on how to balance risk in accordance with the National Security Strategy priorities.

46. Senator BUDD. General Brown, if the United States goes to war with China, will we still be able to maintain fighter aircraft presence worldwide as we are obligated to do or will the military be unable to fight in the Pacific?

General BROWN. If confirmed, I will ensure we review a variety of factors to plan for and allocate Joint Force capabilities to cover global contingencies and commitments in collaboration with our allies and partners.

47. Senator BUDD. General Brown, do you believe that U.S. Military Forces, especially fighters, are already overextended?

General BROWN. Modernization, readiness, and operational requirements collectively create a challenging environment with respect to current fighter aircraft posture. The Department employs management and assessment processes to deliberately ensure we assess global risk and make informed decisions on the distribution of forces. I believe we are balancing those competing priorities effectively to modernize the force while simultaneously addressing global threats. Overall, while these forces are in high demand globally, I would not consider them overextended at this point. If confirmed, I will continually assess modernization, readiness, and operational requirements to balance risk and impacts across the Joint Force to include fighter aircraft.

2001 AUTHORIZATION FOR THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE

48. Senator BUDD. General Brown, as Chairman, your powers and duties to advise on the use of military force must be executed to the letter of the law with no room for error in the terms used to target individuals or groups with lethal force. You stated in your advance policy questions that "[t]he 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force [AUMF] provides a legal basis for operations against certain violent extremist organizations"; however, the 2001 AUMF does not use the term "violent extremist organizations". What is your understanding of the legal authority provided by the 2001 AUMF?

General BROWN. The 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) authorizes the President to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons. The 2001 AUMF intended to give the President the statutory authority needed to prevent future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons. As such, the 2001 AUMF authorizes the use of force against al Qaeda and associated forces, including ISIS, that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners.

49. Senator BUDD. General Brown, what legal definition of “violent extremist organizations” were you using in your advance policy question response?

General BROWN. In my advance policy questions, I stated that the 2001 AUMF provided the legal basis for operations against “certain” violent extremist organizations (VEO). The “certain” VEOs to which I was referring were al Qaeda and associated forces, including ISIS.

50. Senator BUDD. General Brown, under what legal authority is the term “violent extremist organizations” synonymous with the 2001 AUMF authorization to use military force against “nations, organizations, or persons [the President] determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001”?

General BROWN. The 2001 AUMF provides authority for the President to use force against those VEOs that the President determined planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such persons. The “certain” VEOs to which I was referring were al Qaeda and associated forces, including ISIS, that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners.

51. Senator BUDD. General Brown, when describing who can be legally targeted, is it appropriate to use an umbrella term like “violent extremist organizations” which could be interpreted to include domestic groups comprised entirely of U.S. citizens, when only a subset of that umbrella term can legally be targeted under the 2001 AUMF?

General BROWN. The 2001 AUMF does not authorize the President to use force against every terrorist organization in the world. Instead, the 2001 AUMF only authorizes the President to target al Qaeda and associated forces, including ISIS, that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners. The President routinely informs Congress through periodic reporting of all groups he determines are targetable pursuant to the 2001 AUMF. If confirmed, in my role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I am committed to ensuring that my advice to the President and Secretary of Defense on issues involving the application of the 2001 AUMF, to include targeting, will be firmly rooted in the existing legal framework.

52. Senator BUDD. General Brown, if the President of the United States asked you for advice on the use of force, would you advise him using umbrella terms that contain both legally targetable groups and non-targetable groups, or would you refer specifically to only those individuals or groups targetable under domestic and international law?

General BROWN. If confirmed, it will be my duty to provide the President with my military advice. When it comes to the solemn decision to use force, I will ensure I consult with my legal counsel and offer advice that fully comports with domestic and international law.

53. Senator BUDD. General Brown, what groups does the 2001 AUMF apply to?

General BROWN. The 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force provides a legal basis for operations against al Qaeda and associated forces, including ISIS.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ERIC SCHMITT

RACE BASED ADMISSION POLICIES

54. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, do you agree with the Government’s position presented in oral arguments in front of the Supreme Court in the University of North Carolina and Harvard case that racial preferences at the military service

academies and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs exist and should continue as a matter of national security?

General BROWN. I am not familiar with the details of the oral arguments presented, but I understand the Supreme Court declined to address the issue of propriety of race-based admissions systems at the military academies. Therefore, it is my understanding the ruling does not apply to military academies.

55. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, if you are confirmed, will you take steps to ensure that the service academies eliminate the consideration of race as a factor in admissions decisions as other non-military universities are now required?

General BROWN. With their Title 10 responsibilities to organize, train, and equip, each Service develops their own service academy accession criteria consistent with laws and policies. If confirmed as the principal military advisor, I will recommend that our policies remain in accordance with the law and ensure individuals be given a fair opportunity to be selected for service academy admissions based on their merits, qualifications, and needs of the Services.

56. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, why should the Service Academies be permitted to continue race-based affirmative action admissions policies when universities who operate Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs will now be prohibited from considering race in admissions decisions?

General BROWN. I believe there are educational and military benefits to diversity. If confirmed, as Chairman my statutory role is to provide my military advice to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and Congress as requested. In this role and in accordance with the law, I will continue to support the proposition that admission to our service academies is open all students who meet standards, regardless of race.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

57. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, do you believe that decisions on recruiting, accessions, assignments, promotions, and other personnel matters should be made on race-conscious basis?

General BROWN. Our servicemembers want and deserve a fair opportunity to perform. The best qualified servicemembers must be the deciding factor to sustain our military superiority, strengthen national security, and maintain high morale throughout the Services.

58. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, in your view, is there any difference in meaning between "equity" and "equal opportunity"?

General BROWN. I believe there are sometimes differences in policy and common use, but I believe we seek a common outcome: That, all Servicemembers, regardless of background, should be afforded the same opportunities to excel based on merit and their qualification.

59. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, do you have any evidence to demonstrate the benefits of the numerous Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion positions hired in the Department of Defense in the last several years?

General BROWN. The Department needs to attract all those willing to serve in order to remain a global leader, deter war, and ensure national security. Individuals hired into these positions ensure the Department's implementation and compliance with laws and policies that attract, retain, and advance the best talent our Nation has to offer. Having the best talent ensures the Department will be able to outthink, outmaneuver, and outfight any adversary or threat.

60. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, should racial balance or diversity take precedence over competence in any military unit?

General BROWN. No. To tap into talent across our Nation and sustain our Joint Force, we must expand our reach to show opportunities that are available to qualified individuals. Individuals, regardless of demographics, should be given a fair opportunity and be selected based on their merits and qualifications.

UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS RISK MITIGATION

61. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, key decisionmakers are grappling with the question of how unmanned aerial systems (UAS) can be integrated into the National Airspace System (NAS) for beneficial purposes while mitigating the risk of the nefarious employment of UAS. The number of reported UAS incidents outside the battlefield has increased from 63 in 2020 to 115 in 2022. I have seen rogue and mali-

cious drones stop sporting events, cause airport shutdowns, violate borders, delivered illegal contraband into prisons, and damaged critical infrastructure. Is DOD coordinating with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Communications Commission (FCC), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and other key Federal agencies on the development of these regulations to ensure DOD is able to not only test counter UAS systems but also employ and deploy them in the Continental United States (CONUS)?

General BROWN. Yes. The Joint Staff coordinates across DOD and with interagency partners to further our ability to develop and operate these capabilities within the United States. If confirmed, I will ensure coordination with our interagency partners to continue development, testing, and fielding of existing and future Counter small-UAS technologies.

62. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, has DOD coordinated with these agencies to have the ability to develop, test and operate directed energy technologies, to include high power microwave, in CONUS to support installation and critical infrastructure defense and force protection missions?

General BROWN. Yes, there are ongoing U.S. Government and select allied government efforts on the use of directed energy systems to protect critical assets and infrastructure. Coordinating and sharing key developments with our partners, such as potential operational concepts, rules of engagement, and command and control structures are essential to optimizing this potentially revolutionary technological capability. If confirmed, I will ensure coordination with our interagency partners to continue development, testing, and fielding of existing and future Counter small-UAS technologies.

63. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, what barriers is the Department of Defense facing with testing and fielding of directed energy systems to include high power microwave systems, in the continental United States?

General BROWN. Maximizing the effectiveness of directed energy weapons while ensuring the safe operating conditions for our warfighters is of the utmost importance. In addition to safe and secure testing grounds, it is critical that our policies allow us to continue to work closely within the Department, the interagency, and with other partners to efficiently develop and field these systems. If confirmed, I will ensure coordination with our interagency partners to continue development, testing, and fielding of existing and future Counter small-UAS technologies.

64. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, has the Department of Defense provided or identified any recommendations for required changes or modifications to equipment, procedures, regulations, or existing laws to operationally employ directed energy capabilities, to include high power microwave, against these threats?

General BROWN. As most directed energy weapon systems to date have been prototypes, the Joint Staff has no specific recommendations to existing laws or procedures at this time. As the Joint Staff gains more fidelity on the employment of these weapons, it will consider the impact to policies such as the Procedures for Management of Illumination of Objects in Space (CJCSI 3225.01B) and the Directed Energy Engineering and Directed Energy Weapon Review and Approval Process (DEW RAP). If confirmed, I will ensure coordination with our interagency partners continues development, testing, and fielding of existing and future Counter small-UAS technologies to include any recommendations for required changes.

65. Senator SCHMITT. General Brown, is the Department of Defense having any issues sharing these types of technologies and capabilities due to International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) restrictions?

General BROWN. Based on my personal engagements, the Department is having issues sharing technology and capability due to ITAR restrictions. Throughout my time in multiple theaters, I have heard our allies and partners discuss this challenge and its impact to interoperability. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Congress, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Department of State to work through these policy issues.

[The nomination reference of General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF follows:]

NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT

PN677

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
May 30, 2023.

Ordered, That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

The following named officer for reappointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601:

To Be General

Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr., 9120

_____, 2023.
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Reed _____
(Signature)

with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed.

□ The nominee has agreed to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

[The biographical sketch of General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

GENERAL CHARLES Q. BROWN, JR.

Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr. is the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. As Chief, he serves as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training and equipping of 689,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the general and other service chiefs function as military advisers to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and the President.

Gen. Brown was commissioned in 1984 as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at Texas Tech University. He has served in a variety of positions at the squadron and wing levels, including an assignment to the U.S. Air Force Weapons School as an F-16 Fighting Falcon Instructor. His notable staff tours include Aide-de-Camp to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force; Director, Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff Executive Action Group; and Deputy Commander, U.S. Central Command. He also served as a National Defense Fellow at the Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia.

Gen. Brown has commanded a fighter squadron, the U.S. Air Force Weapons School, two fighter wings and U.S. Air Forces Central Command. Prior to serving as the Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Brown was the commander of Pacific Air Forces, Air Component Commander for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

Gen. Brown is a command pilot with more than 3,000 flying hours, including 130 combat hours.

EDUCATION

1984 Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering, Texas Tech University, Lubbock
 1991 U.S. Air Force Fighter Weapons School, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.
 1992 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 1994 Master of Aeronautical Science, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, Fla.
 1997 Distinguished graduate, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2000 Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2004 National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, Va.
 2008 Air Force Senior Leadership Course, Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, N.C.
 2012 Joint Force Air Component Commander Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2014 Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2015 Pinnacle Course, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
 2017 Leadership at the Peak, Center for Creative Leadership, Colorado Springs, Colo.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. May 1985 - April 1986, Student, undergraduate Pilot training, 82nd Student Squadron, Williams Air Force Base, Ariz.
 2. May 1986 - July 1986, Student, lead-in fighter training, 434th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, Holloman AFB, N.M.
 3. August 1986 - March 1987, Student, F-16 training, 62nd Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, MacDill AFB, Fla.
 4. April 1987 - October 1988, F-16 Pilot, 35th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Kunsan Air Base, South Korea
 5. November 1988 - April 1991, F-16 Instructor Pilot, wing electronic combat officer, and wing standardization and evaluation flight examiner, 307th and 308th Tactical Fighter Squadrons, Homestead AFB, Fla.
 6. April 1991 - August 1991, Student, U.S. Air Force Fighter Weapons Instructor Course, Nellis AFB, Nev.
 7. August 1991 - August 1992, F-16 Squadron Weapons Officer and Flight



EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant February 28, 1985	
First Lieutenant February 28, 1987	
Captain February 28, 1989	
Major August 01, 1996	
Lieutenant Colonel July 01, 1999	
Colonel June 01, 2005	
Brigadier General November 20, 2009	
Major General July 03, 2013	
Lieutenant General June 29, 2015	
General July 26, 2018	



Commander, 307th Fighter Squadron, Homestead AFB, Fla.
 8. September 1992 - October 1994, Weapons School Instructor, and standardization and evaluation flight examiner, F-16 Division, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nev.
 9. October 1994 - July 1996, Aide-de-Camp to the Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Arlington, Va.
 10. August 1996 - June 1997, Student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 11. June 1997 - September 1997, Student, Armed Forces Staff College, National Defense University, Norfolk, Va.
 12. September 1997 - November 1999, Air Operations Officer, Current Operations Division, Operations Directorate, U.S. Central Command, MacDill AFB, Fla.
 13. November 1999 - June 2003, F-16CJ Instructor Pilot and assistant operations officer, 79th Fighter Squadron; Weapons and Training Flight Commander, 20th Operations Support Squadron; Operations Officer, 55th Fighter Squadron; and Commander, 78th Fighter Squadron, Shaw AFB, S.C.
 14. July 2003 - June 2004, National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, Va.
 15. June 2004 - June 2005, Deputy Chief, Program Integration Division, Directorate of Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Arlington, Va.
 16. July 2005 - May 2007, Commandant, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, 57th Wing, Nellis AFB, Nev.
 17. May 2007 - May 2008, Commander, 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, South Korea
 18. June 2008 - May 2009, Director, Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff Executive Action Group, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Arlington, Va.
 19. June 2009 - April 2011, Commander, 31st Fighter Wing, Aviano AB, Italy
 20. May 2011 - March 2013, Deputy Director, Operations Directorate, U.S. Central Command, MacDill AFB, Fla.
 21. April 2013 - February 2014, Deputy Commander, U.S. Air Forces Central Command; Deputy, Combined Force Air Component Commander, U.S. Central Command, Southwest Asia
 22. March 2014 - June 2015, Director, Operations, Strategic Deterrence, and Nuclear Integration, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe - Air Forces Africa, Ramstein AB, Germany
 23. June 2015 - July 2016, Commander, U.S. Air Forces Central Command, Air Combat Command, Southwest Asia
 24. July 2016 - July 2018, Deputy Commander, U.S. Central Command, MacDill AFB, Fla.
 25. July 2018 - July 2020, Commander, Pacific Air Forces; Air Component Commander for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command; and Executive Director, Pacific Air Combat Operations Staff, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii
 26. August 2020 - present, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. September 1997 - November 1999, Air Operations Officer, Current Operations Division, Operations Directorate, U.S. Central Command, MacDill AFB, Fla., as a major
2. May 2011 - March 2013, Deputy Director, Operations Directorate, U.S. Central Command, MacDill AFB, Fla., as a brigadier general
3. July 2016 - July 2018, Deputy Commander, U.S. Central Command, MacDill AFB, Fla., as a lieutenant general

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: command pilot
 Flight hours: more than 3,000 including 130 combat hours
 Aircraft flown: F-16A/B/C/D and 20 additional fixed and rotary-wing aircraft

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Distinguished Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster
 Distinguished Service Medal
 Defense Superior Service Medal
 Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters
 Bronze Star Medal
 Defense Meritorious Service Medal
 Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
 Aerial Achievement Medal
 Joint Service Commendation Medal
 Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
 Combat Readiness Medal
 National Defense Service Medal with bronze star
 Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
 Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
 Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
 Korea Defense Service Medal
 Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal
 NATO Medal
 Republic of Korea Order of National Security Merit (Tongil Medal)
 Republic of Singapore Pingat Jasa Gemilang (Tentera) Meritorious Service Medal
 Republic of Korea Order of National Security Merit (Samil Medal)

PUBLICATIONS

"Developing Doctrine for the Future Joint Force: Creating Synergy and Minimizing Seams," Air University Press, September 2005
 "No Longer the Outlier: Updating the Air Component Structure" Air University Press, Spring 2016

[The Committee on Armed Services requires certain senior military officers nominated by the President to positions requiring the advice and consent of the Senate to complete a form that details the biographical, financial, and other information of the nominee. The form executed by General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF in connection with his nomination follows:]

118th CONGRESS, 2023 -- 2024
UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
ROOM SR-228
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510-6050

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRE
INFORMATION REQUESTED OF NOMINEES
FOR CERTAIN SENIOR MILITARY POSITIONS

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOMINEE: Answer all questions and provide all requested information. If more space is needed, attach an additional sheet of paper to the Questionnaire and cite the part of the Questionnaire and the question number (e.g., A-9, B-4) to which the continuation of your answer applies. Unless otherwise required, an answer of "yes", "no", or "not applicable" is appropriate.

QUESTIONNAIRE, PART A

NOTE: Information furnished in this part of the Questionnaire will be made available in Committee offices for public inspection prior to the hearing, if any, and will be entered in the hearing record, also available to the public.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION TO BE MADE PUBLIC

1. **Name (Include any former names you have used):** Charles Q. Brown, Jr.
2. **Position to which nominated:** Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
3. **Date of nomination:**
4. **Government experience (List any advisory, consultative, honorary, and other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed in the service record extract provided to the Committee by the applicable agency/department/board):**

I have no advisory, consultative, honorary, and other part-time service, or positions with Federal, State, or local governments.

5. Business relationships (List all positions currently held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, firm, partnership, or other business enterprise, and of any educational or other institution):

I do not currently hold any positions as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, firm, or other business, enterprise, educational, or other institution.

6. Memberships (List all memberships and offices that you currently hold, as well as any memberships and offices you have previously held, in professional, fraternal, scholarly, civic, business, charitable, and other organizations):

Life Member - Air Force Association (inactive); I do not hold any offices in this organization, nor do I enjoy benefits as a result of my membership.

Life Member - Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. (inactive); I do not hold any offices in this organization, nor do I enjoy benefits as a result of my membership.

7. Honors and awards (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognition received for outstanding service or achievements, in addition to those listed in the service record extract and biographical provided to the Committee by the agency or department):

For my undergraduate studies, I was the recipient of a four-year Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship and a one-year scholarship from Mobil Oil Company.

From 2003-2004, I served as a National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, VA.

In 2010, I was recognized for Engineering Excellence and inducted into the Civil and Environmental Engineering Academy of Texas Tech University.

In 2011, I was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus by the Texas Tech University Alumni Association.

In 2014, I was recognized as U.S. Air Force Stars and Stripes Awardee, Black Engineer of the Year Awards.

In 2020, I was recognized as one of Time100 Most Influential People of 2020.

In 2021, I was recognized as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Security Studies Program General Jimmy Doolittle Awardee.

COMMITMENTS IN FURTHERANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

NOTE: In order to exercise their legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress timely receive testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch. A simple “yes” or “no” response is appropriate.

- 8. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress?**

Yes. I agree, if confirmed, to accommodate requests to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress.

- 9. Do you agree, if confirmed, and when asked before this Committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate Committees of Congress to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the position of the Administration?**

Yes. I agree, if confirmed, to accommodate this Committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate Committees of Congress to give my personal views, even if those views differ from the position of the Administration.

- 10. Do you agree, if confirmed, to provide this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so timely?**

Yes. I support Department of Defense policy to cooperate fully with Congress in the execution of its oversight function. If confirmed, and consistent with these policies, I will accommodate Committee requests to provide records and other information within their jurisdiction.

- 11. Do you agree, if confirmed, to consult with this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you?**

Yes. I agree, if confirmed, to consult this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records-including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested.

- 12. Do you agree, if confirmed, to keep this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided?**

Yes. I agree, if confirmed, to keep informed this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records-including documents and electronic communications, and other information I or my organization previously provided.

- 13. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this Committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request?**

Yes. I support Department of Defense policy to cooperate fully with Congress in the execution of its oversight function. If confirmed, and consistent with these policies, I will accommodate Committee requests to provide records and other information within their jurisdiction.

- 14. Do you agree, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this Committee?**

Yes. I agree, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of me or my organization from individual Senators who are members of this Committee.

- 15. Do you agree, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this Committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress?**

Yes. I agree, if confirmed, to ensure that myself and other members of my organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this Committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress.

[The nominee responded to Parts B-E of the committee questionnaire. The text of the questionnaire is set forth in the Appendix to this volume. The nominee's answers to Parts B-E are contained in the committee's executive files.]

SIGNATURE AND DATE

I hereby state that I have read and signed Parts A and B of the foregoing Senate Armed Services Committee Questionnaire, and that the information provided therein, and in any document appended thereto, is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, current, accurate, and complete.


 CHARLES Q. BROWN, JR.
 General, USAF

This ____ day of _____, 20__

 [The nomination of General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF was reported to the Senate by Chairman Reed on July 20, 2023, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on September 20, 2023.]

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