

**NOMINATIONS OF: VICE ADMIRAL FRANK M.  
BRADLEY, USN, TO BE ADMIRAL AND COM-  
MANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPER-  
ATIONS COMMAND; AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL  
DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON, USAF, TO BE  
GENERAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES  
AFRICA COMMAND**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JULY 22, 2025  
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# CONTENTS

JULY 22, 2025

	Page
NOMINATIONS OF: VICE ADMIRAL FRANK M. BRADLEY, USN, TO BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND; AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON, USAF, TO BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND .....	1
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
Wicker, Senator Roger F. ....	1
Reed, Senator Jack .....	2
WITNESS STATEMENTS	
Bradley, Vice Admiral Frank M., USN, to be Admiral and Commander, United States Special Operations Command .....	4
Advance Policy Questions .....	41
Questions for the Record .....	58
Nomination Reference and Report .....	79
Biographical Sketch .....	80
Committee on Armed Services Questionnaire .....	83
Signature Page .....	86
Anderson, Lieutenant General Dagvin R.M., USAF, to be General and Commander, United States Africa Command .....	7
Advance Policy Questions .....	86
Questions for the Record .....	104
Nomination Reference and Report .....	124
Biographical Sketch .....	125
Committee on Armed Services Questionnaire .....	128
Signature Page .....	131

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



**NOMINATIONS OF: VICE ADMIRAL FRANK M. BRADLEY, USN, TO BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND; AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON, USAF, TO BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND**

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**TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025**

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 Roger Wicker (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Scott, Tuberville, Budd, Schmitt, Banks, Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Kaine, King, Warren, Rosen, and Kelly.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER**

Chairman WICKER. This hearing will come to order. The Committee meets today to consider the nominations of Vice Admiral Mitch Bradley to be Commander of the United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM), and Lieutenant General Dagvin Anderson to be Commander, United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). I welcome our witnesses and their families, and I thank them for their continued willingness to serve our Nation.

If confirmed, Admiral Bradley will assume command at a time when Special Operations Command, SOCOM, faces a formidable challenge. SOCOM is being asked to build a force capable of combatting the advanced militaries of China and Russia while simultaneously remaining fully engaged in the fight against violent Islamic terrorism. At the same time, special operators must be ready to respond at a moment's notice as our Nation's premier crisis response force.

It is clear to me that the role and importance of SOCOM is greater today than at any time since its establishment four decades ago. However, SOCOM's budget does not reflect this reality. Its budget has remained flat since 2019. Adjusted for inflation, that amounts to roughly a 14 percent cut in purchasing power. To amplify that point, SOCOM identifies \$757 million in unfunded requirements for fiscal year 2026.

We want to ensure that SOCOM is fully resourced to meet the demands placed on it. Admiral Bradley should tell us how he plans to meet those demands and how we can help.

If confirmed, General Anderson will confront a growing array of threats on the African continent. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) views Africa as a critical link in Xi Jinping's unprecedented global military expansion, and continues to purchase new bases for the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Vladimir Putin remains fully engaged in his destabilizing campaign to trade security assistance for access to Africa's abundant natural resources. This is one of Mr. Putin's ways to fund his malign activities around the world. All the while, Islamic violent extremist groups aligned with ISIS and al Qaeda remain an enduring threat in Africa.

Despite the growing complexity and scale of threats on the continent, AFRICOM remains under-resourced in both manpower and in critical capabilities like intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. I look forward to General Anderson's assessment of Africa's importance to our national security, as well as his description of what AFRICOM's strategy should be to counter the growing threat posed by China, Russia, and other adversaries across the continent. I am particularly interested in how General Anderson plans to use America's economic tools, including the Office of Strategic Capital, to combat Chinese influence.

If confirmed, our nominees will confront a global security environment that is defined by emboldened, aggressive dictators in Beijing, Moscow, Tehran, and Pyongyang. They view this fight as a global fight, unconstrained by geographic boundaries and the traditional forms of warfare. This axis of aggressors blends conventional military power with asymmetric tactics, including economic warfare, disinformation, and the use of proxy networks to undermine America's security interests. The witnesses before us today will play a key role in the Department of Defense's (DOD's) efforts to combat these challenges, and I look forward to hearing them address these and many other concerns during today's hearing.

With that I turn to my friend and colleague, Ranking Member Reed.

#### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED**

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Admiral Bradley and General Anderson, welcome, and congratulations on your nominations. I want to thank you for stepping forward to continue your long careers of service. I would also like to extend my appreciation to your families who were with you every step of the way and will continue to serve alongside you.

Admiral Bradley, you have been nominated to lead the United States Special Operations Command, or SOCOM, at a time of important transformation. Because of the efforts and sacrifices of the Special Operations community over the past 2 decades, the threat from ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria], al Qaeda, and other violent extremist groups has been greatly diminished. Now America's national security interests are challenged by the aggressive and often coordinated ambitions of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

Our Special Operations Forces, or SOF, are not only needed to maintain pressure on violent extremist groups that threaten our Homeland, they are also key to addressing the challenges posed by these adversarial nations. As the recently released SOF Operating Concept proposes, quote, “Joint SOF capabilities will help deter conflict by changing our competitors’ political calculations, denying achievement, or imposing costs that outweigh potential benefits.” This concept is ambitious and will require close partnership with the military services and other elements of the interagency, especially the intelligence community, and with our network of allies and partners around the world.

Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, I expect your experience commanding Special Operators and SEALs around the world will serve you extremely well. Today I would ask that you share how you would plan to lead the Special Operations community to adjust to the rapid pace of change on the battlefield and how lessons learned from Ukraine, Gaza, the Red Sea, Syria, and elsewhere can inform the tactics and modernization efforts of SOCOM. Additionally, I am interested in how you would leverage unmanned systems, artificial intelligence, space, cyber information operations, and other capabilities in SOCOM missions.

Finally, as a combatant command with service-like responsibilities, SOCOM needs and deserves a senior civilian to provide service secretary-like oversight and advocacy for our Special Operations forces. Congress has sought to empower the Assistant Secretary of Defense of Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict to fulfill that mandate. Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, I ask for your support as the Department continues to work to fully implement those reforms.

General Anderson, you have been nominated to lead United States Africa Command, or AFRICOM. In Africa, our adversaries are focused on building trade relationships while seizing influence from us. China’s military ambitions on the continent are no secret, from their growing presence in Djibouti to the more than 100 seaports that have been constructed, financed, or operated by Chinese-owned enterprises, and include service dual-use for future military contingencies.

Russia has also expanded its military engagement in Africa. It is investing heavily in disinformation campaigns across the continent to spread anti-Western movements, undermine democracy, and promote Russian-backed authoritarian leaders, especially in West Africa.

General Anderson, given these challenges, AFRICOM must continue to explore new methods to maintain United States security interests in the region. Our forces continue to train and advise partner militaries, but we are asked to do so with fewer resources and troops going forward. I want to ask you to share your views on the current security situation, the best approach to establish and maintain close partnerships with partner nations, and how we can seek to engage a whole-of-government effort to address the political and economic instability in Africa.

Indeed, stability is essential for any successful nation. For decades, we have relied upon our State Department diplomats and the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, to develop

deep, lasting relationships in Africa that can outlast China and Russia's coercion. The outgoing AFRICOM Commander, General Langley, described our competitive advantage against Russia as, quote, "not just building military and security capacity. The story needs to be told about the successes of USAID and State Department, collectively, for all of our operations, activities, and investments." I am deeply concerned that our soft power leadership in Africa has been significantly undermined over the past several months.

General Anderson, I would like to know your perspective on the importance of diplomacy and development tools to achieve our national security objectives in Africa and how you would work to ensure our competitors do not capitalize on the dismantling of USAID in the region.

Thank you both for your service and willingness to lead and sharing your time. I look forward to your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Reed. Now Admiral Bradley, you may make your opening statement, and feel free to introduce any friends and relatives you have with you, supporting you today.

**STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL FRANK M. BRADLEY, USN, TO BE ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

Admiral BRADLEY. Thank you, and good morning, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next Commander of the United States Special Operations Command. I am grateful to the President, to the Secretary of Defense, and to Chairman Caine for their trust and confidence in me for this important nomination.

I would like to recognize and thank the current SOCOM command team first, General Bryan Fenton and CSM Shane Shorter, and their families, for their leadership of the SOCOM force and families these past 3 years.

I am privileged to be alongside my teammate Lieutenant General Dag Anderson, a longtime friend and Colleague, and if we are confirmed, I very much look forward to teaming with him again in our new capacities.

I would like to recognize my family that are here with me today. They have been critical to my service and to our Nation and without whom I can't imagine being here today.

My best friend and wife of 34 years, Katie, is here with me. The grounding rod and conscience of our family, she has weathered the storms of this career, mentoring young SOF families, rearing our four children, and keeping me humble and centered. She grew up in an Army family, daughter to an infantry officer who served in Vietnam before joining me in the Navy, and has moved households 27 times in her life, a testament to resilience if there ever was one.

Our children and their families are here with me as well. Mary Katherine and husband Ralph, scientists and parents to our first granddaughter, Rosemary Louise; our oldest son, Henry, an FBI special agent, and his wife Brianna, also an FBI employee—we

seem to be making interagency cooperation a bit of family business here—our son, Lieutenant Frank Bradley, a fellow SEAL, and his wife Kiley, a public servant in Hawaii; and our youngest son, James, a data scientist working in the national industrial base on autonomous underwater systems.

I come from a small ranching community in southwest Texas, where I learned the foundations of meritocracy at an early age. I am the son of a World War II veteran, an Army Air Corps Master Sergeant, who worked on P-38s from Operation TORCH in North Africa to the final assault on Berlin. After the war, my father ranched and served as the Justice of the Peace, an elected judge, in our small Texas community. I learned a deep appreciation for our democracy and the judicial system watching him dispense judgment in our community. His example of service and the allure of adventure are what drew me to the United States Naval Academy and the SEAL community, and I have had ample opportunity for both in my 37 years since leaving Eldorado, Texas.

My mother was the compassionate influence. As much of a rancher as any man in our family, she and my grandmother were the matriarchs who would weave discipline with love in appropriate measure. Their influence looms large in everything I do.

Finally, I must thank my siblings and the countless coaches, professors, and pastors who have shaped me both on and off the field. Special Operations is the ultimate team sport, where to win is to live, and to lose often means someone you care for does not. As such, I am grateful to be a member of the most precise and lethal fighting force the world has ever known.

On a strategic landscape where adversaries and competitors challenge the rules-based international order, your SOF provide the agility, precision, and nuance needed to confront and disrupt these threats in competition. But should the need arise, we are also ready to integrate into the joint force to respond to crisis and engage in high-end conflict, where the precise delivery of violence will be critical to shaping success on the battlefield.

To this Committee and your predecessors I say thank you. SOCOM's existence reflects the strong bipartisan commitment in Congress to ensure the United States leads the world in Special Operations, and that commitment has paid off.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the ASD SO/LIC, with my fellow combatant commanders, service leadership, the Chairman, the Secretary of Defense, and this Committee to sustain and strengthen the force, to man, train, equip, and care for our SOF warriors and their families. I will provide the Secretary of Defense and the President candid and clear military advice, and I will remain fully transparent with this Committee, ensuring that you have the information necessary to continue your critical constitutional oversight of our national defense.

I thank you for your service to our country. I look forward to answering your questions and engaging with you on the important work ahead.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Bradley follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT BY VICE ADMIRAL FRANK M. BRADLEY

## OPENING STATEMENT

Good morning, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished Members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next commander of the United States Special Operations Command.

I am grateful to the President, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for their trust and confidence in me for this nomination.

I'd like to recognize and thank the current SOCOM Command Team, General Bryan Fenton and Command Sergeant Major Shane Shorter and their families, for their leadership of the SOCOM force and families these past 3 years.

I am privileged to be alongside my teammate Lieutenant General Dag Anderson—a longtime friend and colleague; and if we are confirmed, I look forward to teaming with him again in our new capacities.

I'd like to recognize the members of my family, who have been critical to my service to our Nation and without whom I can't imagine being here.

My best friend and wife of 34 years—Katie. The grounding rod and conscience of our family, she has weathered the storms of this career mentoring young SOF families, rearing our children, and keeping me humble and centered. She grew up in an Army family, daughter to an infantry officer who served in Vietnam before joining me in the Navy, and has moved households 27 times—a testament to resilience if there ever was one.

Our children and their families are here with me as well. Mary Katherine and husband Ralph—scientists and parents of our first granddaughter, Rosemary Louise. Our son—Henry, an FBI Special Agent and his wife Brianna, also an FBI employee . . . we seem to be making interagency cooperation a family business. Our son, Lieutenant Frank Bradley—a fellow SEAL, and his wife Kiley, a public servant in Hawaii. And our youngest son, James—a data scientist working in the National Industrial Base on autonomous underwater systems.

I come from a small ranching community in southwest Texas, where I learned the foundations of meritocracy at an early age. I am the son of a WWII veteran, an Army Air Corps Master Sergeant who worked on P-38s from Operation TORCH in North Africa to the final assault on Berlin. After the war, my father ranched and served as the Justice of the Peace—an elected judge—in our small community. I learned a deep appreciation for our democracy and the judicial system watching him dispense judgment in our community. His example of service and the allure of adventure are what drew me to the United States Naval Academy and the SEAL Community . . . I have had ample opportunity for both in my 37 years since leaving Eldorado, TX.

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To this committee and your predecessors, thank you. SOCOM's existence reflects the strong bipartisan commitment in Congress to ensure the U.S. leads the world in special operations—and that commitment has paid off.

If confirmed, I'll work closely with the ASD SO/LIC, my fellow Combatant Commanders, Service leadership, the Chairman, the Secretary of Defense, and this committee to sustain and strengthen the force—to man, train, equip, and care for our SOF warriors and their families.

I will provide the SECDEF and President candid and clear military advice, and I will remain fully transparent with this Committee—ensuring that you have the information necessary to continue your critical constitutional oversight of our national defense.

Thank you for your service to our country. I look forward to answering your questions and engaging with you on the important work ahead.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Admiral. General Anderson, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON, USAF, TO BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND**

General ANDERSON. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning. It is truly a humbling honor.

I am honored by the President's trust and confidence in nominating me to serve as the Commander of United States Africa Command, and I am grateful for the support of the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I would also like to recognize General Langley's 40 years of distinguished service and the strong leadership, and the team that he and Sergeant Major Mike Woods forged.

I am joined today by my wife of 26 years, Liz, a native of the great State of Maine. Her unwavering support and sacrifice have been instrumental to my service and the success of the mission. Liz is the heart of our family, and despite nine schools in six states and three countries she is the reason we have two strong and talented daughters: Hala, who is watching from Paris today, and Lilja, who is here with us.

My commitment to service is rooted in the values instilled in me by my family. My grandmother, a nurse, served her community well into her 80's. My grandfathers, one a sailor in World War I and the other a Marine in World War II, were ordinary people who answered the call during extraordinary times.

My mother, Roberta, a special education teacher, and my father, Charles, a police officer, modeled public service, selflessness, and integrity. These values have guided me through 33 years of military service. My parents are watching from my hometown of Ypsilanti, Michigan, the home of Rosie the Riveter and Willow Run, where, at the age of 17, I learned to fly alongside these symbols of American ingenuity and resilience.

It is an honor to sit beside Vice Admiral Mitch Bradley, a Special Operations teammate and one of the finest leaders and warfighters I have served with. If confirmed, I concur with Admiral Bradley that it is truly a team sport, and look forward to collaborating closely with him, and all the combatant commanders, to confront the complex emerging challenges of today.

My career has followed a non-traditional path, with seven joint assignments across four commands, ranging from conventional warfighting exercises in the Indo-Pacific, to conducting special operations in the Middle East and Africa, and from global mobility to stateside training.

My experiences abroad have shaped my career. I had the privilege of studying in the Czech Republic, where I witnessed an outpouring of support for America after 9/11. Almost 23 years later, I had the honor to speak at the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Plze. by Patton's Third Army. Thousands gathered, waving

Czech and American flags, a powerful reminder of our shared values and enduring ties.

While I have flown several aircraft, the missions flying the U-28, a modest single-engine prop, were among my most rewarding. In under 2 years, a team of operators, engineers, and acquisitions experts turned an urgent need into a mission-ready, highly capable surveillance platform, a testament to empowered innovation meeting battlefield requirements.

As the Commander of Special Operations Command Africa, I witnessed how Africa, strategically positioned between the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific, is increasingly at the convergence of great-power rivalry and terrorism. China is expanding its approach from a focus on economic influence to greater military and information operations. Russia's actions are frequently destabilizing and run counter to United States interests. Terrorist networks continue to exploit ungoverned spaces, posing a direct threat to our safety and security.

During my time at Special Operations Command Africa, an American citizen was taken hostage in Niger. Within 96 hours, we located him, coordinated with multiple African partners and European allies, and Joint Special Operations Command executed the rescue. The speed and success of that mission underscored the seamless integration of the joint force and the importance of strong relationships. When we called in the middle of the night, our partners answered.

If confirmed, I look forward to building on that success and those relationships. I will keep this Committee informed, I will be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars, and I will lead by example to advance U.S. interests and counter adversary threats.

Thank you for your unwavering support of the men and women of the U.S. Military and thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Anderson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning.

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Thank you for your unwavering support of the men and women of the U.S. Military and thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to your questions.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, General Anderson, and thank you both for being with us. It is now time for me to ask some standard questions that we ask of all military nominees.

To exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress be able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information. So if you will just answer yes or no. You can answer simultaneously. And we will be watching.

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

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, Senator.

General ANDERSON. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Okay. Just a yes or a no is fine. Do you agree when asked to give your personal views even if those views differ from the administration in power?

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

General ANDERSON. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Have you assumed any duties or undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

Admiral BRADLEY. No.

General ANDERSON. No.

Chairman WICKER. Will you ensure your staff complies with deadlines established for requests for communications, including questions for the record in hearings?

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

General ANDERSON. Yes.

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

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

General ANDERSON. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Will those witnesses be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

General ANDERSON. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify upon requests before this Committee?

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

General ANDERSON. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communications, in a timely manner, when requested by a duly constituted committee, or to consult with that committee regarding the basis for any good-faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

General ANDERSON. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. And thus ends our standard questions. Let me ask one that has become somewhat standard, and we have gotten encouraging responses from all of our witnesses.

Much of the funding in the defense reconciliation bill, the Big Beautiful Bill, as the President calls it, is unspecific and will technically be at the discretion of the Department of Defense, though this Committee will write recommendations for them. We do that because of the rules.

A quick yes-or-no answer from each of you. Do you commit to follow the Congress' spending recommendations in defense reconciliation, unequivocally? Admiral Bradley.

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. General Anderson?

General ANDERSON. Yes.

Chairman WICKER. And Admiral Bradley, you, in particular, will be receiving quite a sum of money for SOCOM priorities, and we want to work together to make sure it is used for the most pressing needs. So I thank you for your answers there.

General Anderson, you talked about the activities of China and Africa. You talked about the activities of Russia under their dictator, Vladimir Putin. Why do they do this? Are they helping Africa out of the goodness of their hearts?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I appreciate the concern. I see that from my time at SOCAFRICA and my time on the Joint Staff that there is growing activity from both China and Russia on the continent. Both of those nations see their futures running through the continent and as key to their strategy.

I think we can look at several of the things that have been done that have not necessarily been good for the people of Africa. I think they are aware of that. I think when we can highlight that it helps

them understand the risks of dealing with China and Russia, whether that be debt diplomacy from China or the corrosive effects of the Africa Corps, previously known as Wagner, in those societies.

Chairman WICKER. Well, okay, and so when we have programs such as PEPFAR or USAID, we would like to feel that that really helps the people there. But we have a strategic security purpose in doing that ourselves, do we not?

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Okay, and what is that?

General ANDERSON. Senator, these programs are important as long as they provide for the security and prosperity of our Nation. I think as we target those in key areas they can help build stability in key regions.

Chairman WICKER. If we abandoned the playing field in that regard, what would be the response in Moscow or Beijing? I think they would be celebrating, would they not?

General ANDERSON. Well, Senator, I know that if there are opportunities, they will seize them.

Chairman WICKER. Yes. Now, on SOCOM, let me just say, the SOCOM budget has been inadequate. There has been a 35 percent increase in combatant command requests for SOCOM support over the last 3 years. In the last decade, there has been a 200 percent increase in crisis response missions executed by SOCOM. Fourteen percent budget cut, though, in SOCOM, as I pointed out in my opening statement, since 2019, when adjusted for inflation, and in raw numbers, 4,000 troops cut from SOCOM, and \$757 million in unfunded requirements for fiscal year 2026.

Now Admiral, the reconciliation bill included \$1.64 billion to support SOCOM's readiness and modernization priorities. Do you agree with me that SOCOM's budget is inadequate to meet growing global demands?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, as you have described it, I have heard General Fenton make a compelling case with the same statistics and believe those to be true.

Chairman WICKER. Let me just point out to, and make sure you agree. Reconciliation was always meant to be additive to, not a replacement for the core budget, absent real growth in SOCOM's future budget requests. Your command will face significant resourcing challenges. Is that correct?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, we will absolutely use the resources that are provided to us, with ruthless prioritization to go down through the tasks that are given to us. Inevitably, though, with the current operations commitment that exists, that will mean that we will have to mortgage some of our modernization initiatives to be able to pay for that readiness to sustain those current operations.

Chairman WICKER. Well, listen. We will not be able to be generous with either of you, but we do want to hear what you really, really need. We are going to be depending on the two of you and your teams to let us know that, because if something goes wrong and you did not have the capacity to cover it, then they should not look to you if this body has not provided you with the resources.

So thank you very much. Senator Reed, you are recognized.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. When General Fenton delivered the posture statement last year he said, and

I quote, "Our interagency efforts also have included close cooperation with the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development. With the implementation of the Global Fragility Act in Coastal West Africa fundamentally focused on preventing crises in failed states before they can occur."

Similarly, AFRICOM Commander, General Langley, testified, "U.S. investment focused on stabilization, conflict prevention and peace-building, democracy, governance, economic growth, and public health attack the roots of terrorism and tyranny more than bullets and air strikes ever will."

For both of you gentlemen, why are such efforts in our vital national security interests and not just humanitarian good deeds, and what do we risk by walking away from these investments? Admiral Bradley?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. In my 34 years I have had the opportunity on many continents to work closely with our humanitarian, our AID, our diplomats, and I have seen the executors, even at the non-governmental organization level, provide important capability for the U.S. I also recognize, however, that there are many priorities, as we just talked about, and the prioritization of the budget across those is a difficult thing to balance and to manage.

I pledge, and I believe, that throughout time we have always worked as an integrated interagency to be able to bring the multiple levers of influence and power that the U.S. needs to achieve its policy objectives, and if confirmed, I would pledge to continue that.

Senator REED. General Anderson, and particularly in Africa.

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. From my time at SOCAFRICA, much like Admiral Bradley, I worked extensively with State Department, USAID, and NGO's across the continent to meet requirements. Africa is very much an economy of force theater so we have to maximize the limited resources we have. So going forward we will look at where we can find those opportunities, whether it is with State Department and the aid that they can provide, bringing and working with the non-governmental organizations—we have worked closely with several in Africa—also looking at opportunities with the Office of Strategic Capital or private equity as private firms may be able to invest and help in some of these areas, as well.

I think one of the things that AFRICOM is positioned well to do is to convene people to have these discussions, understanding we provide the military aspect of it, we can provide a venue to bring folks together to look at the security implications of these investments.

Senator REED. Given the current situation, in which the State Department is being hollowed out and that USAID is being effectively abolished, have you lost a valuable strategic tool?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I understand that is still under review for the foreign assistance and that much of that is being transferred to State, so if I am confirmed I would have to assess what is available and how we can best use that for our national interests.

Senator REED. Admiral Bradley, the same question. Are you losing a very valuable tool?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I am very confident that however the distribution of those tasks and those efforts are made, we will continue to work with them closely to make sure we bring the best combination of those levers and tools to bear.

Senator REED. Admiral Bradley, what are your modernization priorities for SOCOM?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. As we look to the future, the conflicts that SOCOM might be called to participate in, I have had the opportunity this last 3 years to participate in General Fenton's leadership team as a member of the Board of Directors. We focused, as you have seen and in his testimony, on how to penetrate and power project in contested environments. We see that through the lessons learned on the battlefields of Ukraine, even into the Red Sea, and certainly as we contemplate what a future fight against China might look like. So contested environments and being able to arrive with the element of surprise are a critical component.

A second priority, though, is also the ability to operate within the ubiquitous technical surveillance environment that is evolving around us today. It provides certainly challenges to our ability to again arrive with that element of surprise, but also opportunities, and here, the partnership with CYBERCOM, with SPACECOM, and with your Special Operators is particularly important. So those strategic partnership and relationships and modernization of that partnership I think is critical.

Senator REED. Finally, General Anderson, if I may, you have had valuable experience on the ground already as commander of Special Operations in AFRICOM. With respect to Somalia, do you think a continuous presence is essential?

General ANDERSON. I am sorry, Senator. I missed—where?

Senator REED. In Somalia.

General ANDERSON. In Somalia. Senator, as you know, we have had presence there for quite some time. We have seen some limited success there in training their forces. The Danab force is a capable counterterrorism force. I do believe that that area is volatile. Al-Shabaab has shown the desire and will to attack the United States and the United States' interests. They are increasing cooperation with the Houthis. So I think it is in our interests to have some level of engagement in that region. Whether that is with the Federal Government or the member states, I think that is something I would have to assess, if confirmed.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator. Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, gentlemen, to both of you and to both of your families, as well, for your many years of service and sacrifice.

Countering China has been, and will continue to be, an important mission for both SOCOM and AFRICOM. The Indo-Pacific region, one of the most strategically vital and geographically expansive regions in the world, we have SOCOM, and SOCOM must be able to rapidly engage where the need is paramount over an immense expanse of land, sea, and air space.

Admiral Bradley, as the United States military prepares for a potential war with China, what do you envision Special Operations Forces, what kind of role will they be playing in the Indo-Pacific, and how will you be able to balance that with other SOF responsibilities?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. I believe that the role that SOF has played over its history has been founded on a critical value proposition that will be very relevant, even more relevant against China, and that is our ability to build strong relationships, to partner and to build capacity, essentially to be a force multiplier across a strong alliance, and to strengthen that alliance by doing such.

In fact, the credibility we have generated over these last two-plus decades in the counterterrorism fight give us great ability to be able to help sustain and extrapolate that credibility into the Indo-Pacific, where building partnerships with our allies will be very critical. That will allow us placement and access to then help develop enhanced understanding of our adversaries' actions that might be against us. Then if deterrence fails and we cascade to crisis or conflict, it will give us the ability to leverage that placement and access for the delivery of irregular kinetic and non-kinetic effects.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. General Anderson, we talked a little bit yesterday about the growing influence of China on the continent, and talked about that influence that they have and the threats that they are posing. What do you think are the greatest areas of threats that you are going to have to focus on if you are confirmed?

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator, and I appreciate the discussion that we had on this. I think China does pose a significant threat to United States interests on the continent. We have seen how they have used the Belt and Road Initiative to be a primarily economic focus in the past. We are seeing them expand into more information operations on the continent, for providing the communist propaganda to the continent. We are also seeing them engage in more military-to-military engagements, which is concerning.

We are also looking at some of the infrastructure they are looking to development, and ports that could become dual use are of concern, especially if they have something on the Atlantic. Atlantic base of sea-based Chinese ships would greatly complicate our security picture writ large.

So working across Africa I think to identify where China is not working in everyone's interests is important, and I think also engaging in the information domain to highlight some of these malign activities is important.

Senator FISCHER. We also spoke a little bit about losing some of our Nation partners who have been a great help to us on the continent. We talked about looking at National Guard and the partnerships that they have in various countries, and not just in Africa but also around the world.

Just briefly, could you kind of hit on the importance of developing those or using those partnerships as tools to help develop good relationships?

General ANDERSON. Absolutely, Senator. I think the State Partnership Program is one of the best programs we have within our Department. It establishes long-term relationships, it allows engagement, and builds capability and readiness for our forces as well as theirs.

I think what you brought up is an interesting point, especially Nebraska, who has partners on the continent, but also with the Czech Republic, as there are opportunities that the State Partnership Program can bring these partners together and help burden share some of the effort, so that we can use the expertise—the Czech's bring great expertise and capabilities—to help train our African partners. Combined with the State Partnership Program, I think there are some opportunities there, without a doubt.

Senator FISCHER. Admiral Bradley, short question, Mr. Chairman, please. What is your view on the importance of the space domain with regards to Special Operations Forces, and how would you leverage that new command? If you would take that for a question for the record, the Chairman is anxious to gavel me out.

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I will.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you very much.

Chairman WICKER. Very, very fine question, Senator Fischer, which is going to require a lengthy response on the record. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations to both of you for your nominations. I just noticed, in looking at your bios, you both have had, in your professional careers, some significant experience in programs kind of with international partners. So Admiral Bradley, your posting to the Italian equivalent of their sort of SEALs, the Incursori, and General Anderson, your reception of the Olmsted scholarship. Talk about how in each instance this was important to your professional development.

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. I think I was most surprised and rewarded with being able to see the world through the eyes of a different culture, and as close even as the Italian culture is to America, in fact, many immigrants, a large portion of the country here. But they could still see the same event in a decidedly different way.

I believe that experience both deepened my family's closeness and appreciation for the rest of the world but also helped to deepen my own empathy, to be able to understand the way other people might see things.

Senator KAINE. So you clearly conveyed a benefit to these Italian allies by being posted there, but also received a benefit in return that has helped you in the leader you are today.

General Anderson, tell us about the Olmsted program.

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator, it was, in hindsight, a transformative program to be able to study abroad and to be immersed in the culture. Like I said in the opening statement, when I was there after 9/11 you could not walk through any town square without seeing a memorial to the United States and to the Americans that were lost.

As a matter of fact, when I walked to school that morning, on September 12th, there was a statue of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the first President of the Czech Republic. On that square you could

not walk through it because it was covered with flowers and candles, and across the chest of the statue was, in Czech, a banner that said, "We stand with you for democracy." It was a pretty powerful reminder of what those relations mean and what the American way of life and our values stand for to many people.

Senator Kaine. This was a number of years ago, at a time when it probably would have been hard to imagine a land war in Europe. But the relationship the United States has had with the Czech Republic, including in the current conflict in Ukraine, has been a very important one.

We also have a lot of programs where we bring military leaders from other nations to the United States to participate in programs at the Naval War College and the Army War College and others. If you benefited from the experiences in the Czech Republic and in Italy, I believe, from my own observation, these programs are also pretty important to building relationships with foreign military leaders who come to the United States. Do you share that view?

Admiral Bradley. Senator, I do.

Senator Kaine. The reason I ask the question—I was interested in the commonality in your resumes in this way—is I am very, very worried about the budget that the Administration has submitted, and the rescissions package we voted on is dramatically undercutting these exchange programs. I have not yet seen the effect in the DOD, but in the rescission package that we passed last week, it was very nonspecific about details. But you can tell a little bit from how these rescissions will be used from looking at the Administration's submitted budget.

The Administration's submitted budget for 2026 basically eliminates a lot of funding that goes into this. The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs in the State Department, which handles these programs for diplomats, the recommendation is that it be cut by 93 percent, and many of the RIFs that were done a couple of Fridays ago in the State Department, laying off people who do this work. This is the Fulbright Program, and this is other exchange programs. These programs that the U.S. has funded have educated more than 600 current or former heads of other nations. They have come to the United States and gained experience here. Eighty-eight Nobel Prize winners are alumni of these exchanges, and the Administration proposes to cut the budget by 93 percent. I am very worried about that.

Let me ask one other question. How important is it, in your work in AFRICOM or Special Forces, going forward, that the U.S. be a strong competitor in the information domain?

Admiral Bradley. Senator, I will start there. It is critical. In the competition, in the information domain, truth is the high ground. We in the United States have a history of leveraging the truth, telling the truth, and I think that is powerful.

Senator Kaine. General Anderson?

General Anderson. Senator, I think it is absolutely critical across the continent, and I agree with Admiral Bradley. The fact that we have a credible news source and that we tell the truth is a very powerful information operation.

Senator Kaine. The Administration's proposed budget for 2026 slashes the U.S. Agency for Global Media's budget by 82 percent.



The Voice of America, the Middle East Broadcasting Network, VOA Persian, all of these are being dramatically reduced, and I think many of the RIFs that happened at the State Department are in that space.

Mr. Chair, I would conclude, I would like to just introduce in the record an article from the Washington Institute of Near East Policy, “Here’s How State Department Cuts Would Impede U.S. Policy,” dated July 3, 2025.

Chairman WICKER. Is there objection? Without objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]

### Here’s How State Department Cuts Would Impede U.S. Policy in the Middle East

by Ben Fishman, Elizabeth Surman

Jul 3, 2025

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**The Trump administration’s budget cuts, intended to make America “safer, stronger, and more prosperous,” could wind up harming U.S. interests in the region while strengthening Russian and Chinese media warfare.**

**A**t a time when the Middle East needs additional help managing the fallout from the war with Iran, the extreme State Department budget cuts initiated by the Trump administration are especially ill-timed. By cutting funds to partners who combat Iran’s most dangerous regional proxies, the administration risks enabling a faster rehabilitation of Tehran’s “axis of resistance.” Other cuts would limit Washington’s ability to provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance to Yemen, constrain efforts to reach the Iranian people, and cede ground to China and Russia in the information wars—one of the many negative repercussions of eliminating a vital network like Voice of America (VOA).

The Senate has until July 18 to object to these cuts because the administration submitted its budget by means of a [rescission bill \(https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/rescissions-101/\)](https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/rescissions-101/), a rarely used procedure that gives Congress a limited period to respond to the administration’s proposal before it takes effect.

### Aid Budget Significantly Reduced Following Review

In January, the administration said it would freeze all aid programs while it determines if they make America “safer, stronger, and more prosperous.” The review exempted military aid for Israel and Egypt as well as lifesaving humanitarian assistance on a case-by-case basis.

In his [May 20 Senate testimony \(https://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/review-of-the-fy26-state-department-budget-request\)](https://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/review-of-the-fy26-state-department-budget-request), Secretary of State Marco Rubio presented a budget request for his department that totaled \$28.5 billion—less than half of the most recent budget and the lowest since 2008. Eliminating the \$20 billion budget of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) accounts for only around half of the cuts therein. Some \$11 billion of the new budget is allocated for management and security costs across the department and embassies, leaving around \$17.5 billion for global foreign assistance. When one subtracts military aid to Israel and Egypt (\$4.4 billion), that leaves around \$13.1 billion for spending across the globe.

### What’s New

The budget’s most prominent addition is the \$2.9 billion “America First Opportunity Fund” (AIOF), intended to make the department “more nimble in responding to crises or global developments.” Secretary Rubio cited the political transition in Syria as an example.

The description of the AIOF is so broad that it could be used to address traditional foreign policy issues (e.g., to “support some of our most enduring and critical partners, such as Jordan”) or to facilitate the administration’s immigration policy. AIOF could also be used to restore funding for UN activities that focus on American interests

and include burden-sharing. Other international organizations that have retained their funding are the International Atomic Energy Agency, NATO, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the International Maritime Organization.

## Continuity and Change in Security Assistance

The proposed budget maintains the \$3.3 billion security aid package for Israel that is part of the ten-year memorandum of understanding from 2018. (Almost all U.S. security assistance comes in the form of Foreign

Military Financing, a program under which designated countries receive U.S. military hardware, training, and maintenance.) State's budget request also maintains \$1.1 billion in military support for Egypt and \$200 million for Jordan, as well as the option for Jordan to receive \$2 billion in loans and loan guarantees. Previously, the kingdom received \$350 million in FMF.

However, the administration significantly cut back assistance to key partners at a time when the United States should be taking advantage of Iran's weakness. The budget does not include funding to the Lebanese Armed Forces just as they are challenging a weakened Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The LAF always struggled (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/surprisingly-lebanon-israel-cease-fire-holding>) to recruit and pay its troops, especially in the face of domestic economic crises and Hezbollah's better-equipped, better-funded forces. Now that Israel has dealt Hezbollah a powerful blow, the LAF is finally doing its job of monitoring ceasefire terms and destroying arms caches. Cutting the \$100-\$150 million that the United States has traditionally provided to the LAF endangers this mission and could hand Hezbollah—and, by extension, Iran—the longer-term victory in Lebanon.

Equally important in keeping Iran's proxies down is supporting the Iraqi security forces as they contend with militias. The Defense Department provides most of the "train and equip" support to these forces under the counter-Islamic State fund, but other important security assistance came through direct FMF to Iraq, reaching as high as \$250 million in 2023. Yet the 2026 request includes no reference to Iraq other than embassy security.

Funds for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) comprise most of the remaining security assistance programs. Yet funding for INL, which trains law enforcement entities, would drop from \$1.29 billion to just \$125 million. This weakens Washington's ability to train foreign partners to combat criminal activities that could affect American citizens (<https://www.justsecurity.org/106919/stopped-security-assistance/>). Limited cuts were also made to NADR, which supports international organizations that enforce restrictions on weapons of mass destruction—including those that monitor Iran's nuclear program.

## Eliminating Development Assistance and Economic Support

The 2026 budget completely eliminates a combined \$7.5 billion in funding for development assistance and the Economic Support Fund in order to "streamline accounts and ensure the most effective use of foreign assistance funding." Although most of these funds are not directly related to national security, there are several important exceptions.

Jordan stands to lose the most, including nearly \$1 billion in budget support, which comprises over 10 percent of its national budget. Most other cuts to development assistance and the Economic Support Fund were expected, but the elimination of the Near East Regional Democracy fund (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/why-secretary-rubio-should-provide-grant-waivers-urgent-human-rights-work-iran>) comes as the Iranian regime launches another sweeping internal crackdown. For more than fifteen years, NERD has supported critical human rights and internet freedom groups in Iran. From its inception in 2009 through 2023, Congress appropriated \$600 million for it.

Additional cuts in development assistance would eliminate programs related to countering violent extremism, advancing resilience to environmental shocks, reforming education, promoting human rights, and enhancing workforce development. Apparently, none of these issues meets the administration's threshold for making America safer, stronger, and more secure.

### **Gutting Educational, Cultural, and Public Affairs**

The 2026 request reduces the budget for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by 93 percent, from \$741 million to a mere \$50 million. For more than eighty years, ECA has organized educational, cultural, and professional exchange programs with other countries to foster mutual understanding. The Biden administration's 2025 budget justification noted that more than 600 current or former heads of state and 88 Nobel Prize winners are alumni of ECA exchanges. This includes the Fulbright program, ECA's most highly valued partnership exchange, which is set to lose its entire \$247 million budget.

While the administration gutted ECA, it preserved the Peace Corps, arguing that it exemplifies an "America First" strategy by fostering people-to-people ties, growing a future English-language workforce for American companies, strengthening relationships with allies, and counteracting the influence of adversaries. However, many educational scholarship programs with similar goals were eliminated.

The U.S. Agency for Global Media, whose mission is to advance freedom of information and promote democratic values, will see its funding slashed by 82 percent, from nearly \$867 million to \$153 million. Entities within this agency include Voice of America, its Arabic-language counterpart Middle East Broadcasting Networks, and VOA Persian, a service that should be ramping up programming instead of laying off staff amid the Islamic Republic's postwar crackdown on the Iranian people.

### **Conclusion**

If passed, the Trump administration's proposed budget rescission would likely harm multiple American interests, especially in the Middle East. In addition, it would fail to take advantage of Iran's weakened position after years of concerted U.S. and Israeli action, including costly American strikes against the Yemeni Houthis and Iran's nuclear program. It would also cut crucial funding to the LAF and Iraqi security forces while eroding the resilience of Jordan, a major U.S. ally.

Meanwhile, eliminating funding for NERD, VOA, and other broadcast instruments would leave authoritarian narratives unchallenged, allowing Chinese and Russian media to fill the void. And cuts to humanitarian assistance—traditionally an American strength—would limit Washington's ability on several fronts, such as aiding Gaza once a deal is reached between Israel and Hamas, addressing the ongoing crisis in Yemen, or fulfilling President Trump's stated desire to help the new Syria.

During the June 25 Appropriations Committee hearing on the rescission bill, senators expressed the most concern about eliminating global health programs and losing American soft power. After President Trump's major military action, however, they should also recognize how the bill stands to weaken America's role in the Middle East. Ben Fishman is the Steven D. Levy Senior Fellow in The Washington Institute's Rubin Program on Arab Politics. Ellie Surman is a 2024-25 research assistant in the program.

**Chairman WICKER.** Thank you very much, Senator Kaine. Senator Cotton.

**Senator COTTON.** Gentlemen, welcome. Congratulations. Thank you for your continued service. Thanks to your families for their service and sacrifice, as well.

Admiral Bradley, Special Forces were targeted for reductions in forces and funding in recent years by the past administration. Could you explain what it takes to turn a conventional soldier, sailor, airman, or marine, into a Special Operator? How many years does it take to build that kind of expertise and ability?

**Admiral BRADLEY.** Senator, thank you. First, I have to say we have the benefit of being able to draw from the best and the brightest across the great population of the United States. Our services

do the principal recruiting, and we have the opportunity to be able to draw from within those recruits.

But Special Operations provides a very valuable recruiting tool for those services, as well. Once a candidate assesses into a service and has the initiative to want to volunteer to come to one of our selection assessments programs, a rigorous process, both of their resume, of their psychological resilience, of their physical capabilities begins, followed by some amount of training and really grit determination. On the back side of that, that may take anywhere up to a year, depending upon the program. Then additional advanced training will continue. Then finally, the operator or the member will be assigned to an operational unit where, frankly, another amount of apprentice to master a progression begins.

So for a fully up and around operator to reach leadership status it is not uncommon for that to take 6 or 7 years.

Senator COTTON. So if Special Operations Forces were to face cuts, you do not just lose capability. You lose a lot of time, as well. That is correct?

Admiral BRADLEY. It does take time to build that operator. Yes, Senator.

Senator COTTON. Versus, say, just for the sake of comparison, the Army can send someone from the first day of basic training through infantry training to an infantry platoon in maybe 6 months. Obviously, they are brand new privates just out of training, about 6 months versus many years. I think we should be mindful of that contrast.

What is your assessment on how drones are changing the modern battlefield? Every day there are new reports of new developments in drone warfare in Ukraine. We saw a couple of months ago Ukraine launched audacious attacks from inside of Russia with pre-positioned drones. It appears that Israel may have done something similar inside of Iran. I know you have probably given this a lot of thought in your current job and looking ahead to your future job.

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I do not think it is unfair to call this a revolution in military affairs. The changing, accelerating pace of technology, the ubiquitous information environment, and the advent of man-machine teamed autonomy on the battlefields of the world today are absolutely changing the character of warfare in our very eyes.

Within Special Operations, and I believe the initiatives, frankly, that you have initiated here with the FORGED Act, the SPEED Act across the way, and the President and the Secretary's initiatives to drive innovation within the Department are critical to allowing us to use the innovative spirit of our operators, to be able to capture those problems and opportunities we see on the battlefield and turn them into new man-machine teamed approaches.

Senator COTTON. Thank you. General Anderson, given your current role and also the threat of drone attacks from terrorist groups and your future role, what are your thoughts on this question?

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator, I appreciate that. It is transforming the battlefield. We are at a critical inflection point in history, much like the Industrial Age matured in the early 20th century, the Digital Age maturing now. As Admiral Bradley men-

tioned, it is not just the drones we see today. It is what does it mean when we have autonomy and AI behind those drones, and we have swarm attacks. That is not necessarily science fiction. That is in the future.

So we have to take this very seriously, not just taking on the drone operations but also what do we do to counter them and defend against them. This is a grave concern for me as I look at the African continent, as there are vulnerabilities out there for our forces. But it is also a vulnerability for our partners, as well.

Senator COTTON. I guess I should say this, not just potential terrorist groups. It is also potential insurgencies, uprisings, clashes of the kind that we see with more frequency in Africa, as well.

Okay, thank you, gentlemen.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I want to welcome both of you, congratulate you on your nominations, and acknowledge Liz in the audience, a resident of Maine, as you noted, General Anderson, proud graduate of the University of Maine. I hope, Liz, you will convey to your family in Maine that you saw me working. I appreciate you being here today.

Mr. Chairman, I have a statement from our brother, Jim Inhofe, on the AFRICOM legislation from 2008, when it was first adopted, and I would like unanimous consent to enter it into the record of this hearing.

Chairman WICKER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]



**James M. Inhofe**  
U.S. SENATOR - OKLAHOMA

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For Immediate Release:  
April 2, 2008

Contact: Elizabeth French  
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## INHOFE STATEMENT ON AFRICOM LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) today made the following statement about his legislation (S.Res.480) recognizing the strategic importance of the African continent and welcoming the establishment of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). Senator Inhofe returned on Monday from a weeklong trip through Africa (including visits in Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Zambia, Tanzania and Ethiopia) and Iraq, and met with Vice Admiral Robert Moeller, Deputy Commander for Military Operations of AFRICOM, at AFRICOM's current headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany.

**"The U.S. Africa Command is a partnership between military and civilian communities that will focus on existing U.S. programs, such as training peacekeeping forces and enabling African nations and regional organizations to improve security on the continent. AFRICOM's unique characteristic of combining both military and civil components presents our military with the ability to play a strategic role in partnering with our African allies to help prevent and respond to humanitarian crises, improve cooperative efforts to defend against terrorism, and support efforts to bolster unity and security among African governments.**

**"During my many trips to the continent of Africa, I have seen the significant and strategic place in the world that Africa holds, especially in the global fight against terrorism. African countries have become more vulnerable as Al Qaeda has increasingly infiltrated the Horn of Africa, threatening the stability and quality of life in the region. Security cooperation remains a critical foreign policy tool that allows the United States to advance its national security interests worldwide, as effective global partnerships are key to disrupting terrorist networks and other threats around the globe.**

**"The United States has a long history of offering support and helping to establish security on the African continent. AFRICOM is another tool that the United States can use to aid Africa as it continues to grow into a secure, democratic continent with a growing economy. My resolution recognizes the strategic importance of the African continent and encourages the Department of Defense, the State Department and USAID to work cooperatively together with our African allies to bring hope to the continent, while emphasizing that AFRICOM is expected to support, not shape, U.S. foreign policy in Africa. It also encourages African nations to acknowledge and take advantage of the opportunity which AFRICOM represents to collaborate in promoting peace and stability on the continent."**

In February 2007, the President announced his decision to create a unified U.S. command for Africa, or "AFRICOM", to provide a more holistic approach toward United States military relations, programs, and activities on the continent under a single headquarters staff. The stated purpose of AFRICOM is to "promote U.S. National Security objectives by working with African states and regional organizations to help strengthen stability and security," while simultaneously streamlining United States security assistance programs and

eliminating bureaucratic divisions. The establishment of AFRICOM also serves as recognition of the strategic importance of the African continent and demonstrates the desire of the United States to treat our African allies as partners, rather than clients, in the promotion of international security.

Senator Inhofe's legislation was introduced on March 12, 2008 and is currently in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

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Senator KING. As all of us know, Senator Inhofe was a great champion of our interests in Africa, probably the greatest in the Senate. I noted in his statement, again from 2008, "My resolution recognizes the strategic importance of the African continent and

encourages the Department of Defense, the State Department, and USAID to work cooperatively together with our African allies to bring hope to the continent.”

We sort of have been talking around this today. We just made one of the greatest geopolitical mistakes in my lifetime in the last several weeks by essentially abolishing USAID. I do not expect either of you to answer questions directly about that because it could jeopardize your appointment. But there is just no question.

The term “soft power” is kind of unfortunate, because the emphasis is on soft, but it is power, and as both of you have testified, communications is important, relationships with the countries’ stabilization, anti-terrorism, developing good relationships, the PEPFAR program, the malaria program, education programs, democracy promotion programs are essential to our ability to compete with the Chinese and the Russians in the African continent.

In talking to some friends who have been deployed there, their view was that we just made an enormous gift, particularly to the Chinese. As the Chairman suggested in his opening statement and questions, there is no question in my mind that our recent actions in essentially dismantling and abolishing AID has met with celebration and approbation in Russia and China.

General Anderson, one of the things that concerns me, and it relates somewhat to the AID question but more generally, is the rise of terrorism. You mentioned September 11th. That was 19 people, and my concern is with our so-called pivot to the Indo-Pacific we are taking our eye off the terrorism ball. Could you share with us the thoughts about the status of al Qaeda and ISIS in Africa and what we should be watching out for and being concerned of?

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. I appreciate that concern, and if confirmed, I will definitely make this a priority to assess, as it has been 4 years since I was at SOCAFRICA.

With that said, though, we have seen the terrorist groups move much of their operations into the ungoverned spaces of Africa, both ISIS and al Qaeda. We are seeing ISIS active in Somalia, as well as in West Africa, ISIS West Africa. AQIM and their affiliate, JNIM, are also very active in the Sahel, both with intent to attack U.S. interests. Whether or not they have that capability is not clear.

So to your point, one of the greatest concerns we have is having enough resources and enough relationships to be able to understand how these threats are progressing. So we have the adequate amount of indicators and warnings and we know what the threat to the United States could be, so we could take action.

The access is also critical with our partners to understand what is happening with these threats, and I would also say what is happening with some of the other powers there and how they may be working with them or maybe not acting in our interests, so that we can understand what the threat landscape is on the continent.

Senator KING. Well, I think one of the new duties of your job, as you take this on, since State Department and USAID is essentially retreating, you are going to have diplomatic duty, whether you signed up for that or not. But you are going to have to build relationships, not necessarily strictly military, but with the local governments and the local leadership. Do you see that as a priority?



General ANDERSON. Senator, where we prioritize those areas we have the best return on our investment. I think it is important to build those relationships. I think it is important to look at creative ways, as we go forward. One of the greatest powers the United States brings is our economy. That is largely done through private investment. So finding opportunities in the continent as it continues to expand and grow in population I think is an opportunity. Then working with NGO's to identify some of these. I have worked with several in the past that have been very productive, and engaging some of those areas that you are talking about, that we help them understand the environment and then they are able to execute the actual engagements.

Senator KING. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I will have a question for the record for Admiral Bradley about brain health and the protecting of our troops from traumatic brain injury. I will followup on the record. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you for your interest in that, Senator King. Senator Rounds.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, first of all, thank you for your service to our country. To your families also, I just want to say thank you, because you sacrificed a lot, as well, and we most certainly recognize that, and we appreciate what you do to help both of these gentlemen be successful in their careers.

Gentlemen, I have heard from, at least now from 29 senior Department officials, including every service chief and eight combatant commanders, that vacating the 3.1 to 3.45 GHz and 7.7 to 8 GHz bands of the spectrum would have negative consequences for our warfighting capabilities. Being forced to share these bands with commercial interests in a non-optimal way would have the same impact.

Admiral Bradley, does the Special Operations Force have capabilities operating on the 3.1 to 3.45 band and the 7 and 8 bands of spectrum, which would be used in a conflict with China?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. I have to say that I am not intimately aware of all of the systems across SOCOM. I can speak to my personal experience in these last 3 years. I do agree that both directly, some of our systems operated in those bands that we rely upon for critical tactical capability, but also indirectly the service systems that operate on those bands are very important for us as we integrate with the Joint Force.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. would those capabilities be negatively impacted if DOD were forced to share those bands?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I believe they would.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. General Anderson, same question. Does AFRICOM make use of capabilities which reside on our make use of those bands of the spectrum?

General ANDERSON. Senator, Africa being a remote location, we depend upon satellite communications that use some of those bands, as well as the air and missile defense systems that are on the continent.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir. Admiral Bradley, your predecessor testified earlier this year that SOCOM makes up 3 percent of DOD's forces and less than 2 percent of the budget, all while missions have increased by over 170 percent compared to the last



decade. Is it fair to say that if we are going to continue to ask more of SOCOM, more resources will be needed to enable those increased missions?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. As I have watched General Fenton make the compelling case about that exact equation you described, I think that is a conclusion that comes out. An alternative is we just do less, we do fewer missions. We have to say no more times.

Senator ROUNDS. You are the tip of the spear. It seems to me that we should be doing everything possible to make sure that those young men and women have the best and capable technologies and weapon systems available to them.

General Anderson, how do you assess AFRICOM's role in countering Chinese and Russian influence in Africa, particularly in regions where entities such as the Wagner Group or the PRC-affiliated commercial ventures are exploiting governance or security gaps? What strategies do you believe are most effective in addressing these challenges?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I appreciate that question. I think that is a critical area, how do we counter what these powers are doing on the continent when they run counter to U.S. interests. One of the areas, when I was at SOCAFRICA, that was useful was engaging with the partners and explaining to them what those risks were when they were working with these partners, especially when Wagner was trying to expand into the Sahel. While they have gotten a foothold there, we were able to explain to them the risks that that would entail, the corrosive nature of those engagements, the lack of human rights that those nations bring. That was helpful in buffering. It also helped in some of the other Coastal West Africa states, as well.

As far as China, I would say it is similar, engaging and countering some of the malign influence operations that are out there. We saw, across the Sahel, counter-Western, counter-French, counter-United States propaganda take hold, and that then turns the populations against our interests.

Senator ROUNDS. Would it be fair to say that there is a combination of hard power, military power, but there is also the desire to have not just that stick but the ability to offer other capabilities, as well? Can you give me some examples of what we would call soft power that might be available or be very helpful to you, based upon our current situations in Africa?

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. Across the breadth of what our Nation brings is important, whether that is called hard power or soft power, its influence and how could we engage constructively with them. Can we encourage investment? Can we open sources to critical minerals? Can we partner with the nations that are in our interest that also benefit them, as well? Those are opportunities, as well, that are slightly outside the military lane, but I do believe we have the opportunity to convene some of the right folks to have these types of discussions. Then, again, engagement and building trust and partnership is critical, as we found in the past.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Rounds. Senator Ernst.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, gentlemen, both for being here today and your continued service to our great United States. Your families, as well. We appreciate their selfless service and sacrifice on your behalf, as well.

General Anderson, we will start with you, and we will continue to build upon what Senator Rounds was discussing. History has shown that when America reduces her presence, our adversaries are quickly seeking to fill the void. So sustained U.S. leadership is essential to deterring those threats and preserving stability. This is something we talked about in my office, that I firmly believe that presence is power, especially when it comes to the forward posture of our American servicemembers.

General Anderson, can you speak to why continued American leadership around the globe is essential, and in your particular case in Africa, why it is essential that we maintain a presence and how it is in America's best interests.

General ANDERSON. Senator, I appreciate the question, and I agree that that engagement is absolutely vital. Having that access and that engagement and building of trust makes a difference in times of crisis or in times of need. When we call in the middle of the night, we want our partners to answer, and we want them to help.

At the same time, it needs to be in our mutual interests. One thing I have found, as you talked about, in SOCAFRICA is that we could often bring parties together that normally would not. We could bring some of the European partners together with the African partners and create a dialog. And sometimes just that American presence as a trusted partner opened that door to be more effective.

I would also say, as you mentioned, small investments and small teams go a long way on the continent in working with our African partners. As an example, I was the first general officer to go back to Cote D'Ivoire after 19 years. The very first person who met me was the chief of the army, and the first thing he told me was he thanked me for the training that the Special Forces team had given him as a captain, 19 years before. He said it was the best training he ever had, and he was very excited that we were able to restore relationship, because it was the best training he had received, and he was looking forward to that for his army.

It did not take a persistent presence. It took some episodic engagements and continued investment in that partner. What I have found in Africa is many of those partners that we work with are incredibly good partners. They are not looking for a handout. They are looking for helping hand, and if we can help them build that capacity they are willing to try to stand on their own.

Senator ERNST. That is amazing, and thank you for reaffirming what I have always believed, as well, is that relationships matter, and our friends will never forget that. Neither will our enemies. So we will continue on. We could talk more about China's presence. I think a number of our colleagues have covered down on that, so we will go ahead and turn to SOCOM.

Admiral Bradley, thank you so much for your continued leadership within the organization. We have already talked a little bit about the fact that SOCOM, you have earned the reputation that

the command can do more with less. I have heard SOCOM commander after SOCOM commander come in front of the Committee and State it really does not matter, we will salute smartly and move out and execute our mission.

But we are reaching a point where, as you have very clearly stated today, that if you do not continue to see growth, especially just for inflation, within the department, that you will have to do less. You will have to dig in deeper and make the necessary cuts.

So we are in an era of heightened threats and expanding mission demands. I believe that do-more-with-less mindset can no longer be sustainable. Do you agree with that?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I do, and, in fact, we have adopted the term “less with less” to ensure we apply the ruthless prioritization to achieve the highest priority of those missions.

Senator ERNST. Mm-hmm, and given the increasingly complex threat environment, we need to be able to strengthen SOCOM's capacity to deter our near-peer adversaries. So that does require us moving beyond a stagnant budget. So if confirmed, Admiral Bradley, then what is the vision for SOCOM and how do you do that ruthless prioritization?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. If confirmed, our priorities are the priorities of the Department—defend the Homeland, ensure that we deter China, and ensure that our force multiplication of an already strong alliance is strengthened even further.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, gentlemen, very much, and again to your families, thank you for your sacrifice, as well. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Senator Ernst. Senator Schmitt.

Senator SCHMITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, Admiral, I am glad that you ended that way, because that, those sort of prioritizations of America, which is defend the Homeland and really this pivot to the Indo-Pacific has been absent in a lot of the questions that have been asked. A lot of the questions that have been asked, I feel like I have been teleported into the Foreign Relations Committee.

I want to ask you, since it was brought up—I had no plan to talk about this—I am going to just read off a few things: a half a million dollars for electric buses in Rwanda, \$3.3 million for civic engagement in Zimbabwe, \$300,000 to hold a private parade in Lesotho, and almost \$900,000 for electrical reforms and voter education in Kenya, \$1.2 million for an Afrobarometer public opinion survey, \$116,000 for media strengthening activity in Liberia, \$800 for promoting vegan food in Zambia, African hide camping and tours to create adventure camps for backpackers, graphic design training in Nigeria.

Do you think these are in the best interest of the United States of America, given the scarcity that we have?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I know there are a lot of priorities that have to be balance through the budget process.

Senator SCHMITT. I know that, and I appreciate your story. You were very willing to opine about other things that were sort of policy matters, in my view. These are policy matters, and I think that when we do this stuff, it totally undermines the desire to have real soft power. Like I am not disputing the idea that soft power exists.

My contention is that all of this nonsense that continues to be defended, in many ways, inhibits the ability to do exactly what you are articulating, which is there are smart things to do that are not just about blowing things up and killing people. But that has been crowded out with a mission creep in this wandering foreign policy that just believes that we can just do all of this do-gooding stuff around the world.

Getting back to what you said at the end of your last statement, which is, "Defend the Homeland and understand that our chief threat is in China," that is what I wanted to ask you questions about, and I am going to. But I cannot let this go without it being responded to.

Like we are moving away from this stuff, whether people like it or not. Like the American people do not support it. We have an Administration that wants to move away from this stuff, and I applaud it. I might be in the minority on this Committee. I do not really know. I do not really care, because I think that is in the best interest of the United States, and we can have a robust debate about it.

But I do want to ask you, because we are in this great powers competition, how does SOCOM assess the right balance between sort of the counterterrorism mission that has existed for a long time, and is not necessarily going away, versus this kind of direct action, and especially as it relates to irregular deterrence and China's gray zone activity that is happening in the South China Sea and places where our allies are really—a real threat. We are not talking about electric buses in Rwanda. We are talking about, you know, communist China here.

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. Having had the opportunity to be a part of our counterterrorism operations since 9/11, I have seen us achieve some great successes to diminish the threat against the Homeland. The credibility that has come from that gives us a very powerful entrée with the alliance members in the Indo-Pacific. All of our national defense strategies since 2018, the INDSG all illuminate the importance of that alliance. I believe that force multiplication effort is a critical capability.

As you know, General Fenton is the coordinating authority for counter-VEO, as well, within the Department of Defense, and so still maintains a principal responsibility to be able to oversee and advise the Secretary on the approach for counterterrorism.

The most acute of those threats, those VEOs with external operations, aspiration, and capability, are the top priority threats that we, as a whole, integrated interagency, orient our priorities against. I believe, in many cases, and one instance in particular, the case in the Philippines is a great example—

Senator SCHMITT. I was going to ask you about that, yes.

Admiral BRADLEY.—where our work with the Filipinos over the last two decades has allowed them to be able to keep that terrorist threat at bay, and frankly, allowed us to weather a very difficult diplomatic season with a particular leader there, and now come out an even stronger ally.

Senator SCHMITT. I agree. I think that is a great example, which completes sort of like the last question I have, in limited time. Do you feel like our other really important allies in that region, say

Australia and Japan, are prepared or sufficiently ready to work alongside us the way that the Philippines has?

Admiral BRADLEY. Sir, I absolutely believe the Australians are, and I believe our other allies are working to come to that place, as well.

Senator SCHMITT. Okay. Thank you. Good luck. Congratulations.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Senator Schmitt. Senator Warren.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to both of you on your nominations.

So the American military is built to defeat our enemies, not to create more of them, and that is why Republican and Democratic administrations have worked to reduce risks to innocent civilians as part of military options. In fact, the last Trump administration issued DOD first instruction to establish policies to mitigate civilian harm after concerns grew about civilian casualties in the campaign against ISIS.

Now, one of the tools that commanders now have in the toolkit is working with Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response advisors, from refining war games to real attack planning in the Middle East and Africa operations, and more.

Vice Admiral Bradley, your predecessor at Special Operations Command recently said that these experts, quote, “assisted commanders and their staffs in mitigating civilian harm without compromising lethality.” What’s more, their knowledge, quote, “enhanced precision, preserving legitimacy, and enabling mission success.”

So Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit to keeping civilian harm prevention experts at SOCOM to advise you and your team?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, first, just to resonate, it is not only an obligation to adhere to the law of armed conflict to protect civilians, it is critical to our success and competition to represent our values. I believe that every uniformed, every civilian, and every contractor that is employed or in oversight of the use of lethal force has a critical obligation to be able to do that, and I do commit to keeping that as a focus for our command, if confirmed.

Senator WARREN. Thank you. That is a strong answer, and I appreciate it.

Other tools in the toolkit here are the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan and DOD’s Policy Instruction on Civilian Harm, which outlines DOD’s plans and policies to reduce civilian harm risks. AFRICOM has made progress in implementing these policies, including through training allies and partners on how to reduce risks to innocent civilians. We are serving as a model that our other partners are now beginning to adopt. In May, the Nigerian Air Force announced its own Civilian Harm Prevention Plan. These are efforts that save innocent lives.

Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you carry forward these efforts to integrate civilian harm mitigation planning into AFRICOM operations and train allies in the region to help them do the same?

General ANDERSON. Senator, to echo Vice Admiral Bradley’s importance of this, this is a critically important show of our values.

It is also important that we maintain the laws of armed conflict, and when we engage with our partners that we help them education and that we model this. This has been something that, when I was at Special Operations Command Africa, we did. We worked with partners, and when we saw things or heard of things that were credible, we encouraged them to investigate and to look into this, and then we gave them assistance, as needed, in order for them to conduct their own investigations. So I will continue, if confirmed, to take that on at AFRICOM.

Senator WARREN. I appreciate that. I want to hit one other point here, because we also need to reduce harm to our own Special Operators. I have worked with Senator Ernst and others on this Committee for years to address high levels of brain injury caused by blast overpressure. Exposed servicemembers have reported debilitating systems, from seizures to depression to suicidality. Now preliminary research is showing high rates of heart disease, chronic pain, hypertension, even links to brain cancer and neurodegenerative diseases. Clearly, we have a lot more we need to learn.

So let me ask, Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, you will oversee tens of thousands of Special Operations personnel. Do you support DOD partnering with outside experts to study the long-term effects of blast overpressure?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I do. I have seen great benefit from our partnership with academic and other organizations that are studying this problem critically. Our number one SOF truth is that people are more important than hardware, and the critical part of those people is the intellectual capacity. Of course, that is jeopardized by these brain health issues. We see them as a critical contract with our operators and our operators' families to ensure that we keep them sustainable.

Senator WARREN. Oh, I appreciate that very, very much. If you are confirmed, I will be calling on you to help us with that. There is language in both the House and the Senate NDAA that would help us get this study, and there are lots of organizations like Home Base Massachusetts who have the expertise to help us get these answers. We owe this to our servicemembers.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator Tuberville.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. Thanks to both of you. Thank you for what you have done for our country over your careers, you and your families. What a sacrifice it has been. But you have done an outstanding job.

Admiral, I think for far too long we have had our eyes on other things and not on our hemisphere, whether it is illegal migrants, drugs, or both. So what is Special Operations community doing to assist the militaries and governments in our hemisphere, like Panama, to combat narcoterrorists?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, in my current capacity I am not privy to all of the activities that SOCOM is engaged in in the Southern Hemisphere. But in listening and watching General Fenton and his leadership over these last 3 years, I know that the partnerships that our teams have been engaging in and developing remain critical to being able to help them build capacity, to be able

to defend themselves, but also to provide security locally, which, of course, helps to prevent and secure our southern border, as well.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yes. I am sure you are up on the point of the Darién Gap and the problems it has caused over the years, and relationship with our Special Ops down in that area, training people. That will probably be in your forte going forward. What are your thoughts about cooperation activities with Latin America, as going into this job?

Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, sir. I think, as the counterterrorism fight informs us, it is far better to find the root of the problem well away from our borders than it is to have to defend them internal to the United States. So if confirmed, making it a priority to provide assistance to all of our combatant commanders as far forward as possible and with those partnered forces to help them to be able to secure their own territory.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yes, and we have problems all over the world, but if we do not watch our back door then we are going to have really problems within our country, which we already have.

General, I think we need to be reinforcing our military presence in AFRICOM. Unfortunately, under the previous administration we seemed like we were doing just the opposite. In Niger—you and I talked about this in a meeting in my office—the vacuum that was caused there. China, Russia, Iran were all too happy to fill the things that we were doing there.

What is your assessment of our withdrawal from Air Base 201 and have we learned from these lessons, and your thoughts about maybe the future there.

General ANDERSON. Senator, I appreciate that question, and there was significant investment that went into that air base. It was in a key area for us to be able to monitor the threat, so the loss of that is one that we will have to find creative ways to continue to get the indicators and warnings of what the terrorists are doing in this area.

I think we also have to understand that there is some volatility across the continent, so how do we make smart investments with the partners that we can continue to sustain. I will say that the relationships that we built in Niger with the military over several decades are still there. When the time is right, I believe there will be an opportunity, but that time will have to be determined, and if confirmed, I will look at what that is.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yes. After your confirmation, I guess by telling the Committee, and people even watching at home, why do we need to have presence in Africa? What are your thoughts?

General ANDERSON. Africa is key to any strategy. It is just on strategic terrain, just the waterways that it forms between the Straits or Gibraltar all the way down through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. It is critical minerals and resources that are on the continent that we need for the future economy. Both China and Russia see their strategies going through the continent, and they are going to engage there.

So we can cede that ground or we can compete in that ground, and I think we have a very powerful tool to compete with. As Admiral Bradley mentioned, nobody brings more credibility to the counterterrorism fight than the U.S. As a matter of fact, when we

rescued that hostage in Niger, the next morning there was an influential blogger that posted, "The Americans came like the lion in the night. They killed their enemies and rescued their own." No other nation on Earth could do that, and that is a powerful symbol across the continent and around the world of what our military and what the United States is capable of. I do think that some level of engagement in Africa does matter. I agree it is an economy of force, but a small investment goes a long way, so that we do not have strategic surprise that then distracts the United States from focusing on the rising threats in the Pacific and other areas.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Tuberville, and well said, General Anderson. Senator Sheehy.

Senator SHEEHY. Thank you, Chairman. General, I want to thank you for what you just said there, because we have been hearing a lot today about how pulling back investment in certain programs in Africa is going to end the world and cede the entire dominance to China. The reality is what you just said is what the real power projection is. When we can display to the world that we are going to protect our interests and our people ruthlessly, no matter what, that is what the real power projection of the U.S. Military is about. The SOF stuff is absolutely important. Being able to project economic power and stability is important. But nothing will ever supersede what you just said, so thanks for saying that.

Thanks to both of you and your families for what you have done for this country and continue to do.

Admiral, over to you. We are facing a very challenging naval atmosphere against China. They are building ships faster than we can, 230 times faster than we do, as a matter of fact. So if we should face a maritime conflict, our most asymmetric advantage is going to be our undersea Special Operations capability, how we can project that power, manned and unmanned.

Would you take a moment here and just explain to me your commitment to that program and how we are going to make sure it remains dominant?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you, and thanks for your service in that community, as well. I believe, from my time serving in our undersea community, that the partnership between Special Operations and the Navy in this regard is singular in the world in its sophistication. The ability to arrive with the element of surprise is unparalleled through this approach. It gives us advantage, asymmetric advantage, not just in warfighting but also in the ability, in competition and in crisis.

The Special Operations community has a unique and growing and deepening relationship with the United States Navy in this regard, and if confirmed, I would very much look forward to advancing that and continuing to maintain that asymmetry.

Senator SHEEHY. Thank you, and for both of you a similar question. The last time we fought a war in INDOPACOM we had about 5,000 seaplanes that were a critical part of our logistical and tactical network across the region, from moving insurgents, to supplies, to logistics, to rescuing ships' crew and downed airmen in areas that, at the time, were out of range.



Right now we have precisely zero planes that can land, or any aircraft that can land on water in the entire U.S. Military. General, with your background in non-standard aviation, as I do too—I used to fly seaplanes and PC-12s like you—this is a capability that as we are entering a new era of great power competition I believe we need to reinvest in it, and SOCOM would be the tip of that spear.

I recently worked with INDOPACOM to try to reinvigorate the ability for them to access this capability. Would either of you care to comment on what you think amphibious aviation could mean for our ability to project power all over the world?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I appreciate the question. I do think there are several types of new technologies, emerging technologies, that we need to invest in that allow different types of logistics and different types of support. Seaplanes could be part of that. I think unmanned systems, semisubmersibles, but a plethora of capabilities that allow us to operate in a contested environment, with a combination of manned and unmanned systems is critical. In the Indo-Pacific, there is a lot of water across that area, so having the ability to operate in those areas, and to be able to resupply small islands I think will be very important to a potential Pacific fight.

Senator SHEEHY. Yes. I would say on an AO that in some cases is over 90 percent water, having the entire AO be a runway seems like a pretty good idea.

I was recently in Kenya, Djibouti, Egypt. I went over there for a reason. We also served many years in the Middle East. But Africa is now going to have 2.5 billion people, become the most populous continent in the world here, potentially, in the next decade. It is very possible that the 21st century could be an African century, and as that 2.5 billion people plug into the global economy, as they become global citizens, active on the internet, as they become banked, as they become crypto citizens, we are going to have to reckon with the great power competition that is happening there.

As I look at some of our engagement across the Horn of Africa, and through all of Africa really, what do you see that your biggest challenge is going to be? What do your first 90, 120 days look like, as you try to grapple with the fact that we have a massive geopolitical battlefield emerging?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I appreciate those comments, and I agree that Africa is growing rapidly. There is a large youth population. That youth can either be challenged to contribute to the global economy or they could become terrorists or other nefarious actions.

What I would say to that is that the first thing I would look at is do we have the right access and placement in order to have the indicators and warnings to prevent that strategic surprise. To your point earlier, I think it is a combination of hard power and soft power, as you put it. But having the relationships and the trust to have the access, when needed, in order to project power, to be able to counter terrorism, to be able to respond to a crisis somewhere on the continent, and then also to understand what other powers are doing.

So my first few days, if confirmed, would be focused on assessing that, and do we have the right posture and footprint, and what can we do to maximize the indicators and warnings.

Senator SHEEHY. Thank you. I am out of time, but I would also encourage you to take a look at Camp Simba and upgrades required there. It is a key point of power projection for us in that region. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Sheehy. Let me ask both of you, with regard to the first set of questions Senator Sheehy brought up about seaplanes, that sort of capacity. Is there anything on the horizon in that regard?

General ANDERSON. Senator, there are a few out there that are being developed. I know DARPA is working on a project. There are some other companies that are looking at seaplanes and unmanned seaplanes, as well.

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, across Special Operations there have been experiments with that kind of capability.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you. Thank you very much. Senator Kelly.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral Bradley, General Anderson, thank you for being here and for continuing to volunteer to serve our Nation.

SOCOM and AFRICOM both leverage economies of force principles, so applying limited resources for having an outsized impact. This requires some careful planning and using the right assets against the right problem.

Within this economy of force principle, how important are inter-agency partnership, like the Department of State, for SOCOM and AFRICOM's campaign plan?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I will start. Across the Special Operations community our partnership with the integrated interagency, also our law enforcement, Federal and, frankly, even our local law enforcement partnerships have been critical to us over these last 25 years. I see that as nothing but growing in the future. If confirmed as the SOCOM Commander, the relationships that we have inside our integrated interagency, cultivating those and sustaining them I think would have to be a top priority. I can tell you that today the State of those relationships, from my current experience, is, frankly, a high-water mark certainly of my 34 years, and I suspect even longer than that.

Senator KELLY. General, do you share that view?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I agree that we have very limited resources, and so we have to partner across all government agencies to maximize those resources and to find where we can complement each other. We provide the military piece of that, but to Admiral Bradley's point, my entire career with Special Operations has been working with multiple different agencies in order to maximize that, whether that is the FBI and using legal authorities in different parts of the world, working with our intelligence community, or with State Department and others to make sure we leverage the full authorities and capabilities of our Nation.

Senator KELLY. One of my big concerns here is the impact that the cuts to USAID within the State Department is going to have on our ability to build some trust with partner nations. That is a concern of mine. I am not going to put you on the spot here on that topic, but I think it is something that I hope the two of you think about.

Admiral Bradley, China and Russia currently waging some irregular warfare campaigns against us and our allies in a lot of different places. PRC is using violence to impose their will in the Philippines in the Second Thomas Shoal, and Russia has a long history of using irregular warfare, most recently in Ukraine. Leveraging your most recent experience as the Commander of JSOC, how does the United States effectively wage irregular warfare to compete and win with Russia and China in the gray zones?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. In my last 3 years I have had the opportunity to be a member of the SOCOM Board of Directors and really watch our theater of Special Operations commands who are responsible for operations from the joint SOF community inside those areas. I can tell you that our principal advantage that the SOF value proposition brings is understanding, and enhanced understanding, of those insidious actions, which are really preying on our alliance structure. Being able to illuminate that predatory activity gives our diplomats and our whole-of-government and our allies power to be able to stand against it and be resilient to it. That, in turn, strengthens our alliance and deepens our credibility when we want to partnership and build capacity there.

Senator KELLY. Great. Well, thank you, and finally, in my last minute here, General Anderson, I traveled, and it has been about a year and a half now, in the Sahel, and part of Africa where Wagner is pretty active, especially on social media, to exploit coups in Western Africa, commit human rights abuses. When the Russians gain a foothold in these countries they use a significant amount of disinformation to intimidate the local population, stifling opposing views, while they claim to provide security.

So General, how does Russia's social media activity impact security and stability in AFRICOM?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I think that is one of Russia's greatest weapons that they are employing across the continent. One of the things they use quite often is disinformation. They play on historic grievances, historic colonial issues, fears of sovereignty, and they play that up into an anti-democratic, anti-Western that then has impacts to U.S. support.

I believe that the Russian influence in the information operations was critical in turning populations against the French in the Sahel. I think it is very much not in our interest with what the Russians are doing in the information domain.

Senator KELLY. Not only in Africa but, if I could just take a couple more seconds, do you feel like we are losing this information warfare with the Russians, Chinese, Iranians?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I refer to what we discussed earlier. The truth is incredibly powerful. We have that still. We are still a very credible source of information. We need to leverage that. I think we need to be more aggressive about that in this domain. But I would not say we are necessarily losing it. But if we do not engage, we risk losing it.

Senator KELLY. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you, Chairman. Admiral Bradley, General Anderson, congratulations. First off, thanks for your service. Thanks to your family for being here. Thank you for their sacrifice

while you have served. You both are going to do an outstanding job.

number one, do you believe that the government of China has decided to be our adversary?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I do.

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I concur.

Senator SCOTT. So this Committee has put a lot of effort into getting rid of Chinese drones, in the military and in our country, and we have made a lot of progress. As you know, we are seeing drone warfare increase around the world. We have watched what happened in Ukraine. We have watched what has happened in the Red Sea. We have watched what the Houthis have been doing to shoot down ships.

So do you believe drone technology is going to be important in warfare, going forward?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I do.

General ANDERSON. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator SCOTT. So do you think it is really important to make sure that we do not have, you know, Chinese products in our military, such as drones?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I know that there are nefarious aspects to Chinese products that come out. We must be careful not to include any of those.

General ANDERSON. Senator, I would agree that we need to make sure that we do not open back doors or other vulnerabilities. We need to understand what products we are using.

Senator SCOTT. So whether it is Chinese drones, computers, printers, drugs, products like garlic that is grown in raw sewage, do you think it is important that we make sure none of that—none of that—is used by our military, or never dependent on any of it?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I do resonate with those thoughts, and though I cannot speak to all the details, certainly we must be cautious of anything that comes from China that would be part of our kill chain or part of a military chain of production.

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. I think that is something that we need to assess is where are those critical vulnerabilities, where do we need to ensure we have alternate supply chains as we look at the future.

Senator SCOTT. How about drugs? Do you think we ought to be buying Chinese drugs for our service men, service women?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I have to say I cannot speak to the details of our drug production chain. Sorry.

General ANDERSON. Senator, I am not familiar with the details of that either.

Senator SCOTT. Off the top of your head, so you think we ought to have Chinese drug in our bodies, should anybody be relying on them when we go to war? Do you think they might hold them back?

General ANDERSON. Senator, that could be a risk, any time we become dependent on a sole source. I have full faith in the American system, and I would prefer American-made medicines.

Senator SCOTT. I was encouraged to see Secretary Hegseth announce last week that he was removing CCP cloud services out of

the DOD, which was added, unfortunately, during the Obama era initiative.

So last question. Do you think it is really important that we continue to do everything we can to get all Chinese products, all Chinese apps, everything, drones, computers, printers, drugs, everything, as much as we can, out of our supply chain for our military?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, I do agree with that.

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator, I agree we should eliminate as many vulnerabilities as we possibly can.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Senator Scott. Senator Rosen.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed for holding this hearing. I want to thank our nominees and your families, of course, for your service—it takes a whole family when you give a lifetime of service—and, of course, your willingness to continue to serve, and congratulations on your nominations.

I want to go right into the Houthis and their relations with al-Shabaab, because the Iranian-backed Houthis are diversifying their military capabilities and leveraging regional conflicts to expand their influence. U.S. intelligence reports indicate that the Houthis are working to provide weapons to al-Shabaab. This development is incredibly concerning, as al-Shabaab could utilize more sophisticated Houthi weapons to target United States equities in the Horn of Africa, such as our base in Djibouti.

So to both General and Admiral, please, to the extent that you are able in this open setting, can you share more about the growing partnership between the Houthis and al-Shabaab, the risk that it poses, not only to the United States equities but personnel in the region, global shipping in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden? How are we going to address this challenge?

Since you are closest, Admiral, I am going to start with you.

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, thank you. The Houthi militia and Iranian-supported renegade element inside Yemen has been a destabilizing force in the southern Arabian Peninsula and across the Horn for some time, and continues to act belligerently. Any connection that they might make as an outreach to a violent extremist organization, like al-Shabaab, an al Qaeda affiliate, definitely bears close concern and, frankly, interdiction. The potential for them to partner is what we would see with grave concern.

If confirmed as the SOCOM Commander, I would have the responsibility as a coordinating authority for an advisor to the Secretary on counter-violent extremist organizations, and a combination of those two actors would be a serious measure.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. General?

General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator, I appreciate that question. As having been the Commander of Special Operations Command Africa, I am well aware that the al Qaeda affiliate, that al-Shabaab is, is fully intent, has full intent to attack United States interests in the United States Homeland, if they can build the capability. The concern is that cooperation now across the Red Sea with the Houthis, who are backed by the Iranians, and what that could mean, and give them the capability, not just have the will but now

the capability, to attack the United States or United States interests in a more robust way.

Again, the Houthis and al-Shabaab operate in critical terrain for the United States and for global shipping, and so the means for them to disrupt that and have impact on our interests is significant.

Senator ROSEN. So we need to do everything we can to stop that partnership.

I want to move on to talking about ISR strategy in the Sahel. We know that Senator Kelly was talking about the Sahel a little bit, but I want to go a little bit further, because since our withdrawal from the two air bases in Niger last year, at the behest of the host nation, our ability to conduct ISR within the Sahel, throughout the African continent, has been severely degraded. This also hurts other activities, as well.

So to both of you, can you speak to the challenges of our withdrawal from Niger, the loss of the ISR, what is poses to countering this violent extremism in the region, these partnerships between the Houthis, al-Shabaab, and other things, any other groups, and what are the latest updates to establishing ISR basing elsewhere in Africa?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I appreciate that question, and we did use the ISR coming out of Niger extensively. The loss of that does make it more difficult. There is never enough ISR to meet global demand, as I understand, and that Africa, as an economy of force theater, will have limited assets available. I think it is important that we balance the exquisite high-end ISR capabilities where most needed, and then look at investing in other capabilities, whether it be emerging technologies that can allow some surveillance, partnering with key partners in the area, having intel-sharing agreements so that we can gain understanding from them on the ground. I think those are all critical areas as we look at balancing the ISR demand across the continent. As to where they could be in the future, if confirmed, I would look into that. I am not privy to those plans right now.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Admiral?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator, just quickly, the evolving, ubiquitous information environment provides us an opportunity here, the space-SOF-cyber triad, an opportunity to be able to leverage what we call horizontal ISR, to be able to leverage more and more information available publicly, that people are freely giving through their use of social media.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator Budd.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you both for being here. I enjoyed our meetings last week in the office. Congrats on your nominations, and thank you for your service and your sacrifice and that of your families, as well.

Admiral Bradley, in our conversation last week, and I have said it publicly in this room many times, before this hearing, we need more and not fewer Special Operations Forces. A large reason is because of their ability to help train our foreign partners. You highlighted in your Advance Policy Questions that SOF are unique-

ly suited for building partner capacity in contested and sensitive areas.

So how is SOCOM building partner capacity, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, and what is the Joint Force getting in return for those efforts?

Admiral BRADLEY. Senator Budd, thank you. I very much appreciated the time to visit with you, and thank you for your great support for all of our bases, my current headquarters there in the great State of North Carolina.

Sir, I think the example that best illustrates the essence is the Philippines, where over a period of 20 years our—well, for over 100 years, our strong societal relationship with the Philippine society has been strong. But just within these last 20, our ability to help train, advise, assist the Philippines to counter the terrorism threat in their country has deepened that relationship and, in fact, helped us to withstand a very troubled period, diplomatically, during the Duterte regime. Now, on the back side, we have an even stronger alliance with the Philippines, which will be critical as we look at any action of deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

I certainly would not want to speak for Admiral Paparo to talk about the overall region and where this fits relative to his other priorities, but I know from a SOF perspective our contribution to partnerships throughout the region are important, and we really bring that credibility from the counterterrorism fight to help leaven and deepen those.

Senator BUDD. Thank you very much. General Anderson, I want to read you a quote from DOD's 2024 Annual Report to Congress on Military and Security Developments Involving the PRC. I will tee it up with this, and I will ask you a question about it. It says, "Some of PRC's Belt and Road Initiative projects could create potential military advantages such as PLA access to select foreign ports, to preposition necessary logistics to sustain naval deployments in water such as distant as the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean."

So here is my concern. I am concerned about the PRC's access to ports and the potential military advantage that this could give them. So alongside Senator Kelly and Scott, I introduce the Strategic Ports Reporting Act. It is a bill to require monitoring of the PRC's access to foreign ports.

So if confirmed, do you commit to looking into the PRC's access to foreign ports in your area of responsibility?

General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, I will look into that, definitely.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, and would you be willing to share with us some of your concerns in that area, particularly with PRC access to foreign ports?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I think as we have seen across the Indian Ocean and into the African AOR and to the Atlantic and even the Mediterranean, China is investing in ports globally. I think that should be concerning to us. I think it should be concerning to us not only that they could potentially use those as dual-use military ports but what access could they deny U.S. Forces or U.S. commerce as necessary in time of conflict.

So I think this is an absolutely critical area that we need to understand, the vulnerabilities that may be posed by this. It does not mean that we do not believe in free commerce and economics, but at the same time we need to understand our national security interest and what this may entail.

Senator BUDD. Thank you very much. A question about the North Carolina National Guard. In particular, we have State partners in the AFRICOM AOR. It is Malawi, Zambia, and Botswana. So General, how do you view the future of the State Partnership Program and its ability to strengthen regional stability in Africa?

General ANDERSON. Senator, I think the State Partnership Program is one of the greatest programs we have within the Department. It builds long-term relationships. The nice thing about the National Guard and the partner nation is those same people will see each other decade after decade, and that builds a really powerful relationship that I know we can build upon. As a matter of fact, it was the California National Guard that we called upon to get the first information in Ukraine, because they had long-standing relationships with that State Partnership Program there. The same thing can happen in Africa, where a small investment can have a great return for us in the future.

Senator BUDD. Thank you both. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you. Further questions? We are told that Senator Shaheen is on her way.

Senator KING. I can fill a little time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. There is a vote going on also. But yes, the gentleman is recognized.

Senator KING. I was struck by the Admiral's comment that they had moved 27 times in their career. My first job was moving furniture for Allied Van Lines in this area. Most of our customers were military families, and I will never forget a military spouse saying, "In terms of damage to the furniture, seven moves equals a fire." So congratulations on surviving multiple fires.

[Laughter.]

Admiral BRADLEY. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Senator King, I am a veteran myself, and I only served 4 years Active Duty. It seems to me that those people who have made 20 moves have been able to throw away a lot of things that my children and grandchildren may have to deal with, since I have not moved now in over 30 years.

We think, within 10 seconds, Senator Shaheen will materialize. There is a vote going on, and we are trying to do our best.

[Pause.]

Chairman WICKER. I do not believe we will be able to go on with our hearing, so I want to thank our witnesses for their testimony. There will be an opportunity for questions on the record. So I would remind members, or I would inform members, that questions for the record will be due to the Committee by 5 p.m. today.

With that we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:19 a.m., the Committee adjourned.]



[Prepared questions submitted to Vice Admiral Frank M. Bradley, USN by Chairman Wicker prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

#### QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

##### DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

*Question.* What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)?

*Answer.* As a Unified Combatant Command with service-like responsibilities, USSOCOM is a strategic headquarters with responsibilities to organize, train, and equip four service components (Army Special Operations Command, Naval Special Warfare Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command), the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), and seven Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). In that role, in accordance with Title 10 U.S.C. Section 167, the Commander of USSOCOM is responsible as a force provider to the other supported Combatant Commands to provide ready forces to meet operational requirements and contingency war plans. As directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, and in accordance with Title 10 U.S.C. Section 164, the Commander USSOCOM conducts operations globally.

*Question.* What background and experience do you possess that you believe qualify you to perform these duties?

*Answer.* It has been an honor to serve within the special operations community since 1992, when I completed Basic Underwater Demolition School and became a U.S. Navy SEAL. Since then, I have been privileged to both serve and command at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, including multiple Naval special warfare units, joint task forces, Special Operations Command Central, and for the last 3 years as the commander of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). I have worked counternarcotics missions across South and Central America, served in our undersea forces, and deployed to Afghanistan soon after the September 11th attack. Later, I shaped counterterrorism strategy in the Joint Staff's Strategy, Plans and Policy directorate (J5), and worked as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford's executive officer (XO). I also served as a liaison officer to the Italian equivalent of the U.S. Navy SEALs. These experiences taught me the value our special operators bring in deterring adversaries, strengthening relationships with allies and partners, and disrupting terrorist threats to the homeland.

*Question.* Do you believe there are actions you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of Commander, USSOCOM?

*Answer.* Yes—absolutely. Under the leadership of General Fenton and Command Sergeant Major Shorter, USSOCOM is maximizing its comparative advantages, preserving crisis response capability, and modernizing toward modern warfare and the threat of China. If I am confirmed, I will seek to provide continuity and acceleration rather than course correction. To that end, I would humbly and actively seek the advice and counsel of the USSOCOM and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)) teams, the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) and other DOD leaders, interagency partners, and our combat-experienced special operators.

##### RELATIONSHIPS

*Question.* Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander of USSOCOM to the following offices:

The Secretary of Defense

*Answer.* The Secretary of Defense is the USSOCOM Commander's next superior in the operational chain of command. If confirmed, I will look to the Secretary for guidance and resources to train, equip, and employ Special Operations Forces (SOF) to advance enduring U.S. national interests. The USSOCOM Commander owes the Secretary his best military advice on all aspects of special operations matters linked to national security objectives.

*Question.* The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)

*Answer.* The Chairman is the senior military advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council. He may also consult with Congress, as required. His role is essential to communicating SOF capabilities and requirements to the President and the Secretary of Defense. Coordinating USSOCOM activities with the Chairman enables the Chairman to fulfill his responsibilities to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and to senior policymakers.

*Question.* The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

Answer. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) is the Principal Staff Assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy. The USD(P) develops, coordinates, and oversees the implementation of a wide variety of Department policy, including matters related to special operations activities. If confirmed, I will work closely with the USD(P) to ensure USSOCOM activities support Department policies.

*Question.* The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security

Answer. The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I&S)) is the principal intelligence advisor to the Secretary of Defense. USD(I&S) exercises authority, direction, and control on behalf of the Secretary of Defense over all intelligence and security organizations within the Department of Defense (DoD), including the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency, and the intelligence components of the Combatant Commands and military Services. USD(I&S) is also dual hatted as the Director of Defense Intelligence in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), and reports to the DNI in this capacity. USD(I&S) is the Department's principal interface with the Central Intelligence Agency and other elements of the Intelligence Community and represents the Department on intelligence and sensitive activities at the National Security Council. If confirmed, I will work closely with USD(I&S) to coordinate USSOCOM matters related to intelligence, intelligence-related activities, and security.

*Question.* The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition & Sustainment

Answer. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) serves as the DOD Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) and the Defense Acquisition Executive (DAE) responsible for all matters relating to the DOD Acquisition System, including system design, development, procurement of goods and services, sustainment of systems, and providing Department-wide policy. Per Title 10 U.S.C. Section 167, the USSOCOM Special Operations Acquisition Executive (SOAE) derives authority to conduct acquisition from the DAE. If confirmed, I will ensure USSOCOM acquisition activities, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)), are executed by the SOAE under the authorities delegated to the Command by the DAE. In addition, I will ensure that the Command is effectively implementing policies and procedures for logistics, maintenance, material readiness, and sustainment support to the warfighter.

*Question.* The Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering

Answer. The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (USD(R&E)) is responsible for overseeing the research, engineering, and technology development activities across the DOD enterprise, and is mandated with driving the key technologies (cyber, space, unmanned systems, machine learning/artificial intelligence, directed energy, hypersonics) to ensure technological superiority for the DOD. If confirmed, in coordination with ASD(SO/LIC), I will ensure USSOCOM science and technology research activities and funding are complementary to and aligned with Department research policy, processes, and priorities. In addition, we will assist in the initiation and implementation of acquisition pathways that embrace agile practices that innovate, develop, exploit, and reduce barriers of entry for commercial technologies and non-traditional defense partners.

*Question.* The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD (SOLIC))

Answer. ASD(SO/LIC) 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(SO/LIC) is the overall oversight of DOD special operations activities. The FY17 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section 922 codified the administrative position of the ASD(SO/LIC) formally in the chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander, USSOCOM to exercise of 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 confirmed, I will work closely with ASD(SO/LIC) to ensure our forces are organized effectively, highly trained, and well-equipped to conduct global special operations.

*Question.* The Service Secretaries

Answer. The Goldwater-Nichols Act granted the USSOCOM Commander authority over the Service components assigned to him, but this relationship requires close coordination with the Service Secretaries, to respect and preserve each Service Secretary's legal responsibilities. Close coordination between the USSOCOM Com-

mander and each of the Service Secretaries is also essential to gaining and maintaining the Services' support of SOF as an integral part of the Joint force.

*Question.* The Service Chiefs

*Answer.* In cooperation with the Service Chiefs, the USSOCOM Commander will ensure the preparedness of his forces to execute his assigned missions. The Service Chiefs play a critical role in the development, promotion, and assignment of SOF senior officers and enlisted personnel. The Service Chiefs are also a source of experience and judgment that every Combatant Commander may call upon. If confirmed, I will continue an open dialog and cooperative partnership with the Service Chiefs.

*Question.* The other combatant commanders

*Answer.* Successive USSOCOM Commanders have fostered an atmosphere of teamwork and trust in their relationships with fellow Combatant Commanders. These relationships have only strengthened over the years as trans-regional threats have taken hold and certainly since USSOCOM has been responsible for synchronizing planning for global operations against terrorist networks. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely and collaborate with the other Combatant Commanders to achieve our common objectives. I will be committed to providing the Combatant Commanders trained and ready SOF to support national and theater security objectives.

#### MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

*Question.* In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Commander of USSOCOM?

*Answer.* The next USSOCOM Commander must continually evaluate and balance SOF readiness and employment with SOF modernization to preserve and advance our vital interests and those of our allies and partners—in a resource constrained environment. SOF must continue to enable the Joint Force and provide strategic leaders with options that span the continuum from competition to crisis and conflict, and across the spectrum of attribution.

USSOCOM must preserve and protect the Department's crisis response capability and continue to serve as the Department's Coordinating Authority for Countering Violent Extremist Organizations (C-VEO). All of this allows the Services and other Combatant Commands to maintain focus on the pacing threat while building warfighting advantage. At the same time, USSOCOM must invest in modernizing for the future of campaigning in contested and denied areas, with China as the pacing threat.

*Question.* If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure that we are always ready for our no-fail missions—crisis response and keeping the homeland safe from another major terrorist attack. I would also continue to invest in SOF's irregular warfare capabilities, by maintaining close ties with U.S. Cyber Command and U.S. Space Command; enhancing the ongoing work of the Joint Task Force-Strategic Reconnaissance and Enabling Command; and enabling joint campaigning as a partner with the Combatant Commands and other USG agencies. If confirmed, I would also fully leverage USSOCOM's flexible acquisition authorities—in close coordination with ASD(SO/LIC)—to continue accelerating USSOCOM's modernization campaign, against the Chinese pacing threat. These acquisition and modernization efforts enable SOF to capitalize on our Nation's innovation advantage, and to extend the reach and lethality of the Joint Force. I would also build upon SOF's proud history of strengthening the resilience and resistance ability of partners and allies, in conjunction with the other Combatant Commands and the interagency. Additionally, I would maximize usage of the Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) program to ensure the readiness and resilience of our special operators and their families.

*Question.* What are the most important lessons you have learned during your tenure in senior leadership positions in the Department of Defense?

*Answer.* Our purpose is our mission. Ultimately, we must answer our Nation's call to provide for a common defense. Our most important warfighting system is our people—we must man, train, equip, and sustain our world-class special operators for success in both the physical and virtual domains. SOF win by maintaining readiness and modernization—readiness to fight and win in combat; assure allies; illuminate peer adversary predation; and provide placement and access options for the Joint Force.

The pace of technological advancement is accelerating and changing the character of warfare in a way that demands we transform to remain as decisive in the future as the past 25 years. SOF transform by modernizing and leveraging our Nation's technological advantage. This includes expanding SOF's capabilities in contested environments by leveraging rapid acquisition to integrate state-of-the-market and

state-of-the-art capabilities into operational plans and coupling cutting-edge capabilities with our world-class people using man-machine teaming.

*Question.* If confirmed, what priorities would you establish in terms of issues that must be addressed by the Commander of USSOCOM?

Answer. I believe that USSOCOM should align its strategic priorities directly to those in the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance (INDSG) and new strategic guidance as it is published. The first defense priority is defending the homeland. Here, SOF provide unique value in its Crisis Response and Countering Violent Extremist Organizations with the intent and capability of attacking the homeland and defending the territorial integrity of the United States from State and non-State threats. I also recognize we have the mission to insure against strategic distractions such as the rapid expansion of ISIS that destabilized an entire region and that might divert resources from the pacing threat.

The next priority is deterring China. The INDSG offers a laser focus on deterring China—while simultaneously defending the U.S. Our longstanding ability to build relationships and increase the capacity of allies and partners is critical to strengthening our alliances maintaining U.S. global influence and ensuring deterrence. SOF have a unique role in building resistance and resilience in allies and partners. These relationships provide access and placement for enhanced understanding of adversary threats. They also provide warfighter advantage for the delivery of asymmetric and irregular kinetic and non-kinetic effects; holding adversary systems at risk around the world; and extending the reach, lethality, and maneuver space of the Joint Force.

#### CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT OF USSOCOM

*Question.* Section 922 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, as amended, included modifications to the roles and responsibilities of the ASD (SOLIC) as well as the relationship between the ASD (SOLIC) and the Commander of USSOCOM in order for the ASD (SOLIC) to more effectively fulfill its “service secretary-like” responsibilities to provide civilian oversight of and advocacy within DOD for USSOCOM’s service-like requirements.

What is your view of the role of the ASD (SOLIC) in promoting civilian control over the military?

Answer. Civilian control over the military is a foundational element of our constitutional democracy. To that end, ASD(SO/LIC) assists in interpreting DOD policy guidance for SOF equities and provides administrative oversight to USSOCOM. Per Section 922 of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act codifying ASD(SO/LIC)’s roles and responsibilities in 10 U.S.C., ASD(SO/LIC) exercises authority, direction, and control over administrative matters relating to organizing, training, and equipping of SOF. ASD(SO/LIC) assists the Department in the development and supervision of policy, program planning and execution, and provides oversight for USSOCOM. His role also gives the SOF enterprise a stronger position to connect operational needs with Title 10 solutions.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the organizational and administrative relationship between the ASD (SOLIC) and the Commander of USSOCOM?

Answer. Section 922 of the Fiscal Year 2017 NDAA codified ASD(SO/LIC) in the chain of command for special operations-peculiar administration and support of USSOCOM, including the readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. Section 922 specifically did not impact the Combatant Command’s operational relationship between the Combatant Commander and the Secretary of Defense. ASD(SO/LIC) fulfills an important Secretary-like role in the coordination and relationship with the legislative branch and complements USSOCOM’s long-standing Service-like role. ASD(SO/LIC) plays a critical role in senior level forums like the Special Operations Policy Oversight Counsel (SPOC), providing Service Secretary-like advocacy for issues affecting SOF. If confirmed, I will work closely with the ASD(SO/LIC) as he provides civilian oversight and advocacy for SOF within DOD.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the role of the ASD (SOLIC) in:

(1) The formulation and submission of USSOCOM’s annual budget request;

Answer. As codified in DOD Directive 5111.10, ASD(SO/LIC) performs a budgetary role and responsibility like those of the Secretaries of the Military Departments. In close partnership with Headquarters, USSOCOM, ASD(SO/LIC), provides overall supervision of the preparation and justification of special operations programs and budget for Major Force Program–11 to include review and approval of the USSOCOM annual budget request prior to submission to Congress. Further, ASD(SO/LIC) partners closely with USSOCOM during budget rollout activities and coordinates on all answers to congressional requests for information.

*Question.* (2) Approving programs of record and the acquisition of special operations-peculiar capabilities by USSOCOM;

Answer. ASD(SOLIC) is a full partner in the development and approval of two key processes for USSOCOM that define our programs of record: the Special Operations Command Requirements Evaluation Board (SOCREB) and the Program Objective Memorandum (POM). The SOCREB is USSOCOM's requirements validation board that approves all special operations-peculiar requirements and lays the foundation for the Special Operations Acquisition Executive to establish Programs of Record. The POM determines the resources we will apply to these programs of record.

*Question.* (3) Overseeing the organization of USSOCOM headquarters and service components;

Answer. Section 922 of the fiscal year 2017 NDAA directs ASD(SO/LIC) to exercise authority, direction, and control of all special operations-peculiar administrative matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of SOF. This includes the organization of all USSOCOM elements.

*Question.* (4) Ensuring the readiness of special operations forces (SOF); and

Answer. Since the Section 922 amendment, USSOCOM has maintained a quarterly readiness brief with the ASD and the ASD(SO/LIC) staff to facilitate oversight of special operations readiness issues and discuss areas that warrant advocacy from the ASD(SO/LIC) office. The USSOCOM staff maintains regular contact with the ASD(SO/LIC) staff for actions that require attention between quarterly briefs.

*Question.* (5) Actions relating to the culture, ethics, and accountability of SOF.

Answer. The SOF enterprise is a meritocracy built on a foundation of ethical leadership, professionalism, and accountability. The SOF meritocracy is strong—the battlefield successes and competitive advantages our professionals have attained continue to grow. However, we must acknowledge we are human, and we make mistakes. A culture of meritocracy must also ensure accountability for those mistakes. We must learn from them and demonstrate that unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Leadership is the key to preventing and deterring poor behavior. Treating every teammate with dignity and respect is foundational to any culture, especially a meritocracy. Every individual must be given the opportunity to achieve success based on their own talents and contributions. Sustaining and cultivating a culture that reinforces dignity, respect, and accountability is vital to this. If confirmed, I will work closely with ASD(SO/LIC) to continue to ensure SOF maintain a meritocratic culture, built on a foundation of professionalism and accountability, empowering the innovative spirit to ensure readiness and mission accomplishment.

#### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT AND THE ROLE OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current strategic environment, including your assessment of the critical and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its allies and partners?

Answer. I believe the current strategic environment is characterized by danger, opportunity, and accelerating change. In light of this, the INDSG directs a strategy of peace through strength, and prioritizes homeland defense and deterring Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific, while empowering U.S. allies and partners to address other enduring threats. At the same time, the character of warfare is changing rapidly, with an increasing role for unmanned systems, artificial intelligence, man-machine teaming, and virtual domain sensing—with battlefield success rewarding those who can integrate these elements and shorten the cycle of innovation, experimentation, testing, and fielding. I judge that U.S. allies and partners are critical to mitigating the enduring threats to our national security identified in the INDSG, and that relationships—including those forged and strengthened by SOF—are essential to the cooperative threat reduction and burden sharing envisioned by our strategic guidance.

*Question.* In your view, what should be the role of SOF in addressing these threats and challenges?

Answer. In my view, the evolving operational environment and the emphasis on strategic competition across the Joint Force requires continual reassessment of SOF's operations and activities across the spectrum of competition, crisis, and conflict. SOF must maintain its core, no-fail missions of crisis response and counterterrorism, while integrating with conventional forces, interagency partners, and partners and allies to deter State adversaries to prevent large scale conflict. USSOCOM has been a proactive participant in the Joint Force's development of warfighting and competition concepts, and the lessons we are learning have driven assessment and modernization efforts within the SOF enterprise. If confirmed, I intend to continue USSOCOM's modernization to ensure SOF can continue to deliver asymmetric stra-

tegic effects for the Joint Force in competition and conflict while globally responding to crisis in any operational environment.

*Question.* How do you intend to balance the competing requirements of countering violent extremist organizations, crisis response, and efforts to counter China and Russia?

*Answer.* In my view, USSOCOM must balance sustainable counterterrorism, focusing on threats to the homeland and our no-fail Crisis Response mission, with precision access and global networks to support campaigning. There is shared interest among our partners and allies in countering terrorism, and I judge there are opportunities for effective collaboration and increased burden sharing. If confirmed, I will use the INDSG and additional strategic documents as a guide and prioritize the limited available resources for counterterrorism toward the most dangerous threats—specifically those with the demonstrated intent and capability to conduct external operations (EXOPs) attacks against the homeland—while also focusing USSOCOM’s modernization and acquisition programs toward contested environments and China.

*Question.* Do you believe SOF are appropriately organized and sized to meet global requirements?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will review the organization and size of SOF in light of the global requirements laid out in the INDSG and other strategic guidance, the rapidly evolving strategic environment, and the changing character of war and will make any recommendations for change through the Department and in close coordination with ASD(SO/LIC).

#### SPECIAL OPERATIONS MISSIONS

*Question.* Do you believe the special operations activities identified in section 167 of title 10, U.S. Code, remain relevant and appropriate?

*Answer.* The ten special operations activities specified in USC Title 10, Section 167 are sufficient to meet the requirements of the evolving global security environment and the implementation of the NDS. The tenth specified authority in particular—to perform “Such other activities as may be specified by the President or the Secretary of Defense”—provides adequate flexibility to meet INDSG requirements.

*Question.* What changes, if any, would you recommend?

*Answer.* At this time, I am not prepared to advocate for changes in current USSOCOM missions. If confirmed, and using the INDSG as the foundation, I will review the range of SOF missions and recommend any necessary changes in close coordination with ASD(SO/LIC) and the Department.

#### EVOLVING OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

*Question.* The operating environment facing SOF has evolved significantly over the last two decades, as adversary capabilities in areas such as area access/area denial, ubiquitous technical surveillance, and rapid advances in unmanned systems.

What do you view as the most pressing challenges that special operation forces will face on the battlefield currently and over the next 10 years?

*Answer.* This is the most complex and dynamic security environment I’ve seen in 34 years of service. The character of war is changing faster than ever. SOF face pressing battlefield challenges requiring adaptability and innovation. Technological advancements provide State and non-State actors with commercially available tools to confront us across the virtual and physical domains. Our adversaries’ innovation cycles are days to weeks, not months to years. Our adversaries are leveraging asymmetric capabilities, such as using inexpensive, one-way drones to threaten U.S. forces, bases, and our allies and partners. We are also seeing the threats from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, State proxies, and violent extremist organizations converge globally. In addition, our competitors seek to undermine U.S. global influence, competing with us, and our allies and partners, to expand their own partnerships and influence in critical regions such as Africa, South America, the Middle East, and Asia.

*Question.* What will be your priorities in addressing these challenges?

*Answer.* As proven by the increased demand for SOF by Combatant Commanders over the last several years, addressing these challenges will continue to require more from SOF. The operating environment will only become more and more complex, requiring unrelenting modernization for the most dangerous crises or conflicts we may face. We must balance the need to maintain SOF operational readiness to meet increasing global demand, with the imperative to modernize SOF to ensure we are as decisive in the future as we have been in the last 25 years. Additionally, SOF’s decades-long relationships with allies and partners, and corresponding global

placement and access, will continue to be critical to maintaining U.S. global influence, enhancing understanding, increasing burden-sharing, and enabling rapid response to crises. If confirmed, I will conduct a robust analysis against current and future challenges, and develop plans to ensure SOF remain a capable, ready, and resilient force.

#### COMBATING TERRORISM

*Question.* What is your assessment of the threat posed by Al Qaeda, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and other violent extremist organizations, to the U.S. homeland, and western interests, more broadly? Which group or groups, in your view, currently present the greatest threat to the United States?

*Answer.* I believe ISIS, its senior leadership, and its affiliates including ISIS-Khorasan and ISIS-Somalia pose the greatest terrorist threat to the United States. Al Qaeda senior leadership, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and Al Shabaab also present a terrorist threat to the United States Homeland and United States interests abroad. Although our CT operations, combined with allied and local partner efforts, reduced the threat of sophisticated, large-scale attacks on the Homeland, the underlying causes that produce extremist ideologies persist. Although degraded, ISIS and al Qaeda retain operational networks across the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia, and continue to pose a threat to our regional interests.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you seek to fulfill USSOCOM's assigned responsibilities for synchronizing global operations against terrorist networks?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would fulfill the USSOCOM responsibilities by coordinating with Combatant Commands and across the DOD and interagency, to plan, assess, and make recommendations to the Chairman and Secretary regarding C-VEO campaigning. Under current strategic guidance, SOF resources are focused on disrupting and degrading only the most dangerous VEOs (those demonstrating intent and capability to attack the U.S. homeland), while allocating fewer resources toward disrupting and monitoring VEOs which present a regional and/or local threat to U.S. interests. If confirmed, I will continue to leverage and seek burden sharing opportunities with like-minded partners and allies. In my experience, a wide-ranging partnership among U.S. and coalition military, interagency and law enforcement capabilities and authorities is key to addressing global, trans-regional VEO threats.

*Question.* What is your view of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy and the role of USSOCOM in supporting that strategy?

*Answer.* In my experience, USSOCOM plays a pivotal role in supporting U.S. counterterrorism strategy. In my view, current strategic guidance is appropriate, and periodic reviews and risk assessments help refine priorities for addressing global VEO threats. Informed by this guidance and the evolving environment, USSOCOM helps focus SOF resources on monitoring and disrupting only the most dangerous VEOs, while allocating fewer resources to VEOs which present a regional or local threat to U.S. interests. In recent years, USSOCOM has recommended, approved, and implemented modest but highly impactful adjustments that have reduced risk of external operations attacks at a sustainable level of investment, consistent with U.S. counterterrorism strategy. If confirmed, I will work to sustain and improve this valuable process, which begins with tactical-level feedback from the special operators and intelligence professionals working our most challenging counterterrorism problems. USSOCOM also supports U.S. counterterrorism strategy by working with and leveraging like-minded partners to address the threat and mitigate the risk against less capable regional VEOs—this allows U.S. SOF to focus on the more capable, transregional VEO threats.

#### COUNTERING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (CWMD)

*Question.* Under the Unified Campaign Plan, USSOCOM is tasked with coordinating DOD's efforts on CWMDs.

*Answer.* Correct, the 2023 Unified Command Plan, with change #2 (dtd 23 MAY 2025) states, "Commander, USSOCOM is responsible for planning of DOD CWMD efforts in support of other Combatant Commands, DOD priorities, and, as directed, other U.S. Government agencies.

*Question.* What is your understanding of USSOCOM's responsibilities under the Unified Campaign Plan for synchronizing the Department's efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction?

*Answer.* As the Department of Defense CWMD Coordinating Authority, USSOCOM is currently responsible for coordinating and planning DOD CWMD efforts in support of other Combatant Commands, DOD priorities, and as directed, other USG agencies; integrating DOD plans, in coordination with other Combatant

Commands, against adversaries and networks that possess, seek or facilitate WMD; in support of Combatant Commands, executing global operations against adversaries and networks that possess or seek WMD.

*Question.* In your assessment are there any resources, authorities, or organizational changes needed to better execute USSOCOM's CWMD mission?

If confirmed, I will conduct a holistic review of USSOCOM's CWMD capabilities, and its role as CWMD Coordinating Authority. If changes are needed, I will make appropriate recommendations via the Chairman to the Secretary of Defense on resources, authorities, and organization as required to address current and emerging CWMD threats.

#### 10 U.S.C. 127E OPERATIONS

*Question.* Section 127e of title 10, United States Code, authorizes the provision of support (including training, funding, and equipment) to regular forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations by U.S. SOF to combat terrorism.

What is your assessment of this authority?

Answer. I believe that 127e remains one of the most relevant tools for our forces countering terrorism overseas. It continues to provide outsized effects in return for a relatively small investment of U.S. training and resourcing of select foreign forces. 127e is the essence of burden-sharing; our ability to enable and leverage the access and local-area knowledge of select indigenous regular and irregular forces is critical to mission success, especially in remote or politically sensitive areas where a large U.S. military footprint is neither desirable nor feasible.

*Question.* If confirmed, what criteria would you use to evaluate 127e proposals to ensure they comply with policy guidance, are complementary to other DOD and U.S. Government counterterrorism efforts, and achieve their intended purpose?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that proposals for the use of 127e authority are aligned with INDSG priorities and focused on combatant command strategic objectives accomplished by U.S. SOF operations within the scope of Secretary of Defense-granted operational authority. 127e will not be used to build capacity; rather, it has and will continue to serve as a mechanism to facilitate burden-sharing with foreign allies, partners, and surrogates, as a component of our broader counterterrorism strategy. Proposals must be fully coordinated with the interagency with a well-defined end-State and off-ramp plan that considers the Combatant Command, U.S. Country Team, and Department of State long-term relationships with partner nations. 127e-resourced tactical maneuver forces must be fully vetted to ensure integrity of the force and mitigate the risk of human rights violations.

#### IRREGULAR WARFARE

*Question.* Nation states are becoming more aggressive in challenging U.S. interests through the use of asymmetric means that often fall below the threshold of conventional conflict, commonly referred to as irregular warfare and "gray zone operations."

What is your understanding of the threat to U.S. interests posed by adversaries in this domain of warfare?

Answer. The threat to U.S. interests posed by adversaries employing irregular techniques and hybrid warfare strategies includes peer and near-peer competitor nations, whose actions could drain U.S. resources and those of our allies and partners. In my judgment, adversary nations and their proxies are increasing the frequency and severity of their gray zone operations. By their nature, these operations fall below the level of war and provide attractive and inexpensive options for our adversaries, in part because it increases the difficulty of identifying perpetrators, understanding red lines, and identifying the thresholds at which adversaries would intensify or escalate violence. They also provide the means for a militarily inferior force to coerce advantage through a more limited and insidious approach that falls between traditional diplomacy and our conventional military deterrence approaches.

*Question.* What should be the guiding principles of the Department of Defense's strategy to counter these threats?

Answer. The INDSG provides clear guidance to focus Department of Defense strategy on U.S. homeland defense and deterring Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific, while empowering allies and partners against other threats with more limited support from the U.S.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the role of irregular warfare in supporting Department of Defense strategy and operations? What role should SOF have in executing such a strategy?



Answer. Irregular Warfare (IW) activities support the DOD's strategic and operational priorities, including competing against and deterring China and Russia; combating non-State actors such as al-Qaida, ISIS, and state-backed proxies like the Houthis; assisting allies and partners against State and non-State actors; and preparing for large-scale combat.

SOF have been executing IW operations and activities for more than 80 years. SOF's operations in support of broader USG deterrence efforts help undermine adversaries' confidence; alter their decisionmaking calculus; and provide Combatant Commanders opportunities and advantages—to prevent conflict. With decades of combat experience and credibility, SOF's long-term relationships with allies and partners improve interoperability, while also ensuring broad access, placement, and influence across the globe. This provides the Joint Force with expanded situational awareness and increases options in competition, crisis, and conflict. Small, persistent, globally deployed SOF teams, working alongside regular and irregular forces, strengthen partner capacity, counter adversary malign activity, and promote regional stability.

*Question.* Do you believe that SOF have the appropriate authorities and capabilities to operate effectively in this domain of warfare? Please explain your answer.

Answer. I appreciate Congress's efforts to provide the DOD and USSOCOM with the tools needed to fight and win. In my experience, one of our most important tools is the array of fiscal authorities that we can apply to enable foreign forces that support our operations. To build our military advantage in a changing operational environment, we must adapt and innovate our authorities and capabilities to provide flexibility and operational agility. If confirmed, I intend to assess current authorities in close coordination with the USSOCOM staff and components, as well as ASD(SO/LIC) and the Department.

Section 127d of title 10, United States Code, authorizes the provision of support (including training, funding, and equipment) to regular forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating irregular warfare operations by U.S. SOF.

What is your assessment of this authority?

Answer. I am grateful to Congress for codifying the former 1202 authority into title 10. The ability to enable and leverage the access and local area knowledge of select foreign forces allows U.S. SOF to achieve specific effects in direct support of ongoing priority Combatant Command irregular warfare operations. This enables outsized returns from a relatively small investment in our efforts to impose costs upon malign actors and enhance resiliency of frontline allies. As a resourcing tool, 127d is the mechanism that sets conditions for current and future burden-sharing with partners and surrogate forces. If confirmed, I would work closely with ASD(SO/LIC) to provide Congress with the transparency necessary to build the necessary trust and confidence that this authority is being appropriately implemented to maintain our military advantage.

*Question.* If confirmed, what criteria would you use to evaluate section 127d proposals to ensure they comply with policy guidance, are complementary to other DOD and U.S. Government irregular warfare efforts, and achieve their intended purpose?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that proposals for the use of 127d are aligned with INDSG priorities, consistent with congressional intent, within the scope of Secretary of Defense-granted operational authority and fully coordinated and synchronized with interagency partners. Proposals must include detailed counterintelligence plans to mitigate risk and ensure integrity of the enabled force, with defined control measures to mitigate risk of inadvertent escalation. Proposals must also include well-defined milestones and end State, with consideration for eventual off-ramp, executed in concert with the Combatant Command and the Department of State.

#### INFORMATION OPERATIONS

*Question.* In your view, are the Department and the broader interagency appropriately organized to compete with State and non-State adversaries in the information environment? If not, what recommendations would you make?

Answer. If confirmed, I would like to examine this issue in greater detail and assess how USSOCOM and our other capabilities can contribute to a broader USG effort by integrating and coordinating efforts both within DOD and the Interagency. The DOD has conducted analysis of force structure, authorities, and standing capabilities to meet our Nation's requirements to compete in the information environment. This has resulted in several initiatives across the Joint Staff, the Services, and at USSOCOM. I believe SOF are well-positioned both to support Combatant Commanders and to help synchronize the Department's messaging across the Department and interagency.

*Question.* What is the appropriate role of the Department and, specifically, SOF in the broader information operations and strategic communications efforts of the U.S. Government?

*Answer.* I understand that the Department's role in the broader USG information operations effort is typically to support the designated lead agencies for strategic communications. In most cases, communication efforts take place outside declared areas of hostility with the Department of State as the designated lead. In a broader sense, DOD is emphasizing throughout the force that every operation, action, and investment planned has an accompanying informational component which together contribute to strategic campaigning. Every action we take conveys the principle of Peace through Strength.

As directed in the Unified Command Plan and Title 10 USC Section 167, USSOCOM is the Department's SOF Joint Force Provider with the responsibility to provide combat ready SOF, including Psychological Operations (PSYOP) forces. The UCP also specifies that the USSOCOM Commander's "responsibilities include integrating and coordinating DOD Military Information Support Operations (MISO) capabilities, and when directed, executing MISO in support of Combatant Commands." Working primarily through the Theater Special Operations Commands, USSOCOM provides military information support operations capabilities and exercises its coordinating authority role to support achievement of supported Combatant Commanders' objectives. Outside of areas of hostilities, PSYOP forces conduct military information support operations in close coordination with Department of State and other interagency personnel to support the achievement of U.S. Government information objectives, consistent with Department of State mission strategic plans.

*Question.* Do you believe that USSOCOM's military information support capabilities can be more effectively utilized? If so, are there doctrinal, organizational, training, or authority modifications that you believe could make military information support capabilities more effective?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with USSOCOM, supported Combatant Commands, and interagency partners to review the agility and effectiveness of USSOCOM's military information support capabilities. In my current position, I have witnessed the increasing importance of these capabilities—and other related capabilities in the virtual domain, such as cyber and horizontal ISR—and judge these capabilities to be critical enablers in our current and future operations. I firmly believe that USSOCOM's innovation in this arena—and its fruitful partnership with USSPACECOM and USCYBERCOM in particular—should be reinforced and accelerated. If confirmed, I will remain a strong partner to other Combatant Commands—such as USINDOPACOM—that are integrating information environment operations into their theater campaign plans.

*Question.* Are there additional military capabilities that should be developed by the Department to more effectively compete in the information environment?

*Answer.* At this time, I am not prepared to advocate for the development of additional military capabilities in this area. If confirmed, I will coordinate employment of these capabilities closely with Department, Combatant Command, and interagency stakeholders. As with many other military capabilities, it is essential that these effects are employed with speed, agility, appropriate discipline, and consistent with the relevant law.

#### INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

*Question.* In your view, how are intelligence operations carried out by SOF different from those carried out by others in the intelligence community?

*Answer.* In my experience, SOF principally conduct intelligence-related activities, in support of the warfighter and the Department—to achieve national security objectives. However, SOF do not do this alone; they integrate, coordinate, and deconflict these activities with partners in the Intelligence Community and interagency, often setting conditions for potential DOD operations in support of deterrence, crisis response, and conflict. SOF's unique capabilities, access, and placement enables enhanced understanding, and extends the operational reach and collection capabilities of the Joint Force and intelligence community.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure that intelligence activities carried out by SOF are properly coordinated with activities carried out by the intelligence community?

*Answer.* If confirmed, and in coordination with OUSD(I&S), I will direct USSOCOM to adhere to Intelligence Community and DOD directives for coordination of intelligence collection and intelligence-related activities. I will also ensure that USSOCOM works closely with our intelligence community partners to share best practices, particularly those tied to counterintelligence and force protection, as

required by the increasing adversary use of technical surveillance. USSOCOM will also continue to leverage its SOF liaison network and Intelligence Community senior representatives and liaison officers to collaborate, coordinate, and leverage intelligence expertise to support operations. Theater Special Operations Commands and SOF Joint Task Forces will continue to conduct coordination with Country Teams and the Intelligence Community to deconflict activities, share information, leverage available capabilities, and enable operations.

#### CRISIS RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

*Question.* What is your understanding of the demand for and associated costs of USSOCOM's crisis response capabilities over the last decade?

*Answer.* Employed at the direction of the President and Secretary of Defense, USSOCOM's crisis response forces eliminate threats to the homeland, rescue American citizens, and protect our diplomats, all at a moment's notice. These urgent missions lack predictability in terms of timing, duration, and total cost. In the past three-and-a-half years, the frequency of these Presidentially directed missions has increased by over 200 percent. During this same time, composite strategic airlift costs increased over 76 percent. Adequate funding for crisis response and National Command Authority-directed missions is critical to ensure critical readiness exercises and modernization efforts are not sacrificed to resource the increased frequency, duration and cost of crisis response.

*Question.* What implications, in your view, does a significant increase in the demand for USSOCOM's crisis response capabilities over the last decade have for the readiness and resourcing of the force?

*Answer.* Crisis response operations are inherently unpredictable and vary year-to-year in number, timing, duration, and total cost. In particular, the last 2 years have seen some of the most complex and longest crisis response operations in U.S. history. The increased demand for SOF to respond to crises, and the duration and cost of those operations, have impacted SOF's ability to modernize for the future. Crisis response is no-fail mission for SOF. We must balance SOF readiness for immediate crisis response requirements, with the need to modernize the force to be able successfully execute the crisis response in contested environments.

*Question.* What changes, if any, would you recommend to USSOCOM's crisis response posture, capabilities, and employment?

*Answer.* USSOCOM provides the most capable crisis response force in the world. To sustain this, we must continue to modernize our crisis response capabilities, focused on the potential requirement to execute crisis response operations in environments either directly or indirectly contested by China or other State and/or state-supported proxies. Advanced autonomous and remotely controlled unmanned systems, man-machine teaming, counter-unmanned systems capabilities, and virtual domain sensing and effects will be critical to future crisis response operations. If confirmed, I will continue to accelerate USSOCOM's modernization program—including those capabilities required for crisis response, and in close coordination with ASD(SO/LIC)—with China as the pacing threat.

#### USSOCOM ACQUISITION AUTHORITIES

*Question.* Section 167(e)(4) of title 10, U.S. Code, assigns to the Commander, USSOCOM the authority to develop and acquire special operations-peculiar equipment, and to acquire special operations-peculiar material, supplies, and services. The Commander, USSOCOM is advised and assisted in these matters by a command acquisition executive.

What technology areas and capabilities do you believe should be prioritized to enable SOF to most effectively support the objectives of the NDS?

*Answer.* The increasing pace of technological advancement demands SOF modernize rapidly to outpace our adversaries through the unrelenting development and integration of cutting-edge technologies. This includes harnessing the power of man-machine teaming and fusing all-domain capabilities to achieve decisive advantages. The pervasive technical surveillance environment presents both unique challenges and unprecedented opportunities. Recognizing this, I am committed to strengthening the Space-SOF-Cyber triad, leveraging the combined strengths of USSPACECOM and USCYBERCOM to ensure SOF's operational effectiveness in support of national security objectives. My vision encompasses integrating technological advancements across all domains—physical and virtual—including surface and subsurface maritime platforms; autonomous uncrewed systems; counter-unmanned systems; next-generation intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; stand-off precision effects; and modernized mission command systems. If confirmed, I will leverage the INDSG and other strategic documents to guide a comprehensive

review of USSOCOM's priorities and capabilities and make recommendations to ASD(SO/LIC) aimed at ensuring SOF remain at the forefront of military innovation and preparedness.

*Question.* If confirmed, what criteria would you apply in validating a determination that a particular requirement for equipment, materiel, supplies, or services is "special operations-peculiar"?

*Answer.* The SOF enterprise relies on Service-common investments in foundational capabilities such as personnel, infrastructure, mobility platforms, and weapons systems. However, SOF provide the Nation unique capabilities, and therefore, require specialized capabilities. This may involve modifications of Service-common systems or developing entirely unique SOF capabilities. SOF should continue to look for opportunities to enhance or build from Joint Force solutions wherever possible. I also believe SOF should be viewed as the vanguard for innovation and will work with the Services to develop capabilities with transition to the joint force at the forefront of our development. If confirmed, I will partner with ASD(SO/LIC) to validate SOF capabilities through our established process SOF Capability Integration and Development System (SOF CIDS). Any capability deemed non-special operations-peculiar will be transitioned to the appropriate Service sponsor—in collaboration with the Joint Staff and leveraging the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) framework.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to improve each of the three aspects of the special operations-peculiar acquisition process—requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I commit to ensuring SOF remain a vanguard for agility across the Department and I will assess current USSOCOM requirements, acquisition, and budgeting processes to identify what improvements may be required. I recognize the critical need to respond to adversary innovation cycles with speed and precision. It will be important to reduce capability fielding and employment timelines by empowering leaders to make risk-informed capability development decisions and enabling rapidly fielded capabilities against emerging threats. Openness with industry will foster strategic partnerships, competition, and innovation. Allowing companies insight into SOF requirements will unlock the ingenuity of the American industrial base and drive development of critical cutting-edge technologies.

If confirmed, I will also assess USSOCOM's business systems and processes, and look to modernize them, as required. I will continue to make strides toward achieving a clean audit to earn your full trust and confidence in the management and expenditure of the resources entrusted to USSOCOM. I will continually seek to enhance transparency throughout the requirements, acquisition, and budgeting processes.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you propose, if any, to ensure that special operations-peculiar requirements are realistic, technically achievable, and prioritized?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will lead a Commander-driven prioritization process, ensuring that precious MFP-11 resources are allocated to programs that are demonstrably relevant, realistic, and aligned with addressing the current and most dangerous future threats. I will look to divest of obsolete programs, freeing up resources for modernization. In my experience, special operator-identified capability gaps combined with agile authorities, and iterative experimentation and modernization exercises are invaluable to the successful development and fielding of special operations-peculiar capabilities. To sustain this advantage, we must cultivate a battlefield test lab environment with realistic and technically achievable requirements. If confirmed, I commit to equip our operators with the best tools possible while remaining good stewards of the resources entrusted to USSOCOM.

*Question.* If confirmed, how will you ensure that special operations capabilities and requirements are integrated into overall DOD research, development, and acquisition programs?

*Answer.* I believe a strong partnership with the Department is critical for success in this area. If confirmed, I will prioritize maintaining a close partnership with USD(A&S), USD(R&E), the Strategic Capabilities Office (SCO), and the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU). I will also continue the practice of co-chairing the Acquisition Summit, fostering collaboration between SOF acquisition efforts and those of the Services and key DOD leaders. This synergy will enable SOF to leverage its unique ability to be both a first mover on emerging technologies and an early adopter of innovations developed across the Department. The USSOCOM enterprise's ongoing partnerships with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and SCO exemplifies this approach, increasing collaboration on defining SOF requirements and serving as a transition partner for their groundbreaking technologies. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring transparency and interoperability by inte-

grating USSOCOM developmental efforts and capabilities into the broader DOD and Joint Force to maximize our collective impact.

#### ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*Question.* What are your views on the current culture of ethics and accountability in SOF?

*Answer.* In my view, the SOF enterprise is a meritocracy built on a foundation of ethical leadership, professionalism, and accountability. A meritocratic culture must also ensure accountability for mistakes. We must learn from them and demonstrate that unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Strong, ethical leadership is the key to preventing and deterring poor behavior. Sustaining and cultivating a culture that reinforces dignity, respect, and accountability is vital to this. If confirmed, I will work closely with ASD(SO/LIC) to continue to ensure SOF maintain a meritocratic culture, built on a foundation of professionalism and accountability, empowering the innovative spirit to ensure readiness and mission accomplishment.

*Question.* What steps will you take, if confirmed, to foster a culture of ethics and accountability in SOF?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I am fully committed to fostering an enduring, meritocratic culture underpinned by ethical leadership and accountability across the USSOCOM enterprise. I will work closely with ASD(SO/LIC) and subordinate commanders to promote this culture within SOF, and to make professionalism and accountability pillars of SOF leadership, training, and assessment programs at all echelons.

*Question.* What role, if any, should past mission accomplishment play in decisions relating to misconduct by SOF?

*Answer.* As a general matter, mission accomplishment does not excuse criminal or corrosive behaviors. Accountability is fundamental to ensuring good order and discipline in any formation, and SOF commanders at all levels have a responsibility to uphold standards. In making decisions relating to misconduct, leaders must evaluate each case on its own merits.

#### HEALTH OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

*Question.* What is your assessment of the health and readiness of SOF?

*Answer.* U.S. SOF are the most capable special operations forces in the world. This is an achievement that would not be possible without a strong foundation of health and readiness. To maintain this, if confirmed, I will ensure the USSOCOM force continues to have access to the range of services provided by the command's Preservation of the Force and Families (POTFF) program.

*Question.* If confirmed, what will be your priorities in addressing the stress on SOF?

*Answer.* If confirmed, first and foremost, I will continue the efforts of my predecessors with respect to POTFF. We ask people to do difficult things, and this produces stress—we owe our teammates resources to help with stress. The SOF enterprise knows from hard learned lessons the importance of managing operational tempo and giving our warriors the resources and opportunities to reset and strengthen their minds, bodies, and spirits. If confirmed, my priorities will include closely monitoring the health and well-being of the force through screening and data, initiatives that cultivate an empathetic culture of self and buddy care, sustaining POTFF resources, and investing in innovations to improve the physical, psychological, and cognitive performance of SOF.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps will you undertake to address suicides in SOF?

*Answer.* Even one suicide in our formation is one too many. With the cessation of large-scale combat operations, suicide is now the leading cause of deaths among our service members. Suicide is preventable. Prevention requires involved leaders, peers, and subordinates; constant vigilance; the willingness to ask incisive questions; and access to mental healthcare and spiritual guidance. If confirmed, I will assess, and enhance as required, routine screening and resources for mental health, cognitive impairment, and interpersonal relationship problems—and to increase continuity of care between caregivers. The cultural measures we take—to increase empathy and decrease the stigma of asking for help—also have a tremendous positive impact. In my current command, I am proud to report nearly 50 percent of personnel have visited and used mental health services, a high rate unprecedented in my career, and not always for acute care but to increase resilience and performance.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the USSOCOM's Preservation of the Force and Families program?

*Answer.* The POTFF program is a powerful capability for the USSOCOM enterprise, augmenting Service-provided efforts. We must continue to care for our people—particularly those who have been injured on the battlefield—and their families.

Having benefited from the POTFF program as a Commander, I understand and appreciate the value of having embedded, multidisciplinary teams within our formations. The POTFF construct provides top-quality physical and psychological care to our members, and the spiritual and family services enhance the belongingness and interpersonal relationships of our members and their families. I understand that in FY24 some 89 percent of SOF members were served by the POTFF program, and that USSOCOM's data showed positive results in physical performance and reduced severity of injuries, better mental health access, improved cognitive functioning and deeper family and community connections.

#### RECRUITING AND RETENTION

*Question.* What are the biggest challenges to retention you see in the USSOCOM community?

*Answer.* In my current role, I have limited visibility on USSOCOM's recruiting and retention challenges, but if confirmed, I will examine this issue closely, in partnership with the Services. I anticipate one of the biggest challenges to retention in the SOF community is competition from the civilian workforce. To mitigate this, SOF rely on Service compensation policies as a significant contributor to retain the best and most qualified members. Continued support of compensation policies can only serve to sustain our already positive retention rates. However, service members assessed into SOF have already demonstrated their propensity to serve and are some of the most innovative and adaptive problem solvers in the world. We improve retention and our collective capability by providing SOF service members with a purposeful mission and venues that empower their innovative nature—from training ranges at home to our most sophisticated adversaries at the forward edge of the battlefield.

*Question.* What steps need to be taken, in your view, to meet the recruiting and retention goals of each of the services' SOF?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will conduct a holistic assessment with the USSOCOM team and Services to better understand recruiting and retention issues. Recruiting new service members falls under the purview of each of the Services, and it is evident that they are taking the recruiting challenge seriously. I fully support and applaud the actions that all the Services are taking to ensure that we appeal to today's youth, from compensation and benefit reviews that bolster both recruiting and retention, to studying the factors that disqualify young Americans from serving—such as physical, medical, and educational requirements. I am confident the Services are making positive progress on these challenges, with beneficial downstream effects on SOF's overall readiness and manning.

#### CAPABILITIES OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES AND GENERAL PURPOSE FORCES

*Question.* What is your assessment of the mix of responsibilities assigned to general purpose and SOF, particularly with respect to security force assistance and building partner military capabilities?

*Answer.* Both SOF and GPF have important and complementary roles in Building Partner Capacity (BPC) and Security Force Assistance (SFA) missions; and both have demonstrated their ability to conduct these missions across the globe. It is likely that both SOF and GPF will continue to prove vital to the Department's approach to campaigning. In general, SOF is designed for, and best utilized, as small teams in contested or politically sensitive areas to achieve low-cost, high-return results with partner nations. Because SOF is a high demand, low density force, it is often necessary to use GPF for SFA and BPC missions at larger scale. In my experience, GPF are most effective when specially trained to deliver conventional capabilities to foreign military forces—and in environments where U.S. presence is acceptable to the host-country government. Both GPF and SOF are utilized in the conduct of security cooperation for BPC under 10 U.S.C. § 333 and other Chapter 16 security cooperation authorities.

#### SPECIAL OPERATIONS ENABLING CAPABILITIES

*Question.* In your view, how should the responsibility for providing enabling capabilities for special operations missions be divided between USSOCOM and the services?

*Answer.* In my 34-years of experience within the SOF community, the 5th SOF Truth, "most special operations require non-SOF support," has proven accurate. USSOCOM and SOF units depend on the Services in a wide variety of ways, from administrative needs including recruiting, personnel, and logistics, to operational needs such as Service-common equipment and training. In return, SOF serve as a vanguard for the Services, integrating unique capabilities into operational plans and

creating military options that conventional forces cannot readily provide. The symbiotic relationship between SOF and the Services is a critical variable in the success or failure of both special and conventional operations. This dynamic also highlights the importance of ASD(SO/LIC) providing oversight and advocacy in a role comparable to that of a service secretary. If confirmed, I pledge to partner with the Services—in close collaboration with ASD(SO/LIC)—to bring outsized return-on-investment and value to the Services and the Joint Force.

*Question.* How would you ensure that the enabler requirements of SOF are appropriately communicated to, and receive support, from the services?

Answer. The Joint Staff Global Force Management Process provides the appropriate means to communicate special operations requirements for Service support and allows DOD leadership to consider the strategic risk associated with the allocation of forces. If confirmed, I would also leverage the Special Operations Policy and Oversight Council—in cooperation with ASD(SO/LIC)—to address any support concerns with the Services.

*Question.* Do you believe USSOCOM and the services are maintaining adequate enabling capabilities to support special operations missions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will assess this topic in greater detail and provide transparency and recommendations to ASD(SO/LIC) and the Department. USSOCOM and the Services are adjusting their structure and focus to align with strategic guidance, with downstream effects on SOF enabling capabilities.

#### INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

*Question.* The collaboration between SOF, general purpose forces, and other U.S. Government departments and agencies has played a significant role in the success of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in recent years. However, much of this collaboration has been ad hoc in nature.

What do you believe are the most important lessons learned from the collaborative interagency efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere, and what lessons, in your view, are applicable to efforts against China and Russia?

Answer. In my view, the most important lesson learned from recent decades of combat in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere is the importance of relationships—within DOD, with other U.S. departments and agencies, and with foreign allies and partners. Whether fighting insurgents, conducting counterterrorism operations, competing against and deterring China and Russia, combating non-State actors, assisting allies and partners, or preparing for large scale combat, special operations is most often a team sport. With decades of combat experience and credibility, SOF's long-term relationships are directly applicable to efforts against China and Russia. These relationships are foundational to SOF's ability to provide the Joint Force with placement and access, enhanced understanding, and increased options in competition, crisis, and conflict.

#### SUPPORTED COMBATANT COMMAND

*Question.* Under certain circumstances and subject to direction by the President or Secretary of Defense, USSOCOM may operate as a supported combatant command.

In your view, under what circumstances should USSOCOM conduct operations as a supported combatant command?

Answer. In my view, USSOCOM's primary role is to provide trained and ready SOF to Combatant Commanders with physical areas of responsibility to execute operations in support of their respective theater objectives. By exception, and if directed by the Secretary and President, USSOCOM could be designated as the supported combatant command, particularly when crisis response operations are trans-regional and dynamic, or when exquisite sensitive capabilities may be employed. However, this has not been the historical norm.

*Question.* In your view, what resource, organization, and force structure changes, if any, are required in order for USSOCOM to more effectively conduct both supporting and supported combatant command responsibilities?

Answer. If confirmed, and using the INDSG and other strategic guidance as a guide, I will conduct a holistic review of the SOF enterprise resource, organization, and force structure, and make appropriate adjustments and recommendations to the Department in close coordination with ASD(SO/LIC) and the Services.

#### THEATER SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMANDS

*Question.* Based on your professional military experience, how would you characterize the benefits of a dedicated special operations component to a geographic combatant command in providing responsive special operations planning and capabili-

ties in support of the combatant command's theater campaign plan and associated requirements?

Answer. As a former commander of Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT), I know firsthand the crucial role our TSOC's play in support of Combatant Commands' campaign plans. TSOCs are the primary theater SOF organization responsible for planning, executing, and controlling theater special operations in support of their respective Combatant Commands. Similarly, TSOC Commanders also serve as the senior SOF representative on Combatant Command staffs responsible for advising Combatant Commanders on the best use of SOF in support of theater campaign plans and any other emergent theater operational or training requirements.

#### CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

*Question.* 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. Minimizing civilian harm is one of the core purposes of the Law of Armed Conflict, and crucial for maintaining local support, strengthening partnership, and denying adversaries exploitable propaganda. Civilian casualties are never routine—every civilian death is a tragedy, and we will always take feasible precautions to mitigate CIVCAS—and every time we fail, we will examine where and how we failed and adjust our processes to mitigate civilian casualties to the best of our ability. In my experience, the mitigation, investigation, and reporting of civilian casualties have been improved through measures such as the use of training, technology (weaponizing and modeling), refined processes, and dedicated personnel and funding. If confirmed, I will prioritize the minimization of civilian harm, and I will provide feedback and recommendations on the associated challenges to the Department, in close coordination with ASD(SO/LIC) and supported Combatant Commands.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure civilian casualty allegations are adequately and promptly investigated by USSOCOM?

Answer. USSOCOM actively works with supported Combatant Commands to ensure all CIVCAS incidents and allegations are promptly investigated and reported. USSOCOM has subject matter experts who are involved in responding to all allegations of civilian harm in accordance with Department of Defense policy, and in identifying potential trends of issues specific to SOF. If confirmed, and when USSOCOM forces are operating under another Combatant Command's operational authority, I will emphasize full cooperation with that command's processes to ensure we are taking all appropriate action to investigate and resolve civilian harm allegations.

*Question.* Do you believe credible civilian casualty incidents should be independently investigated by personnel who are sufficiently removed from the unit or chain of command associated with the incident? Please be specific in your response.

Answer. The Civilian Harm Assessment Cells (CHAC) at Combatant Commands are organized to ensure that they are not part of the targeting process, to maintain a degree of separation that enables an impartial review of civilian harm allegations. At the same time, these CHAC personnel, by working as part of the staff, maintain real-time awareness of operations, policies, battle rhythm, battle damage assessments, civilian damage estimates, and have access to all relevant information regarding military operations, including classified material that requires special access. In my judgment, this ensures the CHACs are well-positioned to evaluate all civilian harm allegations thoroughly and in a timely manner, while maintaining their impartiality. This model provides commanders with maximum flexibility and discretion to assign and oversee incidents of civilian harm and results in more relevant investigations as the personnel understand the organization, policy, and processes involved, and have the expertise to make relevant recommendations to create institutional change. Additionally, partnerships with civilian non-governmental organizations can provide important access to information on civil context in and around battlefields.

*Question.* What is your understanding of USSOCOM's obligation to report civilian casualty incidents to Congress?

Answer. USSOCOM forces conduct combat operations under the operational authority of a combatant commander with a physical area of responsibility. USSOCOM provides required inputs to Congress via Combatant Commanders with physical areas of responsibility and the Joint Staff. This report is submitted annually by USD(P). These reports include specific operational details, such as the date, location, and the number of civilian deaths and/or injuries that occurred, among other relevant details.



*Question.* Under what circumstances do you believe it is appropriate to provide ex gratia payments when civilian casualties or other civilian harm result from unilateral or partnered U.S. military operations?

*Answer.* Ex gratia is an expression of condolence or sympathy with the aim to maintain good relationships with the local community. There are many factors to consider when making the decision to use ex gratia funds including the extent of harm, local culture, local economic situation, the ability to confirm the identity of the affected individuals, and the command's ability to communicate with them. There are also the considerations that an ex-gratia payment could put those individuals in danger, or that the payments could be diverted to support terrorist activities. There are cases when ex gratia payments are appropriate due to damage or destruction of property, or injury or death due to U.S. military operations. In my view, while ex gratia is a means to maintain positive relationships with affected communities, it must be weighed against potential risks to the recipients and/or future operations.

#### 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 testimony, 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 with a simple 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 with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

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[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE DETACHMENT KODIAK

1. Senator SULLIVAN. Vice Admiral Bradley, President Trump recently said, “We will ensure Alaska gets even more defense investment as we fully rebuild our military, especially as Russia and China are making menacing moves in the Pacific.” As you know, Alaska offers some of the most challenging and realistic training environments in the world, especially for cold-weather and maritime operations. Naval Special Warfare Detachment Kodiak has played a vital role for decades in preparing our SEALs for missions in Arctic conditions—an area of the world that is increasingly relevant given the strategic competition in the High North. How does SOCOM view the importance of Kodiak in sustaining the readiness of our Naval Special Warfare units?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. While I cannot speak for USSOCOM’s view writ large, I believe Naval Special Warfare Detachment Kodiak provides critical training to enable NSW personnel to operate in extreme, cold-weather maritime environments.

2. Senator SULLIVAN. Vice Admiral Bradley, are there plans to expand or modernize Naval Special Warfare Detachment Kodiak’s capabilities as the Arctic becomes a more contested environment?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In my current position, I am not aware if there are plans to expand Naval Special Warfare Detachment Kodiak. If confirmed, I will review this, as well as SOF’s other arctic-focused training capabilities.

## 8(A) CONTRACTING

3. Senator SULLIVAN. Vice Admiral Bradley, the Small Business Act (SBA) 8(a) program, created by Congress, provides a contract vehicle through which sole source and set aside contracts can be awarded to small businesses owned by Alaska Native corporations, Community Development Corporations, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations. These corporations are tied to political relationships, not racial classifications. They also are some of our most efficient contractors, earning stellar Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) marks. Last, many of these small businesses employ veterans at rates far exceeding the national average, allowing our Nation’s finest to continue to service after they take off the uniform. Will you commit to me to work to preserve and strengthen 8(a) contracting for the Department of Defense?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do.

4. Senator SULLIVAN. Vice Admiral Bradley, I recently toured an SBA 8(a) contracting operation and saw firsthand the value 8(a) brings to the Federal customer in terms of cost and efficiency while delivering mission-critical solutions that increase our national security and warfighting readiness. 8(a) contracts represent the best “bang for the buck” for taxpayers, giving contracting officers additional flexibility while also maximizing efficiency by reducing red tape. Do you see the value in increasing efficiency in flexibility brought from initiatives such as the 8(a) program?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I believe we must use every tool available to leverage the incredible power of the U.S. industrial base to support warfighting readiness, innovation, and modernization. This absolutely includes small business and any legally available mechanism that allows acceleration and delivery of mission critical services and capabilities should be leveraged.

5. Senator SULLIVAN. Vice Admiral Bradley, rapid response capabilities are essential to enable our warfighters to win on the battlefield. At the same time, our defense contractors must rapidly respond to the needs of our military to make the U.S. Military more lethal. Flexible and efficient contracting through the SBA 8(a) program is one trusted way to do this, but many of these small businesses do not have the past performance that other traditional vendors may boast. How does SOCOM evaluate their operational performance in program awards and procurement planning?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I am aware that the DOD has a partnership agreement with the Small Business Administration that allows flexible and efficient contracting through the 8(a) program. From my current position, I do not have insight on how SOCOM evaluates operational performance in program awards and procurement planning, but if confirmed I will do an assessment of this important function.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR KEVIN CRAMER

## MQ-9 AVAILABILITY

6. Senator CRAMER. Vice Admiral Bradley, I've heard from both the Special Operations community and from our own 119th Air National Guard unit in North Dakota that the MQ-9 is doing critical work for conventional and special operations around the world. But attrition is taking its toll on the MQ-9 fleet, and it doesn't look like the Air Force has an immediate plan to replace the fleet with existing or future capabilities. Can you briefly explain the importance of the MQ-9's capabilities to the Special Operations mission?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In my experience, MQ-9s have been, and will continue to be, a critical and enduring platform in SOF's airborne ISR (A-ISR) toolkit. SOF require an array of complementary physical and virtual ISR capabilities for permissive, contested, and denied environments to identify and locate targets, characterize adversary activities, and provide overwatch of our forces during operations. This includes A-ISR. My assessment is that we will continue to need MQ-9s, which we can apply to a range of SOF missions. We must balance our ISR portfolio with other capabilities, in order to protect essential platforms like the MQ-9 that our enemies seek to destroy/defeat through kinetic and non-kinetic (jamming) means. As MQ-9s are primarily used in more permissive environments, we must also modernize our A-ISR platforms for operations in contested airspace.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

## BACKGROUND

7. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, as part of my responsibility as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and to ensure the fitness of nominees for appointment to senior positions within the Department of Defense, I will be asking the same two questions that I ask nominees to all of the committees on which I serve: "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?"

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

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

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

## GREAT POWER COMPETITION

9. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, as United States Special Operations Forces pivot to address threats beyond counterterrorism—particularly from great power competitors like China and Russia—U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) must adapt its structure, mission set, and technology investments. SOCOM has a unique role to play in irregular warfare, strategic influence, and information operations that can disrupt or deter adversaries operating below the threshold of armed conflict. In this context, the ability of SOCOM to counter malign influence and support resistance networks in contested environments has become increasingly important. How would you assess SOCOM's current readiness to deter or disrupt Chinese and Russian irregular influence campaigns in regions like the Pacific Islands, Africa, or Eastern Europe?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. While I don't have complete visibility of the readiness of the entire USSOCOM enterprise in my current position, I can say that SOF are successfully conducting critical deterrence and shaping activities today across the globe, including in the Indo-Pacific, Africa, Central and South America, and Europe. On any given day, more than 6,000 SOF are deployed to over 80 countries supporting over 30 named operations and other Combatant Command requirements.

10. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, what role should SOCOM play in shaping strategic influence operations and countering hybrid threats that fall outside traditional kinetic engagements?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Drawing upon decades of combat-experience and credibility, SOF provide tailorable, asymmetric options while creating dilemmas for our adversaries. With a range of kinetic and non-kinetic options to deter aggression and counter coercion, SOF leverage unique authorities to collaborate and operate with allies and partners—our greatest strategic advantage for tackling shared challenges. This also helps bolster our global influence and counter attempts by our adversaries

to undermine our alliances and partnerships. SOF have a unique role in building resistance and resilience, and our long-term partnerships also provide SOF incredible placement and access across the globe, enhancing our understanding of adversary activities.

11. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, how are you prioritizing investments in emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence (AI), unmanned systems, and cyber tools—to give our operators a decisive edge in irregular and information warfare?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The increasing pace of technological advancement demands SOF modernize rapidly to outpace our adversaries through the unrelenting development and integration of cutting-edge technologies. This includes harnessing the power of man-machine teaming and fusing all-domain capabilities to achieve decisive advantages. The pervasive technical surveillance environment presents both unique challenges and unprecedented opportunities. Recognizing this, I am committed to strengthening the Space-SOF-Cyber triad, leveraging the combined strengths of USSPACECOM and USCYBERCOM to ensure SOF's operational effectiveness in support of national security objectives. My vision encompasses integrating technological advancements across all domains—physical and virtual—including surface and subsurface maritime platforms; autonomous uncrewed systems; counter-unmanned systems; next-generation intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; stand-off precision effects; and modernized mission command systems. If confirmed, I will leverage the INDSG and other strategic documents to guide a comprehensive review and prioritization of USSOCOM's priorities and capabilities and make recommendations to ASD(SO/LIC) aimed at ensuring SOF remain at the forefront of military innovation and preparedness.

#### CIVILIAN HARM PREVENTION AND MITIGATION FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

12. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, General Bryan Fenton, current SOCOM Commander, when asked during posture hearing whether the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence (CPCOE) has been an asset to SOCOM operations: "I think certainly.

[ . . . ] We absolutely, as your SOCOM team, always aim to do the mission . . . and then protect noncombatants and civilians as part of who we are and what we stand for. And I think to your point, that sends a very—that sends a very powerful message across the globe that we're there to eliminate or disrupt a bad actor yet at the same time protect innocents and vulnerable and noncombatants. That's a very different signal from a nation. And that's what your SOCOM team works to do every day." Do you agree with General Fenton's comments on CPCOE and protecting noncombatants?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I absolutely agree. While SOF are laser-focused on mission accomplishment, ensuring we do everything we can to protect noncombatants and civilians from harm represents our values as a Nation, and is critical to our success in competition.

13. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, if so, how will you continue SOCOM's mitigation and prevention of civilian harm?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In my experience, the mitigation, investigation, and reporting of civilian casualties have been improved through measures such as the use of training, technology (weaponizing and modeling), refined processes, and dedicated personnel and funding. If confirmed, I will prioritize the minimization of civilian harm, and I will provide feedback and recommendations on the associated challenges to the Department, in close coordination with ASD(SO/LIC) and supported Combatant Commands.

14. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, what do you understand to be your roles and responsibilities regarding civilian harm mitigation and response?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I understand my role and responsibilities regarding the mitigation of civilian harm and mitigation response as provided in Under Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 3000.17 and the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan. My role would be to continue to apply resources and leverage our staff to identify the risks of our military operations to civilians and make every effort to minimize harmful effects while achieving our military objectives. I would also work with Combatant Commands on investigating reports of civilian harm resulting from SOF operations and responding accordingly when civilian harm does occur.

15. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, furthermore, do you agree that preventing and responding to civilian harm is a critical responsibility of the U.S. Military and makes the United States more effective?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I agree. We have a moral and strategic obligation to avoid civilian casualties and investigate allegations thereof. This is at the heart of who we are as a Military and a Nation.

#### SCALING INNOVATIVE CAPABILITIES

16. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, it's broadly agreed that the Department of Defense needs more rapid procurement and acquisition authorities. However, SOCOM is unique in how it rapidly acquires and fields cutting-edge technologies for special forces around the world. If confirmed, what specific procurement or innovation practices are you most interested in expanding or institutionalizing within SOCOM?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring SOF remain a vanguard for innovation and agility and will assess current USSOCOM procurement and innovation practices in coordination with ASD(SO/LIC) and the Department. I recognize the critical need to respond to adversary innovation cycles with speed and precision and reduce capability fielding and employment timelines. I believe openness with industry will foster strategic partnerships, competition, and innovation. Allowing companies insight into SOF requirements will unlock the ingenuity of the American industrial base and drive development of critical cutting-edge technologies. SOF's ability to rapidly test, evaluate, and make combat-informed judgments on a product's viability for its intended function is key to informing the iterative nature of product development.

17. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, how would you build on SOCOM's existing authorities and innovative processes?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I appreciate Congress's efforts to provide the DOD and USSOCOM with the tools needed to fight and win. In my experience, one of our most important tools is the array of fiscal authorities that we can apply to enable foreign forces that support our operations. To build our military advantage in a changing operational environment, we must adapt and innovate our authorities and capabilities to provide flexibility and operational agility. If confirmed, I intend to assess current authorities in close coordination with the USSOCOM staff and Components, ASD(SO/LIC), and the Department.

18. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, rapid acquisition often increases risk. How do you propose measuring and managing risk without eroding accountability?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I will assess and strengthen internal controls, managing cost schedule and performance risk throughout our acquisition programs, ensuring accountability and stewardship of resources.

19. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, how would you advocate within the broader Department of Defense to scale SOCOM's agile acquisition practices across other commands?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. USSOCOM's unique alignment of flexible budget authorities, mission command, and capability-based programming have been instrumental in SOF's ability to address critical and emergent requirements—specifically unmanned systems development and capacity. I commit to ensuring SOF remain a vanguard for innovation and agility and commit to working with the Services to develop capabilities with transition to the joint force at the forefront of our development. If confirmed, I will commit to assess these authorities and provide recommendations to ASD(SO/LIC) and the Department.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

##### COUNTER-UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS CAPABILITIES

20. Senator KAINE. Vice Admiral Bradley, in your advance policy questions (APQ) you cited the threat that one-way drones pose to U.S. Forces, bases, and allies and partners as one of "the most pressing challenges" facing special operations forces over the next 10 years. What role does SOCOM have to play in counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (c-UAS) operations?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The ability to counter threats from unmanned systems, of all types, from both static and dynamic positions, is a critical capability for SOF—and will only become more important with the constant advances in commercial un-

manned and autonomous technologies. The ability to rapidly innovate to solve hard problems is a hallmark of SOF, and if confirmed, I will ensure USSOCOM continues to work closely with the rest of the Department, and international partners and allies to advance our c-UAS capabilities for fixed site, mobile, and expeditionary scenarios.

21. Senator KAINE. Vice Admiral Bradley, how is SOCOM integrating with U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) (as synchronizer) and the Army (as executive agent) to develop c-UAS technology?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In my current position, I do not have complete visibility on how SOCOM is integrating with NORTHCOM on c-UAS technologies. If confirmed, I will review SOCOM's efforts in this critical capability area.

22. Senator KAINE. Vice Admiral Bradley, what are our biggest technology gaps?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The increasing pace of technological advancement demands SOF modernize rapidly to outpace our adversaries through the unrelenting development and integration of cutting-edge technologies. My vision encompasses integrating technological advancements and man-machine teaming across all domains—physical and virtual—including surface and subsurface maritime platforms; autonomous uncrewed systems; counter-unmanned systems; next-generation intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; stand-off precision effects; and modernized mission command systems. I am committed to strengthening the Space-SOF-Cyber triad, leveraging the combined strengths of USSPACECOM and USCYBERCOM to ensure SOF's operational effectiveness in support of national security objectives.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ANGUS S. KING, JR.

##### UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

23. Senator KING. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you support the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. U.S. Forces currently follow UNCLOS as a matter of customary international law. As to the policy decision of whether UNCLOS should be ratified, I defer to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

##### BRAIN HEALTH

24. Senator KING. Vice Admiral Bradley, Special Operations Command leads the Department with regards to blast overpressure testing. Special operators are a high-risk population when it comes to brain health including blast overpressure and brain health, what specific plans do you have to keep this a priority?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Our people are the most important resource. SOF's lethality and readiness is an obligation to defend the Nation, as is our commitment to safe training while still maintaining critical combat skills. USSOCOM has been a leader in brain health and continues to lead efforts with respect scientific research and advances. As we gain more fidelity on the impacts of the range of traumatic brain injuries, USSOCOM is also taking steps to identify better mitigation and protection measures, as well as improving treatment and care for our impacted service members. In partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, USSOCOM concluded The Repeated Exposure to Blast (ReBlast) Study, the most comprehensive work of this kind to date. If confirmed, I will remain committed to prioritizing brain health, and I will ensure USSOCOM continues to align with, lead, and inform the Department of Defense.

25. Senator KING. Vice Admiral Bradley, how can the Congress be helpful to you to support brain health for special operators?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Congress and this committee have been very supportive of fiscal resources in support of SOF and brain health initiatives. I ask for your continued commitment and support to SOF, the Department, and our families to better understand brain health issues and develop solutions to mitigate and treat them.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

##### ETHICS

26. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit not to seek any employment with or compensation from a defense contractor, includ-

ing through serving on a board, as a consultant, or as a lobbyist, for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I intend to focus on the job at hand. I have no intentions of seeking such employment. I commit to following applicable statutes, policies, and regulations regarding post-government employment and conflicts of interest.

27. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit not to engage in any lobbying activities, including unregistered “shadow” or “behind-the-scenes” lobbying under the guise of consulting or advising, focused on DOD or any of its components for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I intend to focus on the job at hand. I have no intentions of engaging in such activities. I commit to following applicable statutes, policies, and regulations regarding post-government employment and conflicts of interest.

28. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you commit not to seek employment, board membership with, or any other form of compensation from a company that you regulated or otherwise interacted with while in government, for at least 4 years after leaving office?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I intend to focus on the job at hand. I have no intentions of seeking such employment. I commit to following applicable statutes, policies, and regulations regarding post-government employment and conflicts of interest.

29. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, during your nomination process, did anyone on the Trump campaign, transition team, or other closely related entity approach you about your loyalty to President Trump?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

30. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you sign a loyalty pledge or other similar oath? If so, please provide a copy of the text of that pledge or oath.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I was not approached about my loyalty to President Trump.

31. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you make any verbal representations of loyalty? If so, please describe this representation.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I was not approached about loyalty to President Trump.

32. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, in November 2024, the New York Times and other news outlets reported that Boris Epshteyn, a top adviser to President Trump, allegedly requested payment from prospective political appointees to promote their candidacies for top positions within the administration. Did you discuss the possibility of joining the administration with Mr. Epshteyn at any time?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

33. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you did discuss the possibility of joining the administration with Mr. Epshteyn, did Mr. Epshteyn seek payment from you for promoting your candidacy for a position within the administration?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I have never spoken to Mr. Epshteyn.

34. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, at any time, did lawyers for President Trump or members of President Trump’s team approach you regarding Mr. Epshteyn and the allegations cited above? If so, please describe the information that they provided you (including copies of documents), what was discussed during any calls, and any other information pertaining to this interaction.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

35. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, were you in contact with Mr. Elon Musk at any time during your nomination process? If so, please describe the nature of those contacts.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

36. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, was Mr. Musk present or involved in any interviews you did related to your nomination? If so, please describe the nature of his involvement.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

37. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, was Mr. Musk involved in any way with your nomination, including but not limited to directly or indirectly contacting Senators regarding their position on your nomination?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

38. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, who was in the room or participated in any of your interviews regarding your nomination?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. During my interview with President Trump for the position, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the potential nominees for USAFRICOM, USEUCOM, and USCENTCOM, and a notetaker were also present.

During my office calls with SASC members and staff, my current Commander's Action Group (CAG) Director and a representative from the Joint Staff Legislative Affairs were present in the room.

39. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you own any stock or hold any other interest in any defense industry contractors, will you divest it to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do not hold any stock or hold any interest in any defense industry contractors.

40. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what do you consider the role of the press in a democracy?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I am a firm believer in the U.S. Constitution and the First Amendment which provides for freedom of the press. This is the cornerstone of our democracy. The press helps hold the government accountable by exercising the right of all Americans to freedom of speech through their reporting without censorship.

41. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you commit not to retaliate, including by denying access to government officials or facilities, against news outlets or individual journalists who publish articles that are critical of you, your office, your agency, or the Trump administration?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, I commit to not retaliate or deny access to news outlets or journalists if they publish articles critical of me, my office, my agency, or the administration.

42. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you ever been accused of sexually harassing, assaulting, or creating a hostile work environment for another individual in a personal or professional capacity? Provide a list of all instances in which you have been accused of sexually harassing, assaulting, or creating a hostile work environment for an individual and the behavior of which you were accused.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

43. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you requested, or has anyone requested on your behalf, that any other person or third party sign a nondisclosure, confidentiality, non-disparagement, or similar agreement regarding your conduct in a personal or professional capacity?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

44. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you voluntarily release any individual from any such agreements before this committee votes on your nomination?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do not have any such agreement in place.

45. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you ever paid or promised to pay, or has anyone paid or promised to pay on your behalf, an individual as part of any non-disclosure, confidentiality, non-disparagement, or similar agreement?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

46. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if the answer to the previous question was yes, how much was promised, how much was paid, and what were the circumstances?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do not have any such agreement in place.

47. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, were you at any time, or are you currently, contacted by or under investigation or review by any inspector general or any inspector general's office for any reason?



Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

48. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of the Hatch Act?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The Hatch Act is a law that restricts the partisan political activity of civilian executive branch employees of the Federal Government. While it does not apply to members of the Armed Forces, there are Department of Defense Policies that similarly restrict partisan political activities for Active Duty servicemembers.

49. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what disciplinary actions are appropriate for violations of the Hatch Act?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The penalty structure for violations of the Hatch Act by Federal employees includes removal from Federal service, reduction in grade, debarment from Federal employment for a period not to exceed 5 years, suspension, reprimand, or a civil penalty. The nature of the violation, rank/position of the employee, and other extenuating or mitigating circumstances should drive the appropriate disciplinary action in any given case.

50. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, has a member of your family currently or ever been a member, founder, or investor of the “Executive Branch” social club? Please provide their name and role related to the club.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

51. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, has a member of your family ever visited the club or attended an event at the club?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

52. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if a member of your family has ever visited the club or attended an event at the club, please provide the date, circumstances of the visit, and the event.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Neither I nor any members of my family have visited the club or attended an event at the club.

53. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you had any meetings at the club? If so, what were these meetings about and with whom?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

54. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, has a member of your family had any meetings at the club? If so, which family member(s), what were these meetings about, and with whom were these meetings?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

55. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you encouraged anyone to join the club or promoted the club in any other way? If so, in what ways did you promote the club?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

56. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, has a member of your family encouraged anyone to join the club or promoted the club in any other way? If so, which family member(s) and in what ways did they promote the club?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

57. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of the role of the Department of Defense Inspector General and service Inspectors General?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The DOD Inspector General acts as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense in matters regarding DOD fraud, waste, and abuse. The DOD OIG combats fraud, waste and abuse by conducting audits, investigations and evaluations. In addition, the IG ensures the Secretary of Defense, and the Congress are fully informed of problems in the Department.

The Military Services Inspectors General provide oversight and assistance through inspections, investigations, and evaluations within the DOD. The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force each maintain their own IG office, focusing on their respective branches and investigating matters affecting them. These Service IGs operate under similar principles of independence and objectivity, ensuring transparency and accountability within the armed forces.

58. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you ensure your staff complies with any Inspector General deadlines established for requested communications, documents, and witnesses, and that staff will be protected from reprisal for their testimony?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I will.

59. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are not able to comply with any Inspector General requests and deadlines, will you notify the Republican and Democratic members of this committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I will.

60. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit to refusing to follow illegal orders from any individual, including the President?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

61. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what actions would you take if you were given an illegal order from any individual, including the President?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I would first seek clarification on the order, as I do not anticipate that I would receive an illegal order. I would then seek advice and counsel from the Chairman and my legal advisor. If I ultimately determine that the order is an illegal order, I would not follow the order.

62. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you commit to voluntarily provide a deposition if you are requested by Congress to provide one?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

63. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you commit to voluntarily testify in front of Congress if you are requested by Congress to do so?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

64. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you commit to testify or provide a deposition in front of Congress if you are issued a subpoena to do so?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

65. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you commit to providing information or documents to Congress voluntarily if you are requested to do so?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, I will provide information or documents voluntarily to Congress if requested to do so.

66. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you provide information or documents to Congress if you are issued a subpoena to do so?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, I will provide information or documents to Congress if issued a subpoena.

67. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, will you commit to following current precedent for responding to information requests, briefings, and other inquiries from Congress, including the Senate and House Armed Services Committees and their minority members?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

68. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, will you commit to posting your official calendar monthly?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I commit to conducting a security review to ensure OPSEC before I publicly release any information.

69. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you think the Federal Government has an overclassification problem? If so, please provide examples of overclassification you have encountered.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. While there is always room for improvement in our classification processes and procedures, the Joint Force regularly writes for release and utilizes classification markings at the lowest classification levels to ensure dissemination to the widest audience in a timely manner.

70. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, do you think your department should pursue strategic technology to support automated declassification?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I believe there are great opportunities to leverage advancing technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to assist in both

the classification and declassification of information. However, I believe there will still need to be a human in the loop to confirm the accuracy of classification recommendations made by any machine, especially before officially declassifying information.

## PROJECT 2025

71. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Trump campaign, the Trump transition team, or other members of the Trump administration? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

72. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Heritage Foundation? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No.

## FOREIGN INFLUENCE

73. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you received any payment from a foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No, I have not.

74. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you communicated with any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, as a part of my official duties.

75. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, please disclose any communications or payments you have had with representatives of any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years and describe the nature of the communication.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In the course of my official duties over the past 5 years, I have had various contacts with, but no payments to, foreign governments and entities controlled by foreign governments. I am happy to answer specific lines of inquiry on this topic, in a closed/classified setting, as appropriate.

## IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT

76. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you believe the Secretary of Defense has the legal authority to block the disbursement of funds appropriated by Congress?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I am aware of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 detailing procedures available to allow Congress to consider Presidential proposals to delay or rescind budget authority expeditiously. However, I defer questions regarding the legal authorities of the Secretary of Defense to OSD.

77. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of the Impoundment Control Act?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I am aware of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 detailing procedures available to allow Congress to consider Presidential proposals to delay or rescind budget authority expeditiously.

78. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you commit to complying with the Impoundment Control Act?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do.

79. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you commit to notifying the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, including the majority and minority, if you are asked not to comply with the Impoundment Control Act or not to expend the money that Congress appropriates or authorizes?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do.

80. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of the requirements for Federal agencies to obligate funding that Congress authorizes and appropriates, in accordance with the time period that Congress deems it to do so?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I understand the Anti-Deficiency Act requires Federal agencies to obligate dollars for the purposes appropriated, in the year apportioned, and within our allocated budget. I understand funds cannot be expended in advance of or in excess of an appropriation.

81. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you commit to expending the money that Congress appropriates and authorizes?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do.

82. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you commit to following and implementing every provision of the annual National Defense Authorization Act passed into law?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do.

83. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you became aware of a potential violation of the Antideficiency Act, Impoundment Control Act, or other appropriations laws, what steps would you take?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I commit to comply with and prevent violations of the Anti-Deficiency Act, Impoundment Control Act, and other appropriations laws by ensuring proper internal controls are in place to ensure all appropriated dollars are responsibly and accurately expended for the purposes appropriated, in the year apportioned, and within our allocated budget. I will promptly and thoroughly investigate and report any potential violations.

#### CIVILIAN HARM

84. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you agree that one difference between the United States and its potential adversaries is the greater value that the U.S. Government puts on protecting human life and liberty at home and abroad?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

85. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of title 10 U.S.C. 184, which established the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Title 10 U.S.C. 184 establishes the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence (CP CoE) as a specialized military organization that serves as the Department of Defense's primary institution for advancing civilian protection capabilities. The CPCoE operates as a hub and facilitator of Department-wide analysis, learning, and strategic approaches to civilian harm mitigation and response during military operations.

86. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, the U.S. Military has spent many years working to improve its ability to prevent and mitigate civilian harm without sacrificing lethality—including through the development of the DOD Instruction on Civilian Harm under the first Trump administration, which I commend. These efforts received bipartisan support from Congress and grew out of a recognition from the U.S. Military itself that, after over 2 decades of U.S. wars, warfighters needed better tools and trustworthy systems to prevent civilian harm, uphold U.S. values, and prevent the moral injury and psychological trauma that too often comes with deadly mistakes. If confirmed, will you commit to continued leadership on civilian harm issues?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I will.

87. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, what do you understand to be your role and responsibilities regarding civilian harm mitigation and response?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed I understand my role and responsibilities regarding the mitigation of civilian harm and mitigation response as provided in Under Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 3000.17 and the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan. My role would be to continue to apply resources and leverage our staff to identify the risks of our military operations to civilians and make every effort to minimize harmful effects while achieving our military objectives. I would also work with Combatant Commands on investigating reports of civilian harm resulting from SOF operations and responding accordingly when civilian harm does occur.

88. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what do you understand to be the importance of mitigating civilian harm in military operations?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. While SOF forces are laser-focused on mission accomplishment, ensuring we do everything we can to protect noncombatants and civilians from harm represents our values as a Nation, and is critical to our success in competition. Furthermore, we have a moral and strategic obligation to avoid civilian casualties and investigate allegations thereof. This is at the heart of who we are as a Military and a Nation.

89. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what value can advisors with expertise in civilian harm mitigation and response provide to commanders?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Civilian harm mitigation and response advisors provide commanders with crucial data on the civilian environment, tailored mitigation advice, and enhanced understanding of the impact of operations on civilians, preserving the commander's vital decision space.

90. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how have SOCOM and AFRICOM, respectively, benefited from the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The CPCoE provides reach-back support should our team require it and has provided training for our CHMR personnel. Additionally, CPCoE has provided coordination across the Department.

91. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how have SOCOM and AFRICOM, respectively, supported and implemented the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP)?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The CHMR-AP formed the basis for SOCOM's approach to CHMR and resulted in a range of policies and operational processes designed to reduce the risk to civilians prior to conducting U.S. Military operations. During my time in the SOF enterprise, I have seen firsthand that SOCOM has been focused on incorporating CHMR principles into planning, training, and exercises.

92. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what have been the benefits for SOCOM and AFRICOM, respectively, in supporting and implementing Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response efforts and the CHMR-AP?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Supporting and implementing CHMR efforts has promoted consistency and efficiency in operations by standardizing processes across SOF. The standards developed following CHMR-AP implementation govern lethal activities by enhancing precision, repeatability, and accountability.

93. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you believe that our troops are at higher risk for retribution as the number of civilian deaths from U.S. Military operations or U.S.-led military operations increases?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. While I cannot correlate specific incidents of civilian casualties with instances of retribution against troops, I believe terrorist groups like al Qaeda and ISIS exploit galvanizing events to inspire supporters worldwide.

94. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how does preventing and mitigating civilian harm help to promote U.S. National Security?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Minimizing civilian harm is one of the core purposes of the Law of Armed Conflict, and is crucial for maintaining local support, strengthening partnerships, and denying adversaries exploitable propaganda.

95. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, does having civilian-harm prevention personnel build trust and relationships with local civil society groups help commanders to collect useful intelligence information?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Civilian harm mitigation and response advisors provide commanders with crucial data on the civilian environment and enhanced understanding of the impact of operations on civilians, preserving the commander's vital decision space.

96. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, in what ways do you see civilian harm mitigation and response efforts furthering SOCOM and AFRICOM's missions and the effectiveness of their operations, respectively?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Civilian harm mitigation is crucial for maintaining local support, strengthening partnerships, and denying adversaries exploitable propaganda.

97. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit to supporting and protecting the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I will continue to follow all the Department's policies and instructions regarding civilian harm mitigation, to include supporting the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence.

98. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how will you prevent and mitigate civilian harm?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In my experience, the mitigation, investigation, and reporting of civilian casualties have been improved through measures such as the use of training, technology (weaponizing and modeling), refined processes, and dedicated personnel and funding. If confirmed, I will prioritize the minimization of civilian harm, and I will provide feedback and recommendations on the associated challenges to the Department, in close coordination with ASD(SO/LIC) and supported Combatant Commands.

99. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed for these roles, will you commit to working with civil society and interviewing civilian witnesses during civilian harm investigations?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, when USSOCOM forces are operating under another combatant command's operational authority, I will emphasize full cooperation with that combatant command's processes, to include working with civil society and interviewing civilian witnesses, to ensure we are taking all appropriate action to investigate and resolve civilian harm allegations.

100. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed for these roles, how do you plan to work with civil society to reduce civilian harm in military operations?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I will leverage the tools available at my disposal—including working with civil society through combatant commands when appropriate—to ensure mission success while mitigating civilian harm.

101. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed for these roles, will you commit to supporting thorough investigations of allegations of civilian harm, including by partners and allies?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I will continue to follow all the Department's policies and instructions regarding civilian harm mitigation, to include policies on investigating allegations of civilian harm. Learning from instances of civilian harm helps us improve our processes and mitigate future instances of civilian harm.

102. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how would a potential high-intensity conflict with a peer or near-peer adversary that purposefully embeds itself in densely populated operational environments impact targeting capabilities, precision, and risks to servicemembers?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In general, purposely using humans as shields is a Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) violation. Nevertheless, despite adversaries' actions, U.S. Forces maintain an obligation to apply LOAC to all operations, including the principles of distinction and proportionality. As such, to counter an adversary embedded in densely populated operation environments, it is critical that SOF have range of options available, to include precision weapons, AI, and non-kinetic tools.

103. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how would current technology, capabilities, planning, and rules of engagement, including efforts to prevent and mitigate civilian harm, help to mitigate such impacts from the previous question?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Technology, planning, and tailored rules of engagement are tools that can be utilized to ensure mission completion against adversaries in densely populated areas while mitigating civilian harm. If confirmed, I will strive to keep USSOCOM's capabilities and forces agile to anticipate and respond to evolving adversary tactics, techniques, and procedures.

104. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed for these roles, will you commit to sharing all findings of each investigation of civilian harm with Congress, including the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee within 15 days of the investigation's completion?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In accordance with all applicable laws, policies, and regulations, I will work through the combatant commands, Joint Staff, and Office of the Secretary of Defense to provide investigations of civilian harm to Congress.

105. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit to supporting and implementing the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP)?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes. I will follow all Department policies and instructions regarding civilian harm mitigation.

106. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit to supporting and implementing the Civilian Harm Mitigation Response and Action Plan (CHMR-AP)?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes. I will follow all Department policies and instructions regarding civilian harm mitigation.

#### PROTECTING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND FEDERAL RECORDS

107. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of the need to protect operational security, or OPSEC?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Preserving the element of surprise through operational security is paramount. Operational security measures should always be implemented and adhered to in order to not unnecessarily put the lives of our service members at risk and jeopardizing mission success.

108. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what are the national security risks of improperly disclosing classified information?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The national security risks of improperly disclosing classified information depend on the information disclosed, but all classified information should be handled properly and only discussed in sensitive compartmented information facilities (SCIFs) or shared on approved networks for that classification level.

109. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what would you do if you learned an official had improperly disclosed classified information?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If I witnessed an official improperly disclosing classified information, I would redirect them to the appropriate channels for sharing the information and ensure that the incident was reported to the applicable security manager.

110. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of Government officials' duties under the Federal Records Act?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The Federal Records Act is the legal framework that maintains transparency and accountability for our government by requiring each Federal agency, to include those within the Department of Defense, to properly maintain all recorded information to include electronic records. Government officials are required to abide by their organization's records management program.

111. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, should classified information be shared on unclassified commercial systems?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No, classified information should not be shared on unclassified commercial systems.

112. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, is it damaging to servicemembers' confidence in the chain of command if the pilots flying a mission find out that the official who ordered them to perform that mission shared sensitive information that could have made it more likely that the mission would fail or they would be killed?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I believe that it could potentially be damaging to a servicemember's confidence in the chain of command if information that put their mission or safety at risk was improperly shared.

113. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you had information about the status of specific targets, weapons being used, and timing for imminent U.S. strikes against an adversary, under what circumstances would you feel comfortable receiving or sharing that information on an unclassified commercial application like Signal?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I would not feel comfortable sharing classified information on an unclassified commercial application.

#### RETALIATION AND PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

114. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you believe that servicemembers, civilians, grantees, and contractors should be protected from any form of retaliation

for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, all servicemembers, civilians, grantees and contractors should feel protected from retaliation and empowered to come forward about any concern they wish to raise.

115. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what do you consider to be the purpose of Federal whistleblower protection laws?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Federal whistleblower protection laws protect Federal employees and uniformed servicemembers who come forward with claims about agency wrongdoing from reprisal through adverse personnel actions or other threats.

116. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, have you ever retaliated against any individual for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No, I have not.

117. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit to protecting whistleblowers? If so, please specify how you will do so.

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes. I will adhere to the mandates of the Federal whistleblower protection laws. I will not levy any adverse actions or condone retaliation against whistleblowers related to their coming forward to expose violations, mismanagement, or other allegations.

118. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit to preventing retaliation against any individual for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, I commit to preventing retaliation against any individual for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern they wish to raise.

119. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you consider it to be retaliation to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, I do consider it to be retaliation if an individual faces adverse personnel actions in response to their engaging in a protected activity.

120. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you consider it to be retaliation to encourage another person(s) to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, I do consider it to be retaliation to encourage someone else to levy adverse personnel actions against an individual in response to their engaging in a protected activity.

#### DATA PRIVACY

121. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of your obligations to protect sensitive servicemember, contractor, and civilian employee information from unauthorized disclosure and from foreign governments?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Protecting sensitive and personally identifiable information for servicemembers, contractors, and civilian employees is a legal requirement. Everyone within the Department of Defense has the responsibility for safeguarding and properly handling sensitive information and preventing unauthorized disclosure.

122. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what are the risks of any failure to protect sensitive servicemember, contractor, and civilian employee information from unauthorized disclosure and from foreign governments?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The failure to protect sensitive servicemember, contractor, or civilian employee information from unauthorized disclosure and from foreign governments could potentially put them or their families at risk of being targeted by an adversary or nefarious actor looking to exploit them or put national security at risk.



123. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what is your understanding of the Protecting Americans' Data from Foreign Adversaries Act?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The act protects American's personally identifiable information (PII) by prohibiting data brokers from selling or transferring that information to foreign adversaries to include China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

124. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you oppose private entities such as DOD contractors and data brokers selling servicemember data to China, Russia, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, and North Korea and entities controlled by those countries?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes.

125. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, would you support any contracts for the sale or transfer of servicemember data including a prohibition on reselling or transferring servicemember data to China, Russia, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, and North Korea and entities controlled by those countries?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. No, I would not.

126. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, a 2023 Duke University study found that data brokers with datasets about Active Duty servicemembers were willing to sell to buyers in Asia for as little as 12 cents per record. Do you think selling service member data in foreign countries creates a national security risk?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, I do.

127. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, would you support stronger enforcement of existing protections for U.S. and servicemember data?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, I would.

#### BLAST OVERPRESSURE

128. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, will you commit to protecting servicemembers from blast overpressure and increasing their options for seeking care after being exposed?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I will.

129. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, what steps will you take to protect servicemembers from blast overpressure and increase their options for seeking care after being exposed?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. USSOCOM has been a leader in brain health and continues to lead efforts with respect scientific research and advances. As we gain more fidelity on the impacts of the range of traumatic brain injuries, including blast overpressure, USSOCOM is also taking steps to identify better mitigation and protection measures, as well as improving treatment and care for our impacted service members. In partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, USSOCOM concluded The Repeated Exposure to Blast (ReBlast) Study, the most comprehensive work of this kind to date. If confirmed, I will remain committed to prioritizing brain health, and I will ensure USSOCOM continues to align with, lead, and inform the Department of Defense.

130. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how do you plan to work with the Department of Veterans Affairs to make sure that servicemembers, veterans, and their families are aware of the risks of blast overpressure and traumatic brain injury?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Historically, military medical research and experience have benefited the civilian healthcare community, academia, and industry partners. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring USSOCOM's understanding of these risks, risk mitigation tools, and treatment options, are shared with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

131. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you support establishing logs for soldiers on blast overpressure exposure and traumatic brain injury (TBI)?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, I do. USSOCOM is currently exploring the use of sensors and wearable technology to monitor blast exposure in real-time, enabling cognitive monitoring.

132. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you support requiring neurocognitive assessments of soldiers annually, before they begin training to estab-

lish a baseline, and before they leave the military to determine when their change in cognitive health over time?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Yes, I do.

133. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, how will you address the links between blast overpressure exposure and increased risks of suicide?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The first SOF truth is “humans are more important than hardware.” Protecting the health of the special operations force is paramount. There is much we still do not know about the impact of blast overpressure on our brains, but USSOCOM, alongside the DOD, is committed to finding solutions and protecting our people now. If confirmed, I commit to continue studying the impacts so we can diagnose, treat, and institute better preventative measures to protect our service members.

134. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, what steps would you take to improve suicide prevention efforts, including investing in peer support programs, crisis intervention, and community-based mental health initiatives?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Losing even one service member to suicide is one too many and compels us to reflect on what signs we may have missed. I commit to ensuring service members have the support, tools, and resources necessary for mental fitness and health while being afforded appropriate confidentiality. We must eliminate the stigma of seeking help. As we go to the physical gym to strengthen our bodies, we must leverage the full range mental health tools available to us to strengthen our minds. If confirmed, I will continue to support the broad range of programs that emphasize and aid mental wellness.

135. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that servicemembers and their families are aware of the potential increased risks of suicide after exposure to blast overpressure?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Protecting the health and well-being of our SOF and their families is paramount to ensuring SOF’s readiness, now and in the future. We must educate our service members and their families about the risks associated with any traumatic brain injury and provide resources to help them address the impacts. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring these critical education initiatives and response resources are available.

136. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, what resources and support will you provide for families of special operators so that they can understand the risks of blast overpressure and recognize if their loved one may be experiencing symptoms as a result of this exposure?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Family and community support are essential for recovery. The well-being of our service members is closely linked to their support networks, which is why SOCOM provides resources and programs to assist families, including counseling, education and support groups. Additionally, the Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF), provides a robust mental health programs that include regular screenings, access to mental health professionals, and peer support networks. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring these critical resources remain available to our force and families and will constantly seek to improve them.

137. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, it appears that U.S. Army Green Beret Master Sgt. Matthew Livelsberger, who died by suicide in a cybertruck explosion on January 1, 2025, may have had a history of traumatic brain injury. What do you understand to be the consequences and long-term effects of blast overpressure exposure and brain injury on servicemembers?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. While I’m not intimately familiar with MSG Matthew Livelsberger’s medical history, any potential connection to traumatic brain injury continues to highlight the urgent need to understand the consequences and long-term effects of blast overpressure exposure and other brain injuries on service members to find solutions now. Prevention is critical, which is why SOF are continually looking for ways to improve protective equipment and exploring wearable technology to monitor blast exposure in real time.

138. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you support addressing the risks of blast overpressure to service members through the swift implementation of sections 721 through section 725 of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I support all efforts to address the risks of blast overpressure to service members and am grateful to Congress for their emphasis on this critical issue. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department as they implement the comprehensive brain health initiatives outlined in the FY25 NDAA.

139. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, which occupational specialties do you understand to be at the highest risk for blast overpressure exposure?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. SOF operate as a team of teams, so while our breachers and explosive ordinance disposal teams are clearly the highest risk, I believe all team members in proximity to a blast are at risk. It is critical that we do not exclude portions of our SOF formation from cognitive assessment, monitoring, and protection measure for traumatic brain injuries.

140. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, do you support making blast overpressure training mandatory for all troops?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do.

141. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how have special operators benefited from working with community partners to treat servicemembers who have been exposed to blast overpressure or suffered brain injuries?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Our SOF service members benefit greatly from programs like the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICOE) and Home Base—which provide our service members with vital brain health care. In partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, USSOCOM also concluded The Repeated Exposure to Blast (ReBlast) Study, the most comprehensive work of this kind to date. If confirmed, I will remain committed to prioritizing service members' brain health and I will ensure USSOCOM continues to align with community partners, the military health system, and the Department of Defense.

142. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, if you are confirmed, do you commit to working with community partners to treat servicemembers who have been exposed to blast overpressure or suffered brain injuries?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do.

143. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, since 2019 Home Base has partnered with SOCOM to provide comprehensive TBI and poly trauma evaluations to over 750 operators through its Comprehensive Brain Health and Trauma Program—or “ComBHaT.” Ninety-three percent of SOCOM servicemembers who have attended ComBHaT have returned to duty after attending. General Bryan Fenton, current Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, has stated that “This high return-to-duty rate demonstrates the effectiveness of ComBHaT, and the value of partnership with community organizations like Home Base in supporting the health and readiness of our operators.” Do you support continuing this partnership with the ComBHaT program and Home Base if you are confirmed?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I am committed to ensuring service members have access to as many resources as possible when it comes to brain health. While I am not intimately familiar with the specifics of ComBHaT program, if confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the benefits it provides our special operators.

144. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how have special operators benefited from the ComBHaT Program at Home Base?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I am not intimately familiar with the specifics of ComBHaT program, but if confirmed, I look forward to learning about all the program has done in support of our SOF warriors.

145. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, why is it important to mitigate the risks of blast overpressure for special operators?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Our people are SOF's competitive and comparative advantage—this is, first and foremost, because of their incredible cognitive capabilities. We must continue to ensure SOF's physical, psychological and cognitive readiness. Understanding the impacts of all traumatic brain injuries and developing / advancing mitigation and protection measures are critical to ensuring SOF remain ready for current and future challenges.

146. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, why is it important to ensure special operators have access to quality care after exposure to blast overpressure?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Understanding the impacts of all traumatic brain injuries, including blast overpressure, and advancing care and treatment for those injuries is critical to ensuring SOF remain ready for current and future challenges.

147. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, over the past several years, this Committee has supported efforts to better understand the links between blast exposure, brain injuries, and declining health. The Home Base program partners with SOCOM to provide TBI and poly trauma evaluations to operators. If confirmed, how will you ensure that the focus on TBI remains at the forefront of SOCOM's efforts to ensure readiness and longevity of the force?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Without our people and their families, we cannot accomplish our missions. If confirmed, I will remain committed to continue SOCOM's efforts to trailblaze for DOD and partner with other agencies to ensure the readiness and longevity of the force when it comes to brain health.

148. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, SOCOM currently partners with the Home Base Program to provide operators with TBI and poly trauma evaluations and care plans to help mitigate TBI related issues. This program is a prime example of how SOCOM can leverage best-in-class researchers and innovators to ensure longevity of the force and readiness. If you are confirmed, will you continue to work with Home Base and ensure SOCOM stays at the forefront of innovation?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I will.

149. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, research suggests exposure to repeated blasts can cause microscopic brain injuries that lead to profound challenges like mood swings, insomnia, substance abuse, panic attacks and suicide. At Home Base, researchers are working on HealthSpan—with early findings showing that repeated blast injury and TBI, along with other exposures from a SOF career, correlate to advanced aging and fewer years healthy and free of disease. Will you commit to support efforts to better understand and mitigate TBI-related chronic conditions, and ensure SOF personnel remain the Command's priority?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I will.

150. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Bradley, how would Special Operators benefit from working with outside experts on a longitudinal study to better understand the long-term effects from blast overpressure?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. There is much to learn about the cognitive impacts on the brain from blast overpressure exposure. Cognitive monitoring and longitudinal studies are critical to assess and track exposures and impacts over time. I am committed to advancing the research in this area, including working with outside experts who are deeply invested in the study of brain health.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH

##### IMPACT OF CUTS TO FOREIGN AID

151. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, how have you seen U.S. diplomatic and economic tools—such as development aid and State Department engagement—play a decisive role in either deterring conflict or shaping escalation outcomes?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In my 34 years of service, I've had the opportunity to work closely with U.S. diplomatic and development professionals on many continents. I have seen firsthand the benefits they bring in helping to deter conflict—through the application of American statecraft and economic development power. These efforts helped increase stability in critical regions, directly supporting U.S. National Security. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to work closely with our interagency partners to ensure we are maximizing the use of the resources available to meet U.S. policy objectives.

152. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, how do you perceive U.S. Special Operations Command's (SOCOM) role in forging and maintaining partnerships, given the aforementioned gaps in our interagency toolkit resulting from cuts to aid and diplomatic presence?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Drawing upon decades of combat-experience and coalition credibility, an important part of SOF's value proposition is our ability to build and maintain strong relationships with partners and allies. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to work closely with interagency and international partners, and NGO's, as

appropriate, to ensure we are maximizing the use of all the resources available to meet U.S. policy objectives.

#### INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

153. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, how has your experience as a commander been made easier when you have support from the interagency—such as expert negotiators and other tools like economic aid and civic-institution-building—to maintain positive bilateral relations that facilitate your military missions?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Special operations are most often a team sport. Our inter-agency partners are critical members of that team, and I have benefited greatly from their expertise and teamwork over the course of my career. The efforts of our diplomats, law enforcement officials, economic and development advisors, treasury officials, intelligence community partners, and more, are critical—whether fighting insurgents, conducting CT operations, competing against and deterring China and Russia, combating non-State actors, assisting allies and partners, or preparing for large scale combat. Building the strong, enduring relationships with partners and allies which are essential to most of our military missions—is best achieved by leveraging all elements of our national power.

#### FUTURE WAR

154. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, how will you work with U.S. Transportation Command and other stakeholders to navigate complex and contested logistical challenges in your commands?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I look forward to working with USTRANSCOM and the rest of the DOD logistics enterprise to tackle these critical challenges. From my perspective, the US advantage is in our ability to surge combat power rapidly to deliver effects on the enemy—no one does that better than USSOCOM and USTRANSCOM. SOF has the advantage of tactical networks that strategic commands such as USTRANSCOM do not. Through a close partnership, USSOCOM could leverage these networks to provide vital information to USTRANSCOM by setting the stage in a contested environment where the DOD may have to “fight to the fight”.

155. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, what concrete ideas would you bring into your roles to drive innovation in contested logistics and implement solutions that enable more agile force posture and sustainment?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I look forward to working with USSOCOM team, and the DOD logistics enterprise, to identify ways to drive innovation for contested logistics, and develop and implement sustainment solutions to ensure SOF can remain agile. Two such examples are:

1. Establishing energy independence through self-sufficient power grids. Such grids enable warfighters to establish C2 and basing nodes anywhere in the world free from dependency on traditional logistics supply lines and contracted solutions.

2. Autonomous resupply over land, sea, and air able to achieve large standoff to avoid enemy A2AD threats, while delivering substantial payload to objectives. These systems enable flexible, responsive resupply of warfighters across the conflict continuum. Autonomous systems also present the opportunity to create an unmanned system of systems allowing one pilot to orchestrate a multitude of systems across the battlespace providing commanders more capability with the same manning.

156. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, how would you work with our international partners to combat complex and contested logistical challenges and test the concepts that we will need for future warfare?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed, I look forward to working with SOF's robust network of international partners and allies, 30 of which are represented at the USSOCOM headquarters on these challenges. This knowledge becomes critical in bridging gaps U.S. Forces would face in contested environments where the tyranny of distance is multiplied. SOF are the leaders in fostering these relationships. Additionally, our international relationships provide another perspective on the same contested environment challenges that we grapple with globally. By gathering a multi-national consortium, we can address these problems collectively and multiply the possible solutions.

#### U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND POSTURE

157. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, what would your top priorities be for Special Operations Forces (SOF) in the Indo-Pacific theater?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed I will consult with Commander, USINDOPACOM, and Commander, Special Operations Command Pacific (SOC PAC) to assess what SOF's priorities should be in the Indo-Pacific.

158. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, how do you assess the role of SOF in countering PRC gray zone activities in areas like the South China Sea or the first island chains?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. Drawing upon decades of combat-experience and credibility, SOF provide tailorable, asymmetric options while creating dilemmas for the Communist Chinese. With a range of options to deter aggression and counter coercion, SOF leverage unique authorities to collaborate and operate with allies and partners—our greatest strategic advantage for tackling shared challenges. This helps assure and bolster our global relationships and helps counter the predatory approach of the Chinese against our alliances and partnerships. Deterrence is a function of influence, and SOF contribute to deterring China with the influence generated by our enduring engagements with partner and allied forces. These relationships also provide SOF incredible placement and access, enhancing our understanding of Chinese activities in the Indo-Pacific, but also places like Africa and South America. Additionally, SOF have a unique role in building resistance and resilience. If deterrence fails, SOF's speed and agility to project force offer warfighting advantages in crisis and conflict—to deliver precision effects with the element of surprise, and to establish small but meaningful levers of dominance.

159. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, which Indo-Pacific nations do you view as the most promising for new SOF partnerships?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. In my current position, I do not have in-depth understanding of all the nations in this critical region, to be able to identify those most promising for new partnerships. If confirmed, I would consult with Commander, USINDOPACOM, and Commander, Special Operations Command Pacific (SOC PAC) to identify these opportunities.

160. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, for the nations with whom we already maintain partnerships, what specific steps would you take to expand those relationships, if confirmed?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. If confirmed I will consult with Commander, USINDOPACOM, and Commander, Special Operations Command Pacific (SOC PAC) to identify the appropriate steps to expand our current relationships in the Indo-Pacific.

161. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, how do you see SOCOM aligning with the Trump administration's prioritization shift to the Indo-Pacific, as reportedly outlined in the interim National Defense Strategy?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. From my perspective in my current position as a USSOCOM Subunified Commander, USSOCOM has been steadily shifting focus to the Indo-Pacific over the last several years. SOF deployed continuously to the Indo-Pacific region throughout the last 20+ years of the CT-focused fight, maintaining our placement and access in the region, and paving the way for greater SOF presence and partnerships over the last few years.

162. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, how can SOCOM continue to maintain credible forward presence in all geographic commands without overextending?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. As General Fenton has spoken about, the global demand for SOF increased by 35 percent in just the last 2 years. If confirmed, I will ruthlessly prioritize the allocation of SOF, aligned with DOD's priorities defined in the INDSG and future guidance documents, as appropriate.

163. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, given SOCOM's track record of pioneering some of our military's most adaptive solutions in austere environments, how do you plan to expand or accelerate that role to benefit the joint force?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. The ability to rapidly adapt and innovate to address changes to the operating environment is a hallmark of our SOF operators. They have been, and will continue to be, pathfinders for the Department in identifying, leveraging, and integrating new technologies to support operations. If confirmed, I will continue the great work USSOCOM is already doing to rapidly develop and field new capabilities to SOF, and transition them, as appropriate to the broader Joint Force.

## ETHICS

164. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, would you follow an illegal, unlawful or immoral order?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I would not.

165. Senator DUCKWORTH. Vice Admiral Bradley, if confirmed, do you commit that your deliberations and decisions will only be communicated through official, secure channels and any decisions properly documented for both oversight and institutional memory?

Vice Admiral BRADLEY. I do.

[The nomination reference of Vice Admiral Frank M. Bradley, USN follows:]

## NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT

PN247

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,  
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
June 2, 2025.

*Ordered*, That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

*To Be Admiral*

Vice Adm. Frank M. Bradley, 8298

\_\_\_\_\_, 2025.  
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Wicker \_\_\_\_\_  
(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 Vice Admiral Frank M. Bradley, USN, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

29 MAY 1991	Ensign
29 MAY 1993	Lieutenant (junior grade)
01 JUN 1995	Lieutenant
01 JUL 2001	Lieutenant Commander
01 NOV 2006	Commander
01 SEP 2011	Captain
21 AUG 2017	Designated Rear Admiral (lower half) while serving in billets commensurate with that grade
01 MAR 2018	Rear Admiral (lower half)
01 AUG 2020	Rear Admiral
09 JUL 2022	Designated Vice Admiral, while serving in billets commensurate with that grade
10 AUG 2022	Vice Admiral, service continuous to date



ASSIGNMENTS AND DUTIES	FROM	TO
Naval Special Warfare Center (Student)	JUL 1991	FEB 1992
SEAL Team FOUR (Assistant Platoon Commander)	FEB 1992	OCT 1994
Leave/Transit/DUINS	OCT 1994	APR 1995
Naval Special Warfare Center (Student)	APR 1995	JUL 1995
SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team TWO (Reconnaissance Platoon Commander)	AUG 1995	JAN 1997
Leave/Transit	FEB 1997	MAR 1997
Naval Security Group Detachment, Monterey, CA (Student)	MAR 1997	OCT 1997
PEP-Italy, La Spezia (Special Warfare Officer)	OCT 1997	APR 1999
Naval Special Warfare Development Group (Student)	MAY 1999	JAN 2000
Naval Special Warfare Development Group (SEAL Team Element Leader)	FEB 2000	OCT 2003
Naval Postgraduate School (Student)	OCT 2003	DEC 2005
Joint Special Operations Command (Technical Operations Division Chief, J-3)	JAN 2006	NOV 2007
Naval Special Warfare Development Squadron ONE (Commanding Officer)	NOV 2007	SEP 2009
Naval Special Warfare Development Group (Operations Director)	SEP 2009	AUG 2012
Joint Special Operations Command (Deputy Director of Operations)	AUG 2012	SEP 2013



<u>ASSIGNMENTS AND DUTIES (CONT'D)</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
Naval Special Warfare Development Group (Commander)	SEP 2013	AUG 2015
Joint Staff (Assistant Deputy Director for Global Operations, J-39)	SEP 2015	MAY 2016
Joint Staff (Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff)	MAY 2016	AUG 2017
Joint Staff (Director, Trans-regional Threat Coordinator Cell, J-5)	AUG 2017	SEP 2018
U.S. Special Operations Command (Assistant Commander, Joint Special Operations Command)	SEP 2018	JUL 2020
Special Operations Command Central (Commander)	JUL 2020	JUL 2022
Joint Special Operations Command (Commander)/ Joint Special Operations Command Forward, U.S. Special Operations Command (Commander)	AUG 2022	TO DATE

#### MEDALS AND AWARDS

Defense Superior Service Medal	Joint Meritorious Unit Award
Legion of Merit	Meritorious Unit Commendation
Bronze Star with two Combat "V" devices	National Defense Service Medal with one Bronze Star
Defense Meritorious Service Medal with two Gold Stars	Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
Meritorious Service Medal	Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Service Medal
Joint Service Commendation Medal with two Gold Stars	Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal	Armed Forces Service Medal
Joint Service Achievement Medal with one Gold Star	Sea Service Deployment Ribbon
Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with one Gold Star	Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon
Combat Action Ribbon	NATO Medal
Presidential Unit Citation	Expert Rifleman Medal
	Expert Pistol Shot Medal

SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS

BS (Physics) U.S. Naval Academy, 1991  
 MS (Combat Systems and Technology) Naval Postgraduate School, 2005  
 Designated Naval Special Warfare Officer, 1992  
 Designated Joint Qualified Officer, 2013  
 Designated Level IV Joint Qualified Officer, 2021

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Spanish

SUMMARY OF JOINT DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Joint Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, NC (Technical Operations Division Chief, J-3)	JAN 06 – NOV 07	LCDR/ CDR
Joint Staff (Assistant Deputy Director for Global Operations, J-39)	SEP 15 – MAY 16	CAPT
Joint Staff (Executive Assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff)	MAY 16 – AUG 17	CAPT
Joint Staff (Director, Transregional Threat Coordinator Cell, J-5)	AUG 17 – SEP 18	RDML
U.S. Special Operations Command (Assistant Commander, Joint Special Operations Command)	SEP 18 – JUL 20	RDML
Special Operations Command Central (Commander)	JUL 20 – JUL 22	RDML/ RADM
Joint Special Operations Command (Commander)/ Joint Special Operations Command Forward, U.S. Special Operations Command (Commander)	AUG 20 – TO DATE	VADM

As of 26 February 2025

Years of active commissioned service: 33

Date of birth: November 1968

Mandatory retirement date for age: 1 December 2032

Mandatory retirement date for years of service: 1 June 2029

Mandatory retirement for service-in-grade: 1 September 2027

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[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 Vice Admiral Frank M. Bradley, USN in connection with his nomination follows:]

119<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, 2025 -- 2026  
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):**  
Bradley, Frank M.
2. **Position to which nominated:**  
Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command
3. **Date of nomination:**  
23 May 2025
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):** None.
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): General Partner, JDM Ranch. This is my family ranch in Texas, in partnership with my brother and sister. I keep books and help with occasional ranch work.

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):** Member, United States Naval Academy Alumni Association.
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):** None.

#### **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.
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.
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.
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.

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.
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.
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.
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.

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[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.



This 23rd day of May, 2025

[The nomination of Vice Admiral Frank M. Bradley, USN was reported to the Senate by Chairman Wicker on July 29, 2025, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on July 31, 2025.]

[Prepared questions submitted to Lieutenant General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, USAF by Chairman Wicker prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

## QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

## DUTIES

*Question.* What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM)?

*Answer.* Under section 164 of title 10, United States Code, Combatant Commanders are responsible to the President and the Secretary of Defense for the performance of assigned missions within their respective areas of responsibility. If confirmed, I would command U.S. Armed Forces as directed by the Secretary of Defense and approved by the President and ensure USAFRICOM has ready and postured forces to execute directed national defense missions, respond to military contingencies, and deter conflict. I would provide authoritative directions to subordinate commands and forces to carry out the missions assigned to USAFRICOM, identify and request any additional required support, engage the interagency, allies, and partners.

I would execute these duties informed by the National Security Strategy (NSS), the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance (INDSG), Defense Planning Guidance (DPG), National Military Strategy (NMS), and other plans.

*Question.* What qualifications, qualities, and characteristics would you bring to the position of Commander, AFRICOM, if confirmed?

*Answer.* Throughout my assignments across the last 33 years of service to this Nation, I have been consistently humbled by, and inspired to lead and serve alongside, the talented men and women of our Armed Forces and our civilian teammates, who make it possible for us to achieve our mission.

Since commissioning in 1992, I have been fortunate to command at every level below Combatant Command which gives me a wide breadth of experience across conventional and Special Operations missions. From commanding the Joint Task Force during Operation Octave Quartz, leading Air Force Special Operations units from Squadron to Wing, serving as the Deputy Director of Operations at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), or as the Joint Staff Director of Force Development, my path has been non-traditional and gives me a unique perspective. Specific to Africa, my previous experience as the Commander of Special Operations Command—Africa (SOCAF), provides me with insight into the threats to our Homeland, our interests, and our forces, but also the opportunities across the African continent to advance U.S. interests.

Additionally, my time as the Deputy for Operations in USINDOPACOM and my current role as the Director for Joint Force Development informs my understanding of the changing character of war and how the future Joint Force needs to change to counter the growing threat from China.

I possess the joint qualifications required by sections 661 and 664(d) of title 10, United States Code. Specifically, I have completed seven joint tours at various echelons, most notably as Director for Joint Force Development, the Pentagon; Vice Director, Joint Staff Operations, the Pentagon; Commander, SOCAF; and Deputy Director for Operations, USINDOPACOM.

*Question.* Do you believe there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of Commander, AFRICOM?

*Answer.* Key actions I would need to take include assessing the theater operating environment, securing partner and allied engagement to solve shared problems, and clearly communicating the risks and requirements relevant to our national security and defense strategies. If confirmed, I will learn from the USAFRICOM staff about the current intelligence assessments, ongoing efforts and campaigns, and the associated approaches of components, the interagency, and allies and partners.

Africa is truly the world's crossroads—throughout its history, its location between the Atlantic and Pacific, and now in terms of its rising populations and economies. It is also of vital and growing importance to the world—and to U.S. interests. The continent is one of the world's most dynamic. As it rapidly changes, I will need to constantly reevaluate the significant opportunities but also the substantial risks Africa offers. Ungoverned African spaces host global terrorist organizations with growing reach and ill intent. China and Russia seek their own advantages at the expense of African nations and the United States.

If confirmed, I will build upon the successes of the Commanders and teams who came before while taking steps to ensure USAFRICOM's plans are adjusted, as necessary, to any strategic guidance that encompasses coordinated equities across the U.S. Government.

#### CHAIN OF COMMAND

*Question.* Section 162(b) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commands. Section 163(a) of title 10 further provides that the President may direct communications to combatant commanders 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.

*Question.* In your view, do these provisions enhance or degrade civilian control of the military?

*Answer.* These provisions enhance civilian control of the military. In essence, ensuring that all lawful orders are passed from the President to Combatant Commanders through the Secretary of Defense and/or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ensures that policy direction flows through individuals that have been nominated by the Administration and confirmed by the Senators on the Armed Services Committee elected to represent their constituents.

*Question.* Are there circumstances in which you believe it is 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, United States Code?

*Answer.* I understand that national command authority over U.S. Forces is always retained by the President. This includes authority and responsibility for, as consistent with law, the organization, direction, coordination, control, and employment of U.S. Forces. To the extent practicable, operational command and control should remain under the chain of command established through title 10 of the United States Code. That said, I also understand that there are historical cases in which U.S. Forces have operated in multinational forces, and there may be such cases in the future. Generally, national command was often retained through political negotiations or U.S.-led NATO roles. These historical cases have formed the bedrock of our doctrine on Multinational Operations. In my role as the Joint Staff J-7, I led and supervised the review and development of this doctrine and am comfortable in its application.

Nations operating in an alliance or coalition should always seek to achieve and maintain unity of effort with all missions, tasks, responsibilities, and authorities clearly defined and understood by all involved—as that is a pre-requisite to achieving mission success in an allied, coalition, or partnered operation.

## RELATIONSHIPS

*Question.* The law and traditional practice establish important relationships between the Commander, AFRICOM, and other senior officials of the DOD and the U.S. Government. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, AFRICOM, to each of the following officials:

The Secretary of Defense

*Answer.* My understanding is that the relationship with the Secretary of Defense is informed by title 10, U.S. Code § 113, 162(b), and 164(b). Unless otherwise directed by the President, the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense, and from the Secretary of Defense to the Commander of USAFRICOM. If confirmed, I would be directly responsible to the Secretary for the preparedness of the command to carry out missions assigned to the command. I would be responsible for interpreting and implementing defense strategic guidance within the bounds of USAFRICOM's area of responsibility (AOR), with careful consideration of application of the Nation's resources.

*Question.* The Under Secretaries of Defense.

*Answer.* My understanding is that the relationship with the Under Secretaries of Defense is informed by title 10, U.S. Code § 133–137. These appointees are principal staff assistants and advisors to the Secretary on all matters that pertain to their specific portfolios. They serve as valuable counsel to the Secretary, and to the Combatant Commanders, and are an integral part of the overall decisionmaking process within the Department.

*Question.* The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

*Answer.* My understanding is that the relationship with the Assistant Secretaries of Defense, including for International Security Affairs, is based on their roles and responsibilities as specified by title 10, U.S. Code § 138. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD (ISA)) is the principal advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) and the Secretary of Defense on international security strategy and policy on issues of Departmental interest that relate to the nations and international organizations of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, their governments and defense establishments; and for oversight of security cooperation programs and foreign military sales programs within these regions. If confirmed, I would ensure that the staff of USAFRICOM continues to maintain positive and proactive relationships with the ASD (ISA), given the need to establish more effective ways to collaborate with our allies and partners for burden sharing in Africa.

*Question.* The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict.

*Answer.* As the former Commander of Special Operations Command—Africa, I'm familiar with the work of the ASD for Special Operations (SO) and Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). Per title 10, U.S. Code § 138(b)(2), the ASD (SO/LIC) is the principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low-intensity conflict matters and (after the Secretary and Deputy Secretary) is the principal special operations and low intensity conflict official within the senior management of the Department. The ASD (SO/LIC) oversees and advocates for Special Operations and Irregular Warfare throughout the Department to ensure these capabilities are properly employed in accordance with Administration priorities. If confirmed, I will ensure we maintain coordination with this office on policy issues related to special operations capabilities and resourcing, given the propensity for special operations forces to operate on the African continent.

*Question.* The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

*Answer.* The Chairman's roles are delineated by title 10, U.S. Code § 151–3 and § 163. The Chairman is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council (NSC), the Homeland Security Council (HSC), and the Secretary of Defense. In carrying out his functions, duties, and responsibilities the Chairman shall consult with and seek the advice of the Commanders of the Unified and Specified Combatant Commands and the Service Chiefs, as necessary. The Chairman transmits communications between the National Command Authority and the Commander of USAFRICOM and oversees the activities of the same, as directed by the Secretary of Defense. The Chairman is a key conduit between Combatant Commanders as well as the Service Chiefs.

The Vice Chairman's roles are specified by title 10, U.S. Code § 151 and § 154. As a full voting member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice Chairman is a military adviser to the President, NSC, HSC, and Secretary of Defense who may provide advice after first informing the Secretary and the Chairman. When there is a vacancy in the office of the Chairman or in the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman acts as Chairman and performs the duties of the Chairman until a



successor is appointed or the absence or disability ceases. The Vice Chairman serves on several councils and boards whose decisions affect USAFRICOM, including the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, the Defense Acquisition Board, the Defense Advisory Working Group, and the Senior Readiness Oversight Council. Regular communication between Combatant Commanders and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is key to ensure these boards and councils make informed choices on matters affecting the command. If confirmed, I will keep the Chairman informed on significant issues regarding the command's area of operations, provide advice regarding the USAFRICOM mission and theater as appropriate, and communicate directly with the Chairman and Vice Chairman on a regular basis.

*Question.* The Secretaries of the Military Departments and Service Chiefs.

*Answer.* The roles of the Service Secretaries are clearly delineated in title 10, U.S. Code § 7013, 8013, and 9013. Generally, they are responsible for, and have the authority necessary to, the conduct of all affairs for their respective Departments. These affairs include the functions of organizing, supplying, equipping, training, administering, and maintaining their forces. They exercise administrative control through the Service Component Commands assigned to USAFRICOM.

Duties of the Service Chiefs are covered in title 10, U.S. Code § 7033 (Chief of Staff of the Army), § 8033 (Chief of Naval Operations), § 8043 (Commandant of the Marine Corps), § 9033 (Chief of Staff of the Air Force), § 9082 (Chief of Space Operations), and § 10502 (Chief of the National Guard Bureau). Additionally, as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, their roles and responsibilities are further defined in title 10, U.S. Code § 151. The Service Chiefs are responsible for ensuring the readiness of their Service branch. As members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff the Service Chiefs can also serve as advisers to the President, NSC, HSC and the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I would rely on the Service Chiefs to provide properly trained and equipped forces to accomplish the mission.

*Question.* Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command.

*Answer.* The responsibilities of the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) are defined in title 10, U.S. Code § 167. The Commander, USSOCOM is responsible for the administration and support of special operations forces assigned or attached to USAFRICOM. Unless directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, however, a special operations activity or mission shall be conducted under the command of the Combatant Commander in whose geographic area the activity or mission is to be conducted. If confirmed, I would maintain an exceptionally close relationship with the Commander, USSOCOM, on issues of mutual interest. SOCAF serves as a Theater Special Operations Command and is a sub-unified command of USSOCOM under the operational control of USAFRICOM. As a former SOCAF commander, I look forward to maintaining the close relationship between USAFRICOM and USSOCOM.

*Question.* The other combatant commanders.

*Answer.* Duties of the other combatant commanders are defined in title 10, U.S. Code § 164, the Unified Command Plan, and other Departmental guidance and directives. While each Combatant Commander may be assigned a specific geographic area or functional responsibility, it is imperative that they all work together. Today's strategic operating environment is characterized by global threats that cannot be addressed solely in one theater. Additionally, each combatant commander is vying for the same resources from the Military Departments. Collaboration and consultation between commanders are critical to assisting the Chairman in ensuring all operations are integrated globally to execute the NMS.

USAFRICOM has close relationships with several other Combatant Commanders, namely the Commanders of U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), and USSOCOM. Shared boundaries between USAFRICOM, USEUCOM, and USCENTCOM require close coordination as military operations in one AOR have systemic impacts on the other areas. The Commander, USAFRICOM has an especially close relationship with the Commander of USEUCOM as they share four component commands (USAREUR/AF, NAVEUR/AF, MARFOREUR/AF, SPACEUR/AF), as well as forces and assets. Additionally, as the Combatant Commander for special operations forces operating in Africa under the control of USAFRICOM, close collaboration is necessary with USSOCOM. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to maintain the great relationships that have been formed before me.

*Question.* The U.S. Chiefs of Mission in the AFRICOM area of responsibility (AOR).

*Answer.* My understanding of the roles and responsibilities of U.S. Chiefs of Mission is informed by title 22, U.S. Code § 3927. Upon presenting their credentials to the host government, Chiefs of Mission are recognized as the principal diplomatic representative of the U.S. Government. Serving as the official representative of the

U.S. President, they have the task of carrying out overarching U.S. foreign policy goals and strategic objectives in their country of assignment. The Chiefs of Mission have full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all government executive branch employees in a given country, except those employees under the command of a U.S. area military commander. If confirmed, recognizing their scope of authority, I will ensure USAFRICOM's partner engagement complements the Ambassadors' priorities as directed by the President and Secretary of State.

*Question.* The U.S. Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés (SDO/DATT) in the AFRICOM AOR.

*Answer.* The roles and responsibilities of the SDO/DATT are defined in Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5205.75, "DoD Operations at U.S. Embassies." Unified DOD representation in U.S. embassies is critical to the accomplishment of national security objectives. The SDO/DATT is the Chief of Mission's principal advisor on defense issues and the senior diplomatically accredited DOD military officer assigned to a U.S. diplomatic mission. All DOD elements under Chief of Mission authority are under the coordination authority of the SDO/DATT, except for the Marine Security Guard Detachment and naval support units. While they do not work directly for USAFRICOM, they represent the Command's perspective on a Country Team. There is a supervisory relationship between the Commander, USAFRICOM and the SDO/DATT. This relationship ensures they maintain close coordination on all matters as the Command's senior representative. If confirmed, I will ensure that the staff at USAFRICOM continues to maintain positive relationships with the SDOs/DATTs within the AOR.

#### MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

*Question.* What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you will face if confirmed as Commander, AFRICOM?

*Answer.* If confirmed, the most significant challenges I will face as USAFRICOM Commander include maintaining awareness and understanding of the growing threat, monitoring and countering terrorists that threaten the Homeland, countering expanding Chinese malign activity, aggression. ISIS, centered in Somalia, has demonstrated the capability and intent for external operations to threaten the Homeland, while al-Shabaab threatens our forces in East Africa. West Africa, meanwhile, is becoming a growing hotbed of terrorism as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslmin (JNIM) and ISIS-WA expand their control over large swaths of the Sahel and destabilize the region.

Concurrently, China's military and economic influence over the continent continues to grow as Beijing continues to exploit Africa as a source of power. China is expanding beyond traditional economic activity with increasing military engagement and information activities. If confirmed, I will direct USAFRICOM resources to defend the Homeland, counter China, and prepare for crises—to include enabling joint force freedom of maneuver during a conflict. I will also direct aggressive engagement with partners as the ability to rapidly respond to crisis requires effective relationships to gain and maintain the required access.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure that USAFRICOM's priorities remain centered on achieving the goals of the INDSG, and the forthcoming NDS and the NMS. Secretary Hegseth has given USAFRICOM two overarching priorities: prevent terrorist groups in Africa from exporting threats to the United States and to deter Chinese military advances across the continent. I will continue to place pressure on terrorists with the intent and capability to threaten the Homeland and work to improve indications and warnings of emerging threats. Additionally, I will task assigned forces to take actions that undermine any Chinese malign intent throughout the continent. Key to this effort will be to work with willing and capable allies and partners, where feasible and mutually beneficial. Any security cooperation should be tailored and time-bound based on demonstrated partner will and capacity with the goal to build partner independence to operate against mutual security threats.

Africa is a theater where threats, opportunities, adversaries, partners, and allies converge. The challenges in Africa go beyond just terrorism and require a nuanced approach that spans multiple agencies. While working on these priorities, I will also seek ways to balance investment between United States Forces, African and other partners, and allies on shared objectives throughout the theater. I know that USAFRICOM and its forces are not the right tool to solve all these problems alone. I will prioritize working with the whole-of-government, international institutions, and our global network of partners and allies to advance U.S. interests.

*Question.* Recognizing that challenges, anticipated and unforeseen, will drive your priorities to a substantial degree, if confirmed, what other priorities, beyond those associated with the major challenges you identified above, would you set for your tenure as Commander, AFRICOM?

*Answer.* Beyond the identified major challenges, I would also seek to create opportunities for U.S. advantage. While Africa has many challenges including terrorism, political instability, and malign foreign actors, it also shows great promise. This promise will create extraordinary opportunities for our Nation but realizing it will take time and investment to find. As China and Russia both focus their strategies on Africa, I want to ensure the U.S. realizes these opportunities first.

Additionally, many African nations are susceptible to instability to threats and other unforeseen challenges to governance—sometimes with little to no notice. The responsibility to safeguard American lives, property, and interests at U.S. Military installations and diplomatic facilities across the continent factor into my crisis response priority. Force protection remains a key and critical concern of mine, and I understand my responsibility to protect the servicemembers assigned to African-based operating locations. I understand my role in identifying, communicating, and integrating capabilities across all domains to protect the force from potential threats. I will also coordinate with fellow Combatant Commanders to close seams that adversaries would exploit. I acknowledge my mandate to support the Department of State in safeguarding our embassies and the people assigned to them—especially the 14 high threat embassies in theater.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to focus your Command's efforts on each of these priorities?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will prioritize my efforts to understand the situation on the continent as quickly as possible, specifically related to our counterterrorism efforts against ISIS and al-Shabaab. I will also work to better distinguish CCP military objectives in Africa, where I will seek ways to prevent further military encroachment that disrupts U.S. access and relationships. This will involve visiting the AOR and meeting with key U.S. Ambassadors, my counterparts from our allies and partners, and senior military and diplomatic officials from our multilateral security institutions who share our security objectives. I would also seek guidance from USD(P) and partner with USINDOPACOM to see where we can deepen mutual efforts to counter Chinese malign objectives in Africa.

I will obtain assessments from subordinate Service Component Commanders and discuss regional issues with African Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of Defense. These efforts will inform USAFRICOM's priorities as we receive a new NDS and update our own guiding documents. I will carefully review command priorities to maximize scarce resources for greatest effect.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

*Question.* What is your understanding of the 2025 Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance (INDSG) and its implications for the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* My understanding of United States strategic objectives in Africa is informed by the INDSG through the Secretary of Defense. The United States strategic objectives in Africa are to defend America forward by preventing terrorists from coordinating attacks on the Homeland from the continent and contribute to deterrence against CCP aggression. The implications for the USAFRICOM AOR are a ruthless prioritization of terror organizations that are looking to attack the Homeland. Additionally, it calls for a more targeted focus on CCP military activity and the impact it has on our objectives. Finally, the INDSG calls for a deliberate effort to shift activities over time to our allies and partners.

*Question.* What is your understanding of United States strategic objectives in Africa and what role do you believe AFRICOM should play in supporting these objectives?

*Answer.* My understanding of United States strategic objectives in Africa is informed by the INDSG through the Secretary of Defense. The U.S. strategic objectives in Africa are to defend America forward by preventing terrorists from coordinating attacks on the Homeland from the continent and contribute to deterrence against CCP aggression. USAFRICOM accomplishes these objectives by building partner operational independence through tailored and high-impact security cooperation with African partners, exposing CCP and Russian malign influence that is counter to our interests, and retaining access for contingency operations.

*Question.* In your view, what does "great power competition" look like in the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* USAFRICOM's priorities are to defend the U.S. Homeland from terrorist threats and to deter CCP global military ambitions on the African continent in

alignment with the 2025 INDSG. As the Department of Defense balances resources to the Pacific, USAFRICOM's greatest challenge will be to undermine China's expanding military goals across Africa while preventing strategic surprise from an attack on the United States Homeland by external threats. Additionally, USAFRICOM would need to consider the effect of Russia's destabilizing activity on the continent and how it impacts United States interests and military requirements. If confirmed, I will work closely with the interagency to undermine China's military activities in key areas and apply USAFRICOM's modest resources for a high return on investment.

*Question.* Are United States policies and programs, as applicable to Africa, appropriate to ensure the United States can succeed in great power competition in the AFRICOM AOR? Are there additional measures we should be considering? What do you perceive as the areas of highest risk?

*Answer.* As China is the Department of Defense pacing threat, USAFRICOM would need to balance countering China with preventing attacks on the United States Homeland by Africa-based terrorists' organizations. Terrorist attacks would create strategic surprise and serve as a strategic distraction from countering China's global malign ambitions. Specific to Africa, USAFRICOM would look to counter any additional CCP military basing in Africa—especially on the West coast. To accomplish both, USAFRICOM would need to detect the indications and warnings provided by sufficient Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) and partner and allied information, access, and placement.

*Question.* Do you believe the Command's resources and authorities are aligned in a manner consistent with U.S. strategic objectives?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I intend to review the Command's current assigned tasks and missions, resources, and authorities considering their alignment to Defense guidance and U.S. strategic objectives. From this review, I will provide an assessment on any additional requirements or residual risk to the Secretary and Chairman.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would you do to enhance or expedite the implementation of the U.S. strategic objectives in AFRICOM?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will update the theater strategy, campaign plan, and campaign order as appropriate to align with the forthcoming NDS and support of overarching U.S. foreign policy goals. In alignment with the current guidance in the INDSG, I will engage with African, European, and interagency partners to maximize our combined efforts and achieve United States advantage.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you seek to balance the requirements for increased emphasis on great power competition with China and Russia with countering violent extremism in the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure USAFRICOM has a balanced approach between countering violent extremist organizations with the intent to attack the Homeland and competing with China and Russia. Successfully executing both efforts requires increased partners and allies' capability and engagement to actively take the lead on regional terror threats. This shift will allow limited U.S. resources to be focused on threats to the U.S. Homeland and countering China.

#### CHINA

*Question.* What is your assessment of China's strategic objectives in the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* China views Africa as critical to its future and central to its strategy. China seeks to build diplomatic influence and supremacy in the information, military, and economic spheres to achieve regional hegemony. The CCP seeks to secure access to markets and resources in Africa to decrease its reliance on supply chains and financial systems led by the United States and Western allies and promote China as leader of the so-called "Global South." Frequent senior leader engagement with African leaders, political parties, and militaries serves Beijing's strategic objective to build international support for its global leadership at the expense of the United States. The CCP has increased People's Liberation Army (PLA) engagements across the continent, offering professional military education, military equipment donations and sales, and training and exercises to African militaries to deepen strategic access and influence.

*Question.* In what ways, if any, do their strategic objectives conflict with U.S. strategic objectives? In what ways, if any, do they align with those of the U.S.?

*Answer.* The strategic objectives of the CCP in Africa aim to ensure continued CCP rule, domestic economic growth, and regional hegemony despite Beijing's narrative of championing the Global South. Beijing uses all instruments of national power with little regard to the rule of law, stable and open international system,

democratic governance, and multilateral institutions. CCP State and non-State entities lack fair and transparent practices, which has challenged African governments to achieve favorable terms and has undermined debt restructuring efforts.

In comparison, the strategic objectives of the United States and our Western allies include promoting a favorable distribution of power to ensure equal and fair access to the global commons. We are concerned that expanding PLA security presence in Africa could restrict freedom of navigation and global commerce through strategic sea lines of communication. While the CCP searches for clients and customers, the United States seeks partners and allies. This reality puts our two nations' long-term strategic objectives at direct odds.

*Question.* In your opinion, what effect has China's engagement with African militaries had on those militaries and on United States security interests?

*Answer.* The CCP has likely marginally improved some African militaries through delivering military equipment sales on a quicker and cheaper basis than the U.S. The opportunity to seemingly more rapidly modernize their military forces entices African partners to purchase CCP equipment, but these purchases frequently do not address the underlying military need, are of low-quality, and lack robust training and maintenance support. The prevalence of Chinese military equipment can complicate U.S. security assistance and interoperability. The CCP contributes up to 2,000 personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations, but Beijing's deployments are tailored toward its security interests, including gaining overseas operational experience for its military personnel.

*Question.* Are United States policies and the associated authorities—as applicable to Africa—sufficient to counter China's influence, where needed, or are additional measures required? What role should AFRICOM play in this regard?

*Answer.* The second most important task the Secretary of Defense has given USAFRICOM is to deny CCP encroachment on United States interests in Africa, after countering terrorist threats to the Homeland. If confirmed, I will thoroughly review USAFRICOM's policies and authorities to determine if the Command is sufficiently postured to counter China's malign activities in Africa. I will seek to work with partners and allies to expose and hold the CCP accountable for its activities in Africa and determine ways to strengthen African institutional capacity to withstand those efforts to undermine international norms.

*Question.* Do you foresee China's growing energy and resource demands affecting security developments in Africa?

*Answer.* Yes. Beijing has agreements with at least 45 African countries to extract natural resources, including critical minerals. It continues to acquire new mines and expand production and investment in strategic minerals to reduce critical dependencies on the West. China's dominance in this sector, from extraction to processing, is resulting in strangleholds over global bauxite, cobalt, iron ore, lithium, and tantalum supply chains.

CCP private security companies are playing an increasingly pivotal role in securing economic investments in Africa. While Beijing typically avoids investing in countries deemed unsafe or incapable of protecting its citizens or interests, Africa is a continent with a rapidly shifting threat environment. Increased presence of these and other CCP-affiliated groups or state-owned enterprises could pose a challenge to U.S. access and influence in the region.

#### RUSSIA

*Question.* What is your assessment of Russia's strategic objectives in the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* Across all theaters, Russia seeks to systematically counter Western interests and bolster its influence through military/intelligence cooperation, arms sales, and energy partnerships. Moscow sees Africa as a vehicle necessary for its own success centered on developing the partnerships necessary for its vision of a multipolar world, while also presenting an opportunity for Russia to extract natural resources, weaken the West's dominance of global governance, and recognize economic opportunities for Russian companies, particularly those closed off to Western markets because of sanctions.

*Question.* In what ways, if any, do their strategic objectives conflict with U.S. strategic objectives? In what ways, if any, do they align with those of the United States?

*Answer.* Russia intends to undermine Western influence and access wherever possible. USAFRICOM assists allies in combatting violent extremists to protect United States and Western interests. In contrast, Russia's assistance is focused on gaining influence to serve Moscow's needs and its business interests. Russia's strategic objectives do not align with those of the United States.

Russia seeks to pressure NATO's southern flank through its activities in North Africa, but its influence there remains unlikely to threaten the alliance in the near future, especially while Moscow is focused on the war in Ukraine.

Russia presents its limited efforts in humanitarian and economic aid, infrastructure development, and security assistance, including counterterrorism, as broadly consistent with objectives shared by the United States and Western partners; however, Moscow views these activities primarily as tools to compete with Western influence. In pursuit of these goals, Kremlin-linked groups such as the private military company Wagner Group have been implicated in practices—including human rights abuses and illicit mining—that are counter to United States and Western values.

*Question.* In your opinion, what effect has Russia's engagement with African militaries had on those militaries and on United States security interests?

*Answer.* Russia provides extensive arms sales and limited training to African militaries, specifically to former Soviet partners. Moscow is the largest exporter of weapons systems to Africa, though this support has faced constraints due to the ongoing war in Ukraine. Russia is historically a leading supplier of military equipment—to include small arms and heavier weapons such as armor and artillery, as well as air defense systems, fighter aircraft, and naval vessels—to select African militaries. These systems increase host nation lethality, but several of these systems are difficult to sustain and decrease interoperability with Western military norms and systems. Russia's lack of robust end-user agreements and support for authoritarian regimes undermines United States objectives in Africa and fosters human rights abuses by host nations.

*Question.* Do you view Russia's activities on the continent of Africa as a threat or challenge to United States national security interests? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* Russia's current activities challenge United States national security interests in the USAFRICOM AOR. Russian military and security advisers currently do not pose a direct military threat to United States personnel, but Russian deployments and influence organizations severely limit USAFRICOM's placement and access throughout the region, inhibiting campaign effectiveness. Russia's pursuit of a permanent military presence and the deployment of Russian military and paramilitary personnel across Africa undermines democratic norms, destabilizes vulnerable security environments, disrupts U.N. missions, and threatens United States and Western progress. Additionally, Russia's pervasive propaganda, guised as information operations, seeks to actively undermine United States influence and highlight anti-western narratives throughout Africa. These propaganda efforts are as much an impediment to United States Government access as its military operations. Ultimately, Russia's operations, activities, and investments complicate future United States Military and economic access and heighten the risk to United States national security interests in Africa.

*Question.* Are United States policies, associated authorities, and resources—as applicable to Africa—sufficient to counter Russia's influence, where needed, or are additional measures required? What role should AFRICOM play in this regard?

*Answer.* Based on my prior experience at SOCAF, the current authorities extended to USAFRICOM appear sufficient, though a comprehensive review upon confirmation would definitively assess their adequacy considering updated strategic guidance and priorities. USAFRICOM's role is to continue interagency collaboration, integrating with Defense plans, and to work with partners and allies to expose and hold Russia accountable for its activities in Africa. USAFRICOM's future role in countering Russian influence and propaganda will require nuanced adjustments focused on military-to-military relationships with African partners and information operations.

*Question.* In your view, is the interagency effectively unified in implementing a strategy to compete with Russia in the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will assess the effectiveness of interagency integration and the appropriate role for USAFRICOM. An interagency approach is critical to effectively counter Russian influence across the continent. Russia's hybrid warfare tactics, which include disinformation campaigns, economic coercion, political interference, and security partnerships, demand a coordinated response that transcends purely military solutions. Our success hinges on leveraging the diverse expertise of agencies focused on diplomacy, intelligence, cybersecurity, economic policy, law enforcement, development assistance, and public diplomacy to ensure a comprehensive and impactful strategy. USAFRICOM has played a vital supporting role in this effort, enabling diplomatic and development initiatives that support U.S. interests.

## AVAILABILITY OF FORCES

*Question.* AFRICOM has minimal 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 associated capabilities to support the AFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan and other requirements in the AOR?

Answer. If confirmed, I will assess the current posture and force allocation to ensure the command has the necessary forces to accomplish the tasked mission.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the challenges and risks to U.S. security interests, if any, resulting from the lack of assigned forces to AFRICOM?

Answer. Predictable, postured, and ready forces and resources are essential to the successful execution of any mission. Based on my previous experience as the SOCAF commander, rotational forces increase the complexity and lose some momentum with partners due to turnover. Effective partnering is based on relationships, which can be difficult to maintain in a rotational construct. If confirmed, I would assess how to optimize the force allocated to USAFRICOM against the assigned tasks and mission to maximize effectiveness.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the utility of the assignment of the Army's Security Force Assistance Brigade to AFRICOM?

Answer. From my time as the SOCAF commander, the Security Force Assistance Brigade has conducted training throughout the African continent, advanced partner capacity, and developed relationships demonstrating the United States as the partner of choice. These deployments significantly contributed to USAFRICOM's Theater Campaign Plan, providing multiple teams capable of conducting military-to-military engagements.

## THEATER SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

*Question.* Special Operations Command-Africa (SOCAF) is under the operational control of AFRICOM and employs United States Special Operations Forces (SOF) to conduct operations, exercises, and theater security cooperation activities.

What is your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of SOCAF in supporting AFRICOM's Theater Campaign Plan and associated requirements?

Answer. Based on my experience as a previous SOCAF commander, SOCAF plays an important role in executing USAFRICOM's Campaign plan as operationalized through the USAFRICOM Campaign Order. SOCAF provides SOF expertise dedicated to the security challenges and operational environment unique to the USAFRICOM AOR. SOCAF supports USAFRICOM across the competition continuum, leading the theater counter terrorism campaign, overseeing the integration of SOF capabilities, and advising the Combatant Commander, Service component commanders, and others on the proper employment of SOF in executing USAFRICOM's Campaign plan as operationalized through the USAFRICOM Campaign Order. SOCAF provides SOF expertise dedicated to the security challenges and operational environment unique to the USAFRICOM AOR. SOCAF supports USAFRICOM across the competition continuum, leading the theater counter terrorism campaign, overseeing the integration of SOF capabilities, and advising the Combatant Commander, Service component commanders, and others on the proper employment of SOF.

*Question.* Based on your professional military experience, how would you characterize the benefits of a dedicated special operations component for a geographic combatant command in supporting the combatant command's theater campaign plan and associated requirements?

Answer. A dedicated special operations component allows for singularity of focus with economy of force, development of long-term relationships, and theater-specific operational approaches. USAFRICOM requires dedicated SOF support to effectively counter malign competitors in addressing the complexities of strategic competition, disrupt terrorist threats, and maintain relationships with key allies and partners through its niche skills and capabilities that are not present in other elements of the joint force. This also facilitates greater integration of planning efforts amongst all components and the USAFRICOM staff.

SOF offers low cost for the high return on investment to shape conditions for to counter terrorist attacks on the Homeland, counter adversary exploitation of the resources and people of Africa and create United States advantage. U.S. SOF are the premier training partner for our African partners and enable them to continue the fight against extremists. Their quality shows through exercises like FLINTLOCK and the example they set through Joint Combined Exchange Training events throughout the continent.

*Question.* What special operations capabilities are in highest demand by AFRICOM?

Answer. From my previous experience as the SOCAF commander and in my current capacity, I believe the Special Operations capabilities that are in the highest demand in USAFRICOM are the expert training and advising of counter terrorist forces as well as the ISR capabilities to assist partner forces in counterterrorism operations. Personnel recovery, search and rescue, and casualty evacuation assets are also in extremely high demand.

*Question.* Which countries in the AFRICOM AOR do you believe have the greatest need for engagement with SOF?

Answer. If confirmed, I will closely examine all USAFRICOM's requirements to include those for the unique capabilities of SOF. I will encourage engagement that is driven by analysis, yet flexible enough to be adapted to the dynamic environment in the USAFRICOM AOR. I would consider the feasibility of future partnerships based on the partner nation's will and capacity to absorb and operationalize U.S. engagement, enough to be adapted to the dynamic environment in the USAFRICOM AOR. I would consider the feasibility of future partnerships based on the partner nation's will and capacity to absorb and operationalize U.S. engagement.

#### VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS (VEOS) IN AFRICA

*Question.* What is your understanding of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy as it relates to the AFRICOM AOR?

Answer. Countering terrorist threats in Africa with the capability of affecting the United States Homeland is the number one priority given to USAFRICOM by the Secretary of Defense. I understand that the National Strategy for Counterterrorism outlines a comprehensive approach to combating terrorism by leveraging all elements of national power and collaborating with international partners. In the USAFRICOM AOR, and in alignment with the INDSG, assigned and allocated forces focus their efforts on countering the most pressing threats to the U.S. Homeland. Separately, remaining limited resources are used to help African partners to independently address regionally focused terror threats.

*Question.* How would you assess the effectiveness of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy and associated activities in addressing the threat posed by violent extremist organizations?

Answer. My view on this varies by region, and the situation has evolved since my time as the Commander of SOCAF. For example, in North Africa, groups like JNIM are expanding south to pose a significant threat to the Sahel and increasingly Coastal West Africa. In the East, counterterrorism operations against ISIS-Somalia have garnered some success at halting external operations plots targeting the West and United States Homeland and paused the group's ability to freely move additional forces to Somalia, many of whom possess technical expertise. A reduction in pressure against ISIS-Somalia without increasing counterterrorism burden sharing with allies and partners, will likely undo hard-won gains made by partner ground operations and U.S. air strikes.

Also in Somalia, al-Shabaab has retaken nearly all the territory the group lost in the 2022 Somali National Army (SNA) offensive, while continuing to collaborate with the Huthis, directly threatening the security of United States Forces in the region. While United States and partner CT efforts likely have slowed the pace of the group's offensive and immediate threat to Mogadishu, the Huthi-al-Shabaab relationship constitutes a serious threat to United States Force protection in the USAFRICOM AOR.

*Question.* What changes, if any, would you recommend to the strategy or associated measures of effectiveness? Should efforts to prevent the underlying causes of extremism be a component of our counterterrorism strategy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with my staff to assess our counterterrorism operations, activities, and investments to ensure they align to the priorities of the INDSG. I welcome the opportunity to work with the Department to further refine our strategy, in conjunction with USSOCOM, USCENTCOM, and the interagency, to ensure a global approach to deterring terrorist threats to the Homeland.

*Question.* Within the AFRICOM AOR, what do you consider the highest counterterrorism priorities?

Answer. USAFRICOM's number one counter terrorism priority is countering those organizations that pose the highest threat to the United States Homeland and United States personnel. Terrorists continue to expand and adapt to locations that allow greater freedom to maneuver. They are seeking to shift recruiting, financial and weapons transactions, and planning for external operations to locations in



Western Africa. We must continue to adapt to these threats to minimize risks to American citizens at home and abroad.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the threat posed by al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other violent extremist organizations operating in Africa, to nations in the AFRICOM AOR, the United States Homeland, and broader western interests?

*Answer.* The global center of terrorism has shifted from the USCENTCOM AOR to the USAFRICOM AOR. While al Qaeda and ISIS have suffered setbacks outside Africa, their affiliates on the continent have expanded in tempo and lethality to pose an increased threat to African partners and other United States and Western interests on the continent. Africa-based al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates aspire to attack the United States Homeland.

In East Africa, Al-Shabaab—al Qaeda's largest, wealthiest, and most lethal global affiliate—is the main organization that threatens United States and partner interests. Additionally, they have publicly advocated for attacks against United States targets, including lone-actor attacks against the United States. ISIS-Somalia is expanding and continues to aspire to attack the United States Homeland and foreign deployed U.S. personnel and facilities abroad. In West Africa, JNIM has emerged as one of al Qaeda's most capable and deadly affiliates and has increased the frequency and lethality of its attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. It also has positioned itself to effectively threaten West African littoral states including Benin and Togo.

*Question.* Which VEOs do you find most concerning, and why?

*Answer.* As ISIS and al Qaeda shift from the Middle East to Africa, both have the intent to attack the United States and our Homeland. Africa's ungoverned spaces provide them the opportunity to plan where they are difficult to find. I am concerned about our ability to detect the indications and warnings of an attack on our Homeland that would create strategic surprise and distraction from our focus on China. If confirmed, addressing this concern will be a priority. opportunity to plan where they are difficult to find. I am concerned about our ability to detect the indications and warnings of an attack on our Homeland that would create strategic surprise and distraction from our focus on China. If confirmed, addressing this concern will be a priority.

#### SOMALIA

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of United States National Security interests in Somalia?

*Answer.* The critical United States interest in Somalia is preventing terrorists from using Somalia as a safe haven to threaten the United States Homeland and United States persons and facilities in East Africa. United States national security interests in Somalia remain focused on our commitment to our allies and partners in coordinating and addressing the shared security threat presented by al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia.

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of the United States strategy for Somalia?

*Answer.* In my current capacity, I have not conducted a detailed assessment of United States strategy in Somalia. I would consider how USAFRICOM can enable Somalia and other allies and partners to effectively contribute to countering shared threats.

*Question.* What role should AFRICOM play in supporting that strategy?

*Answer.* Given al-Shabab's continued resilience within Somalia, USAFRICOM should continue to play two key roles in Somalia. First, it should continue to plan, enable, coordinate, and facilitate ongoing kinetic actions to disrupt Somali terror networks. Second it should identify opportunities to burden share while also supporting our network of allies and partners on the ground.

*Question.* How would you evaluate the effectiveness of United States efforts to counter Al Shabab and ISIS to date?

*Answer.* Al-Shabaab's manpower has swelled in the past few years, increasing the resources needed to counter the group's capabilities and influence. Over the past 6 months, USAFRICOM's air support to Somali National Army (SNA) operations has mitigated the immediate threat to Mogadishu, but al-Shabaab still controls substantial territory, has increased their attacks in Mogadishu, and has been able to increase the group's overall capability. If confirmed, I will assess our persistent presence that the President has approved to ensure it provides an adequate force to work with our interagency partners and international allies and partners to degrade and disrupt al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the prospect for long-term stability in Somalia?

Answer. I believe that long-term stability in Somalia will require the establishment of inclusive, representative, and accountable governance at all levels. Having previously grappled with this challenging problem as the Commander of SOCAF, I know what a challenge long-term stability in Somalia is. Creating stability there is beyond the scope of the military alone to solve.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the effectiveness of United States efforts to build the capacity of the Somali National Army to date and what should the objectives of such efforts be in the near-, mid-, and long-term?

Answer. As the SOCAF commander, we saw moderate success with the Danab as a component of the SNA. I would need to reassess our progress to date and determine what appropriate timeline objectives should be. I would also look to engage other regional allies and partners to determine their level of interest and investment to determine what limited role the U.S. would play in concert with other contributors.

#### LAKE CHAD BASIN AND THE SAHEL

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of United States national security interests in the Lake Chad Basin? The Sahel?

Answer. JNIM is now one of the most active and lethal terrorist groups in the world and poses a direct threat to the governments in the Lake Chad Basin, Sahel, and coastal West Africa regions. The ungoverned spaces in Northern Mali and the Sahel pose a challenge to detect indications and warnings for an attack on the United States Homeland. Additionally, China and Russia seek to exploit instability in the region to achieve their own strategic ends.

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of the United States strategy to address threats in the Lake Chad Basin and across the Sahel?

Answer. I have not had the opportunity to do a thorough assessment of United States strategy for the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel. If confirmed, I will advocate for where possible United States and African partner engagement to advance an African-led regional counter-terrorism strategy.

*Question.* What is your understanding of AFRICOM's role in supporting that strategy?

Answer. I believe that USAFRICOM supports partner efforts to counter threats emanating from Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa and does so through bilateral and multilateral United States security force assistance to our partners in the region. If confirmed, I will ensure USAFRICOM coordinates closely with the interagency to meet our Nation's objectives in the region. force assistance to our partners in the region. If confirmed, I will ensure USAFRICOM coordinates closely with the interagency to meet our Nation's objectives in the region.

*Question.* Do you view the problem sets in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel to be the same? If not, how do they differ and how should we account for that in our strategies?

Answer. No, I do not. However, a more detailed assessment will be necessary for my full understanding of the relationships between these problems. The Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel problem sets differ in the nuances of grievances between terrorist organizations and nation states and long histories of ethnic tension. They are separated geographically and ideologically.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the efforts of governments in the region to combat VEOs, as well as other regional security and governance challenges?

Answer. My assessment on this topic is informed by my time as the Commander of SOCAF. Security and political challenges continue to undermine stability in the Sahel. Mali and Burkina Faso remain the epicenter of instability and a haven for many terrorist groups to stage and launch attacks across the region. Governments are willing to combat terrorists. Yet, these countries are among the world's poorest, face severe resource constraints, and have relatively limited military capability.

Similarly, in the Lake Chad Region, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria are largely willing to confront terrorists operating out of Nigeria and do so through unilateral operations and the five-nation Multinational Joint Task Force. Multiple competing national security priorities in each of the Lake Chad Region nations have prevented them from focusing adequate resources to counterterrorism operations, which has allowed terrorists freedom to operate.

*Question.* What do you view as the most pressing impediments to regional efforts to address security and governance challenges?

Answer. Regional efforts to improve security and governance are often interrupted by urgent internal crises, whether they be caused by terrorist organizations, military coups, natural and man-made disasters, or displaced populations. These events redirect the state's attention and limited resources and distract from capacity and

institution-building endeavors. Weak and hollow State institutions struggle to reorganize and grow while confronting constant challenges and limited resources. One of the most pressing impediments to regional efforts, however, is corruption. Sudden crises also hinder progress on security and governance challenges by requiring time and resources at the expense of capacity building work.

*Question.* In your view, what measures should the United States incorporate into current and future military-to-military engagements to help avoid violence by regional police and the militaries of other nations against civilians during operations?

*Answer.* I believe that the United States should continue to press for partner compliance with long established international norms and not hesitate to restrict security forces from receiving assistance when there is credible evidence of gross violation of human rights by security forces. Consistent application of these standards as a basis for access to the benefits accrued from military-to-military engagements with the United States will further legitimize these norms, reinforce the concept of the rule of law, and act as a deterrent to violators.

#### NORTH AFRICA

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of United States national security interests in North Africa?

*Answer.* United States interests are directly tied to maintaining stability in North Africa by preventing malign foreign and non-State actors from expanding their presence. The United States can do so by leveraging two of our most capable African partner nations, Morocco and Tunisia, who are able to serve as security exporters, most notably when it comes to training other African nations. The United States should also strive to reorient Algeria away from its historic dependence on Russia, and to prevent Libya from serving as an access point for Russian malign actions and expansion. Unchanged for 225 years, the United States's desired objectives for North Africa are stable, western-oriented nations that ensure access to critical sea lines of communication through the Mediterranean.

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of the United States strategy for North Africa?

*Answer.* In my current capacity, I have not conducted a detailed assessment. I do know that the United States continues to support Morocco and Tunisia, and continues to encourage them to take the lead in training other African partner nations. Both nations demonstrated this willingness during my time at SOCAF by serving as the first African training leads during exercise FLINTLOCK. NATO is another important ally in addressing the challenges of North Africa as terrorism and immigration challenge their southern flank.

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of the United States strategy for Libya?

*Answer.* In my current capacity, I have not conducted a detailed assessment of the United States strategy for Libya. I do know the United States continues to pursue a diplomatic and political reunification process.

*Question.* What is your understanding of AFRICOM's role in supporting the United States strategy for North Africa broadly and Libya specifically?

*Answer.* I believe that USAFRICOM primarily works to facilitate military engagement and training opportunities for North African partner nations, encouraging them to assume a primary role for African security challenges. A priority for USAFRICOM is to guarantee United States overflight through North Africa to the remainder of the continent, and to maintain access to critical sea lines of communication. USAFRICOM coordinates these efforts with partners such as Türkiye, Italy, the United Kingdom, France, and NATO to synchronize and layer our activities. For Libya specifically, USAFRICOM strives to facilitate military engagement and training opportunities between both Libyan sides to encourage the formation of an integrated military force capable of conducting independent counterterrorism operations with the oversight of a unified government.

*Question.* What do you view as the most significant challenges and opportunities with regards to the AFRICOM interests and objectives in North Africa?

*Answer.* Libya remains a key challenge in North Africa. I would continue to seek opportunities to engage with Libya and despite the political instability and other challenges to focus on countering terrorism that could affect the United States Homeland. Additionally, I would continue to engage with Morocco and Tunisia to leverage their partnerships and leadership in our various exercises and security cooperation with other African partners.

## CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of United States National Security interests in central and southern Africa?

*Answer.* Our national security interests in Central and Southern Africa extend beyond counterterrorism to include strategic competition with China and Russia, transnational threats such as trafficking and piracy, global health security, and commercial access to natural resources. Instability in the region can directly impact U.S. security, while the economic and political trajectory of these nations is increasingly important to U.S. investments.

*Question.* What is your understanding and assessment of the United States strategy for central and southern Africa?

*Answer.* The U.S. strategy prioritizes partnership with African nations to promote security and economic opportunity and respond to crises. Key pillars include counterterrorism focused on root causes, investment in sustainable development where interests align, security sector reform to support operationally independent partners, and countering malign influence. African leadership and ownership are central to this approach, emphasizing a collaborative rather than prescriptive model.

*Question.* What is your understanding of AFRICOM's role in supporting the U.S. strategy?

*Answer.* USAFRICOM protects the United States Homeland from external threats to prevent strategic surprise, counters malign actors such as China, and maintains a ready and responsive crisis response force. USAFRICOM provides extraordinary value for a very modest investment to advance U.S. interests, by maintaining access and placement to detect indications and warnings and find opportunities to gain advantage. USAFRICOM does this in close partnership with African nations, allies, and the interagency.

*Question.* What do you view as the most significant challenges and opportunities with regards to the AFRICOM interests and objectives in central and southern Africa?

*Answer.* Key challenges in central and southern Africa include expanding terrorist groups, increased Chinese investment in military exercises and engagement, and integrating into whole of government approaches across the region. USAFRICOM is limited in its resources and infrastructure focused on this region—especially in the lack of a contingency location for crisis response. Southern Africa presents a variety of opportunities where nations have approached the United States for engagement.

## BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE

*Question.* In your view, what should be our strategic objectives in building the capacities of partner nations in the AFRICOM AOR through defense security cooperation activities or other means?

*Answer.* I believe that USAFRICOM's building partner capacity (BPC) efforts should focus on partners that are directly supporting USAFRICOM's efforts to combat threats to the Homeland and advance United States interests. BPC efforts should also support advancing partners to the point where they can train, conduct, and sustain their own operations against shared threats in a manner that supports U.S. strategic interests, and regional security. USAFRICOM can also use BPC programs to counter China as it works to expand its influence across the continent. If confirmed, my aim will be to make sure we are a valued security partner throughout the continent by supporting partners' efforts to field sustainable, accountable security forces that possess the capability and capacity to address their own security needs.

*Question.* In your view, what is the appropriate balance between efforts to build partnership capacity at the tactical and operational levels and at the institutional and ministerial levels?

*Answer.* Any assessment of the appropriate balance begins with a nation's commitment to some shared U.S. interest. Engagement with nations should be based on our assessment of feasibility—including both a nation's will and their capacity to absorb and operationalize U.S. engagement. Then, we would balance building partnership capacity at both the national and operational levels as appropriate for that nation. Building only one would be ineffective without the other. Efforts to build partner capacity must be very select, judicious, and balanced to ensure a partner nation's ability to maintain a comprehensive defense approach conducive to U.S. strategic interests.

*Question.* Do you believe the ability of a partner nation to sustain U.S.-provided equipment and capabilities should be a key factor in determining the level and type of assistance to be provided?

*Answer.* I do. Providing unsupportable aid ultimately undermines our relationships and creates vulnerabilities malign State actors are likely to exploit.

*Question.* How would you characterize the importance of adherence to human rights as an objective of AFRICOM security cooperation programs and activities?

*Answer.* Adherence to human rights underpins USAFRICOM's relationships with our partners and allies, and, ultimately, increases our mission effectiveness to advance U.S. interests. Support for human rights is the cornerstone of an effective military. Security cooperation improves partner nations' ability to mitigate civilian casualties and enhances operational effectiveness by maintaining government legitimacy and differentiating from adversaries who violate human rights. If confirmed, I will ensure every engagement with a partner nation, regardless of topic or objective, is an opportunity to emphasize the core values of human rights and a professional military.

*Question.* When credible allegations of violence against civilians by partner nation security forces arise, what should the U.S. response be?

*Answer.* Allegations of violations of human rights, the rule of law, or law of armed conflict undermine governance and should be fully and transparently investigated. If reports are deemed credible, we will call on our partners to hold perpetrators accountable via legitimate judicial processes in addition to internal disciplinary actions. Incidents of civilian harm by partner nation security forces should also inform the planning, design, and execution of security cooperation activities and programs. If confirmed, I will support full and transparent investigations into credible allegations of civilian casualties, and violations of the law of armed conflict.

#### CRISIS RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

*Question.* What is your understanding of the crisis response capabilities available to AFRICOM?

*Answer.* My experience as Commander of SOCAF provides direct insight into the critical role of USAFRICOM's crisis response capabilities. Properly equipped, postured, and ready forces are essential for protecting U.S. personnel, property, and interests during crises. USAFRICOM possesses limited organic crisis response forces. Their missions include reinforcing embassy security and facilitating military-assisted departures of Department of State-designated personnel. Furthermore, subject to the Secretary of Defense's approval, additional crisis response assets from the United States, Europe, and the Middle East can supplement USAFRICOM's resources.

*Question.* Do you believe that the availability of crisis response capabilities and the mechanism for obtaining and deploying those capabilities are both appropriate and adequate to meet crisis response requirements in the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* Africa's vast size and overall lack of an integrated logistics infrastructure make the movement, employment, and sustainment of military forces exceedingly difficult. Many locations suffer from unstable and delicate security conditions. On any given day, a crisis could arise that requires USAFRICOM to commit military forces either to augment the security of a U.S. facility or to evacuate personnel. Allocation of assets to crisis response in Africa will be balanced against global requirements in line with security and defense strategies. If confirmed, I will conduct an assessment to determine if additional capabilities or contingency locations are necessary given the current and future risks and mission requirements. I will also examine how to best develop access with partners to enhance USAFRICOM's ability to respond to crises.

*Question.* In your opinion, what additional steps, if any, should be taken to reduce the risk of attacks on U.S. embassies, consulates, and personnel by terrorist organizations and other threats throughout AFRICOM?

*Answer.* The Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service is the lead agency for embassy protection supported by Marine Security Guard Detachments, and Marine Security Augmentation Units as needed. If confirmed, I will review the current authorities and resources available to support the Department of State to reduce the risk of attacks on U.S. embassies, consulates, and personnel. Key factors of that assessment would consider available military response forces, ISR and associated collection for indications and warnings, the posturing of forward coordinating elements, and regular information sharing and coordination with agencies, allies and partners.

#### CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure civilian casualty allegations are adequately and promptly investigated by AFRICOM?

*Answer.* I understand that USAFRICOM has a long-standing process to assess or investigate allegations of civilian casualties. I also understand that staff sections re-

view allegations of civilian casualties in a holistic fashion, considering all the information available. This includes classified information to assess the allegation and, as necessary, determine whether a further assessment or investigation is necessary. To the extent permissible by law and policy, and except as necessary to ensure operational security, USAFRICOM publishes the results of these assessments. If confirmed, I intend to continue to implement and refine that process consistent with Department policy and law.

*Question.* Do you believe credible civilian casualty incidents should be independently investigated by personnel who are sufficiently removed from the unit or chain of command associated with the incident? Please be specific in your response.

*Answer.* I believe that to be useful and fair, any assessment must be impartial. I understand that USAFRICOM's current civilian harm assessment process ensures an appropriate level of separation or distance between the unit and/or chain of command involved in a potential allegation and the unit that is conducting the assessment.

*Question.* What is your understanding of AFRICOM's current policies with respect to public transparency, and if confirmed, what policies would you seek to establish in this regard?

*Answer.* I understand that USAFRICOM publishes press releases after any kinetic strike taken by units under its commander and, since 2020, has publicly reported information on its assessment of allegations of civilian casualties. If confirmed, I will continue to support transparency through the release of information in accordance with law and policy while protecting operational security.

*Question.* Under what circumstances do you believe it is appropriate to provide ex gratia payments when civilian casualties or other civilian harm result from U.S. unilateral or partnered military operations?

*Answer.* I understand that, consistent with law, ex gratia payments may be an appropriate response for damage to civilian property or the personal injury or death of a civilian that is incident to the use of force by U.S. Armed Forces, a coalition that includes the United States, a military organization supporting the United States, or a military organization supporting the United States or such coalition. I believe that the decision to offer such payments should be made consistent with law and implementing Department guidance, on an individual and case-by-case basis, considering factors such as whether the relevant facts can be verified and any potential risks to both U.S. personnel and the intended recipients, including any risk that such funding could be exploited by malign actors. United States or such coalition. I believe that the decision to offer such payments should be made consistent with law and implementing Department guidance, on an individual and case-by-case basis, considering factors such as whether the relevant facts can be verified and any potential risks to both U.S. personnel and the intended recipients, including any risk that such funding could be exploited by malign actors.

#### INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE (ISR) CAPABILITIES

*Question.* Demand for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities of every kind has grown exponentially in recent years, largely due to the enhanced situational awareness and targeting capabilities they bring to our commanders. Almost all of the geographic combatant commands have validated ISR requirements that are not being met.

What is your understanding of the support AFRICOM is currently receiving to respond to its ISR requirements?

*Answer.* ISR availability remains a challenge not only for USAFRICOM given its lack of organic assets, but also to all other Combatant Commands given the high global demand for ISR. The need for ISR in the USAFRICOM AOR remains high to maintain indications and warnings of attacks on the Homeland and to characterize malign State actor activity on the continent.

*Question.* Do you believe the threats emanating from the AFRICOM AOR warrant additional resources from within DOD? If so, how do you intend to advocate for additional ISR and other enabling assets, if confirmed?

*Answer.* Threats emanating from Africa are likely to distract from our strategic focus and give our adversaries the advantage if not checked—both from terrorists and State actors such as China. While additional resourcing is a question of policy, I will assess the current risk and advocate for the required resources as appropriate to achieve the national security and defense strategies. I will also engage allies and partners to continue developing the relationships that mitigate potential shortfalls and enhance our domain and threat awareness.

## MARITIME SECURITY

*Question.* What is your assessment of AFRICOM's ongoing maritime security initiatives?

*Answer.* My perspective from my current capacity is that USAFRICOM has been expanding the maritime capabilities of partners through a mix of security cooperation efforts and exercises. USAFRICOM appears to be prioritizing its maritime security efforts appropriately given current security challenges, which I intend to reassess, if confirmed, given the evolving circumstances of our security interests in North, West, and East Africa.

*Question.* Very few African countries have the capacity to project naval forces beyond their coastal waters. As a result, the economic exclusion zones of many coastal African countries are exploited by a variety of international actors.

*Answer.* I agree and see this topic as an opportunity to engage African partners and encourage them to hold malign actors, such as China, accountable.

*Question.* What opportunities, if any, do you see for expanded U.S. engagement on maritime security in the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will assess opportunities to expand U.S. Military, inter-agency, partner, and allied engagement on maritime security across the USAFRICOM AOR. The AOR's expansive maritime domain holds both significant challenges and strategic opportunities that demand a robust and collaborative approach. I envision enhanced coordination with our European allies and other non-traditional partners to advance shared national security objectives, from strengthening security in NATO's southern flank to combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the Gulf of Guinea.

Through focused maritime exercises, security cooperation training, information sharing, and bilateral law enforcement engagements, USAFRICOM can empower partners to operate independently, detect and expose malign activity, and achieve these vital shared goals. Moreover, I will coordinate with adjacent Combatant Commands to maximize regional outcomes. A critical area for disruption involves United States-designated drug cartels whose involvement in West Africa's drug supply chain poses a threat to the United States Homeland.

## QUALITY-OF-LIFE CHALLENGES IN AFRICOM

*Question.* What unique quality-of-life challenges affect service members, civilians, and their families assigned to the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* From my experience, the USAFRICOM AOR presents unique challenges to Service members, civilians and their families assigned on the African continent. These challenges include access to medical care, access to education, local environmental concerns impacting health, adequate religious/spiritual fitness resources, isolation from serving in remote locations, high operational tempo, local crime, language barriers, and potential armed conflict exposure. If confirmed, I will assess the extent to which those serving forward have the necessary resources and support to fulfill their mental, physical, and spiritual needs to execute the mission.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you address these theater-wide challenges to help improve the quality-of-life and retention of these personnel and their families?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will complete a thorough assessment of the current initiatives USAFRICOM employs to address quality of life and retention. In addition, I will assess subordinate command climates through site visits, surveys, and feedback. Leveraging my experience as the Commander of SOCAF, I will refine and promote quality of life initiatives for personnel deployed within Africa based on eligibility, threat environment, and mission requirements. I would ensure that forward-deployed personnel are provided a clear mission, defined objectives, necessary resources, and appropriate capabilities required for mission success.

## 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 testimony, 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.

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[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR M. MICHAEL ROUNDS

‘RWANDA

1. Senator ROUNDS. Lieutenant General Anderson, Rwanda is a capable and reliable United States partner on the African Continent, particularly in the areas of peacekeeping, counterterrorism, and regional stability. For example, Rwanda’s deployment in northern Mozambique to combat the ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] affiliate in Mozambique has been a vital contribution to restoring security in Cabo Delgado and protecting critical energy infrastructure. Given United States Africa Command’s (AFRICOM) increasing focus on strategic partnerships and burden-sharing in counterterrorism efforts, can you commit to strengthening United States coordination and support for Rwanda’s operations in Mozambique, and more broadly, to deepening AFRICOM’s engagement with Rwanda as a trusted partner in promoting security and stability across the region?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. If confirmed, I commit to support the priorities identified in national strategic guidance, to include continuing partnerships with capable and willing African nations to degrade and defeat terrorist organizations who pose a threat to the United States Homeland.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

8(A) CONTRACTING

2. Senator SULLIVAN. Lieutenant General Anderson, the Small Business Act (SBA) 8(a) program, created by Congress, provides a contract vehicle through which sole source and set aside contracts can be awarded to small businesses owned by Alaska Native corporations, Community Development Corporations, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations. These corporations are tied to political relationships, not racial classifications. They also are some of our most efficient contractors, earning stellar Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) marks. Last, many of these small businesses employ veterans at rates far exceeding the national average, allowing our Nation’s finest to continue to service after they take off



the uniform. Will you commit to me to work to preserve and strengthen 8(a) contracting for the Department of Defense?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to ensure our defense industrial base is more agile and flexible so that our warfighters have the most advanced and capable equipment to meet our national security priorities.

3. Senator SULLIVAN. Lieutenant General Anderson, I recently toured an SBA 8(a) contracting operation and saw firsthand the value 8(a) brings to the Federal customer in terms of cost and efficiency while delivering mission-critical solutions that increase our national security and warfighting readiness. 8(a) contracts represent the best “bang for the buck” for taxpayers, giving contracting officers additional flexibility while also maximizing efficiency by reducing red tape. Do you see the value in increasing efficiency in flexibility brought from initiatives such as the 8(a) program?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. As I committed in my testimony to the Committee, I will be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. I see significant value in increasing warfighting readiness through enhanced efficiency. If confirmed, I will prioritize efficiency as well as low-cost solutions to address the greatest threats to U.S. national security in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility.

#### MOROCCO

4. Senator SULLIVAN. Lieutenant General Anderson, 2 years ago, this Committee, at my request, asked for a briefing on the options to establish a forward deployed AFRICOM headquarters in AFRICOM. In response, I understand that DOD has assessed that AFRICOM’s current location in Stuttgart provides key efficiencies and logistical benefits it requires. Still, Africa is a long way from Stuttgart. Given Morocco’s status as a longstanding and valuable United States security partner—and the vast range of potential contingencies in Africa—if not as a subordinate command of AFRICOM, how can we leverage our partnership with Morocco to more effectively advance AFRICOM’s security objective on the Continent?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, USAFRICOM’s security objectives on the Continent are focused on undermining China’s malign activities while simultaneously defending the United States Homeland from terrorist attack. It’s my understanding that USAFRICOM continues this critical partnership with Morocco to ensure we can focus our efforts on these objectives.

5. Senator SULLIVAN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how do you assess the threat posed by Iran and its proxies on the African Continent, specifically in North Africa and the Sahel?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, Iran and its proxies pose a growing threat to stability across Africa, exploiting existing vulnerabilities and seeking to expand their influence. Looking across the Continent, I am most concerned about the Iranian and Iranian proxy threat in East Africa, where the Iran-backed Huthis pose a force protection threat to United States personnel in Djibouti and Somalia, as well as to maritime traffic in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. If confirmed, I can assure you that USAFRICOM will continue to monitor their activities and work with partners to counter their malign influence through intelligence sharing, capacity building, and coordinated security efforts.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED BUDD

#### SOMALIA

6. Senator BUDD. Lieutenant General Anderson, in 2022, the Department of Defense deployed hundreds of Special Operations Forces to Somalia to counter Al-Shabab. After 3 years of operations, I’d like to know your assessment of the fight and what you think AFRICOM needs to accomplish the mission?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I am not fully informed on the details of the current United States strategy in Somalia. I am aware that al-Shabaab has demonstrated resilience and, as al Qaeda’s largest, wealthiest, and most lethal global affiliate, is the main organization that threatens United States and partner interests. Additionally, they have publicly advocated for attacks against U.S. targets, including lone-actor attacks against the United States.

I am concerned by al-Shabaab’s continued collaboration with the Huthis, which also directly threatens the security of United States Forces in the region. While United States and partner counterterrorism efforts likely have slowed the pace of

the group's offensive and the immediate threat to Mogadishu, the Huthi-al-Shabaab relationship constitutes a serious threat to United States Force protection in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility.

I understand that to successfully counter al-Shabaab, all stakeholders and the government of Somalia need to act with a singular, unified objective. The United States, along with our allies and partners, must deliver a strong message to Somali leadership that counterterrorism is the international priority in Somalia. If confirmed, you have my assurances that I will assess our persistent presence to ensure it provides an adequate force to enable Somalia and other partners to effectively contribute to countering shared threats.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

##### BACKGROUND

7. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, as part of my responsibility as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and to ensure the fitness of nominees for appointment to senior positions within the Department of Defense, I will be asking the same two questions that I ask nominees to all of the committees on which I serve: "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?"

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

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

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

##### POSTURE/BUDGET REDUCTIONS

9. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, AFRICOM operates under persistent resource constraints compared to other geographic combatant commands, despite the Continent's growing strategic importance. Budget limitations, combined with recent discussions about restructuring or even merging AFRICOM with United States European Command (EUCOM), risk sending the wrong message to our African partners and ceding influence to China, Russia, and other malign actors. Any reduction in posture or personnel would likely diminish the command's ability to respond to crises and maintain long-standing security relationships. What risks do you see in the current review of AFRICOM's posture, particularly if it results in budget or force reductions?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, as the former Commander of Special Operations Command—Africa, I witnessed first-hand the ability of USAFRICOM component units accomplishing their missions with limited resources, leveraging both innovation and strong partnerships. We have opportunities to seek capable partnerships on the African Continent, enabled by our allies and partners, to address regional security concerns and allow our command elements to focus on the most pressing national interests. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing that same effort to maximize resources by working with allies and partners toward shared security goals.

10. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, how would such a decision affect our ability to counter violent extremist organizations and support regional stability efforts in places like Somalia, the Sahel, and the Gulf of Guinea?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, violent extremist threats emanating from Africa are likely to distract from our strategic focus and give our adversaries—both terrorists and State actors such as China—advantage if not sufficiently checked. While additional resourcing is a question of policy, I will assess the current risk and advocate for the required resources as appropriate to achieve the national security objectives. I will also engage allies and partners to continue developing relationships that mitigate potential shortfalls and enhance domain and threat awareness.

11. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, in your view, what resources or authorities are most urgently needed to maintain or grow AFRICOM's impact given the strategic competition playing out across the Continent?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, our Nation's greatest pacing threat is China. Beijing sees Africa as an important theater to secure international support for its policies, strategic resources for its economy and defense industrial base, and operational experience in military power projection. As we look at China beyond the

next 3 years, we must consider Africa as a major source of China's long-term capability to sustain a globally protracted conflict. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to identify resources and authorities needed for USAFRICOM to support United States National Security objectives and constrain China's efforts to achieve hegemony in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

## FOREIGN AID

12. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, I am very concerned about how this Administration's mass firing of State Department employees, cuts to foreign aid, and the dismantling of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) affect our standing with allies and partners in the Region. How does ending foreign assistance programs and other regional aid efforts impact AFRICOM's security cooperation missions and the command's relationship with partners in the region??

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, in alignment to national security and defense priorities, I am committed to defending the U.S. Homeland and countering China's malign activities on the Continent. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the interagency, allies, and partners, to ensure that USAFRICOM's limited resources are maximized to responsibly execute and enable African partners to be more independent and ensure our shared strategic objectives are achieved.

13. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your best military advice on the potential risk of the United States ceding influence in the region by abandoning our allies, partners, and foreign aid commitments??

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, one of the greatest tools we have in defeating terrorist activity and undermining malign Chinese activities is enhanced engagement and collaboration with strong African partners and other allies. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the work currently underway at USAFRICOM to engage with key African partners and enable their ability to operate independently.

14. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, I am reminded of former Defense Secretary James Mattis' comment: "If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition." Do you agree with that statement??

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, the State Department is essential to interagency efforts in Africa that further United States and partner shared interests. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department of State and other interagency members as I did as Commander, SOCAF, to ensure that the United States Homeland is safe from terrorist attacks and United States security interests are advanced on the African Continent.

## CHINA AND RUSSIA IN AFRICA

15. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, China has dramatically expanded its presence in Africa through the Belt and Road Initiative, dual-use port investments, and a permanent military base in Djibouti. Russia, meanwhile, is deploying private military companies to support autocratic regimes and secure access to critical minerals. These efforts often come at the expense of good governance, transparency, and civilian safety. AFRICOM plays a crucial role in helping African partners resist coercion and maintain sovereignty but faces growing competition in both the security and diplomatic domains. How do you assess the evolving security risks posed by China's military and commercial expansion in East Africa, and how is AFRICOM postured to respond?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, China's approach to security and economic engagement allows Beijing to expand its influence and normalize its military presence through its base in Djibouti, the continuous presence of Chinese warships assigned to the Naval Escort Task Force, and extensive Chinese economic investment. I am very concerned about the China's growing efforts, not just in East Africa, but across Africa. Attempts to entrench Chinese influence with African Governments and militaries poses challenges to United States relationships. If confirmed, I will assess USAFRICOM's efforts to undermine China's military ambitions and work closely with the Department of Defense and the interagency to address risks to United States national security because of those activities.

16. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, what role is Russia's paramilitary presence—especially in Central and West Africa—playing in destabilizing partner governments or disrupting United States interests?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, as I stated in my testimony, Russia is a destabilizing force whose actions often run counter to United States interests. Russia's deployments in multiple African nations and use of persistent information operation campaigns undermine USAFRICOM and Western military support and relationships. Russia uses its presence to bolster and protect transitional and fragile regimes—many with highly objectionable practices toward local populations—to derive geopolitical, military, and economic benefits. This also disrupts United States and Allied military access to countries in Central and West Africa that are key terrain for countering ISIS and al Qaeda terrorist groups that could pose a threat to the United States Homeland. If confirmed, I will work with allies to address the destabilizing propaganda that Russia uses to further its malign goals of instability across the Continent.

17. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, how can AFRICOM better coordinate with the Department of State and international partners to provide a viable, values-based alternative to Chinese and Russian engagement?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, USAFRICOM must remain in close coordination with the Departments of State, Commerce, and Homeland Security, as well as other elements of the interagency, to ensure that we achieve U.S. national security objectives and advance U.S. national interests. USAFRICOM must also work with African partners, traditional allies, other global partners, and multinational organizations with shared security objectives to enable a broader approach to safeguard national interests.

One of the greatest powers the United States brings is our economic power, largely through private investment. I believe this approach has the potential to offer additional opportunities across the USAFRICOM area of responsibility, particularly as the populations of Africa grow. In my prior role at SOCAF, we were successful in partnering with non-governmental organizations and elements of civil society to identify other opportunities to demonstrate the value proposition and power of U.S. partnerships.

If confirmed, I look forward to further developing both internal and external relationships to provide viable, credible alternatives to Chinese and Russian malign efforts that exploit African partner nations.

#### CIVILIAN HARM PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

18. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, the U.S. Military has spent many years working to improve its ability to prevent and mitigate civilian harm from its operations without sacrificing lethality, consistent with both U.S. values and strategic goals, including through the development of the Department of Defense (DOD) Instruction on Civilian Harm under the first Trump administration and the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP). Congress also mandated the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence to provide support to warfighters across the force, and combatant commands have onboarded expert staff to support civilian harm mitigation and response. As you know, these efforts received bipartisan support from Congress and grew out of a recognition that warfighters needed better tools and trustworthy systems to prevent civilian harm in today's wars and in the future. Do you agree that preventing and responding to civilian harm is a critical responsibility of the U.S. Military and makes the United States more effective?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

19. Senator HIRONO. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, what do you understand to be your roles and responsibilities regarding civilian harm mitigation and response?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, it is my understanding that Combatant Commanders regularly ensure that Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response (CHMR) considerations are integrated into all phases of planning and execution, including operational planning, intelligence preparation of the environment, and targeting processes. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to ensure compliance in accordance with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 5840.01.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

##### UNMANNED SYSTEMS

20. Senator KAINE. Lieutenant General Anderson, the events at Langley Air Force Base (AFB) 18 months ago, and Operation Spider's Web last month, both underscore

the role that unmanned systems currently play in modern warfare. How do you assess the threat from unmanned systems to U.S. interests in AFRICOM?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, threat actors operating in and within reach of U.S. interests in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility have benefited greatly from the proliferation of inexpensive, advanced unmanned system technology. Their access to this technology and ability to integrate these capabilities into more complex and lethal attacks present a high risk to U.S. forces, operations, and interests in Africa. As I did as Director, Joint Force Development, I will continue to prioritize innovative ways to increase capabilities with respect to unmanned technologies in line with the Secretary's imperative to achieve drone dominance. I will also seek solutions to help African and other partner nations build their capacity and capability related to UAS opportunities and threats.

21. Senator KAINE. Lieutenant General Anderson, what are our capability gaps? Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed and after completing my initial assessment, I welcome the opportunity to have a conversation on this subject in a secure setting.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ANGUS S. KING, JR.

##### UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

22. Senator KING. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you support the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I understand that the United States considers the vast majority of UNCLOS to be reflective of customary international law, and I support the continued leadership of the United States in promoting international norms that advance American interests in the freedom of the seas and safe navigation.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

##### ETHICS

23. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you commit not to seek any employment with or compensation from a defense contractor, including through serving on a board, as a consultant, or as a lobbyist, for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I will abide by U.S. law and all ethical rules, regulations, and restrictions pertaining to post-government employment.

24. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you commit not to engage in any lobbying activities, including unregistered "shadow" or "behind-the-scenes" lobbying under the guise of consulting or advising, focused on DOD or any of its components for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. I will abide by U.S. law and all ethical rules, regulations, and restrictions pertaining to post-government employment.

25. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you commit not to seek employment, board membership with, or any other form of compensation from a company that you regulated or otherwise interacted with while in government, for at least 4 years after leaving office?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. I will abide by U.S. law and all ethical rules, regulations, and restrictions pertaining to post-government employment.

26. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, during your nomination process, did anyone on the Trump campaign, transition team, or other closely related entity approach you about your loyalty to President Trump?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

27. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you sign a loyalty pledge or other similar oath? If so, please provide a copy of the text of that pledge or oath.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

28. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you make any verbal representations of loyalty? If so, please describe this representation.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

29. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, in November 2024, the New York Times and other news outlets reported that Boris Epshteyn, a top adviser to President Trump, allegedly requested payment from prospective political appointees to promote their candidacies for top positions within the administration. Did you discuss the possibility of joining the administration with Mr. Epshteyn at any time?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

30. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you did discuss the possibility of joining the administration with Mr. Epshteyn, did Mr. Epshteyn seek payment from you for promoting your candidacy for a position within the administration?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

31. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, at any time, did lawyers for President Trump or members of President Trump's team approach you regarding Mr. Epshteyn and the allegations cited above? If so, please describe the information that they provided you (including copies of documents), what was discussed during any calls, and any other information pertaining to this interaction.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

32. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, were you in contact with Mr. Elon Musk at any time during your nomination process? If so, please describe the nature of those contacts.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

33. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, was Mr. Musk present or involved in any interviews you did related to your nomination? If so, please describe the nature of his involvement.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

34. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, was Mr. Musk involved in any way with your nomination, including but not limited to directly or indirectly contacting Senators regarding their position on your nomination?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

35. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, who was in the room or participated in any of your interviews regarding your nomination?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, during my nomination process I interviewed with the Secretary of Defense and the President. In my courtesy calls with members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I was accompanied by an aide from the Joint Staff.

36. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you own any stock or hold any other interest in any defense industry contractors, will you divest it to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

37. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what do you consider the role of the press in a democracy?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. The press is vital to our Nation and democratic governance, and to the military's civic duties and civil engagement. DOD doctrine recognizes this importance, emphasizing a responsibility to proactively engage with the media while balancing operational security with the public's right to information.

38. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you commit not to retaliate, including by denying access to government officials or facilities, against news outlets or individual journalists who publish articles that are critical of you, your office, your agency, or the Trump administration?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

39. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you ever been accused of sexually harassing, assaulting, or creating a hostile work environment for another

individual in a personal or professional capacity? Provide a list of all instances in which you have been accused of sexually harassing, assaulting, or creating a hostile work environment for an individual and the behavior of which you were accused.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

40. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you requested, or has anyone requested on your behalf, that any other person or third party sign a non-disclosure, confidentiality, non-disparagement, or similar agreement regarding your conduct in a personal or professional capacity?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

41. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you voluntarily release any individual from any such agreements before this committee votes on your nomination?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I have no such agreements.

42. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you ever paid or promised to pay, or has anyone paid or promised to pay on your behalf, an individual as part of any non-disclosure, confidentiality, non-disparagement, or similar agreement?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

43. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if the answer to the previous question was yes, how much was promised, how much was paid, and what were the circumstances?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I have no such arrangements.

44. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, were you at any time, or are you currently, contacted by or under investigation or review by any inspector general or any inspector general's office for any reason?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

45. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of the Hatch Act?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. As I understand it, the Hatch Act is applicable to civilian Federal employees and generally restricts them from engaging in partisan political activities while on duty, in a Federal facility, or using Federal property. Military personnel are subject to DOD Instruction (DODI) 1344.10, which governs military engagement with political activities.

46. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what disciplinary actions are appropriate for violations of the Hatch Act?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Potential penalties for violations of the Hatch Act are detailed in law and include the possibility of disciplinary actions, including suspension, removal from Federal employment, or assessment of civil penalties. I believe that appropriate disciplinary action should be consistent with law and, as provided for by law, made on a case-by-case basis after considering all lawful factors.

47. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, has a member of your family currently or ever been a member, founder, or investor of the "Executive Branch" social club? Please provide their name and role related to the club.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

48. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, has a member of your family ever visited the club or attended an event at the club?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

49. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if a member of your family has ever visited the club or attended an event at the club, please provide the date, circumstances of the visit, and the event.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

50. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you had any meetings at the club? If so, what were these meetings about and with whom?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

51. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, has a member of your family had any meetings at the club? If so, which family member(s), what were these meetings about, and with whom were these meetings?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

52. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you encouraged anyone to join the club or promoted the club in any other way? If so, in what ways did you promote the club?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

53. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, has a member of your family encouraged anyone to join the club or promoted the club in any other way? If so, which family member(s) and in what ways did they promote the club?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

54. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of the role of the Department of Defense Inspector General and service Inspectors General?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. It's my understanding that the DOD Inspector General (IG) serves as an independent watchdog and objective oversight body within the Department of Defense. Their primary role is to detect and deter waste, fraud, and abuse in DOD programs and operations, promoting economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Each military service also has its own Inspector General focused on readiness, standards, and addressing servicemember complaints within their branch. Together, they uphold ethical conduct, improve efficiency, and provide a trusted channel for reporting concerns. This dual structure creates a system of checks and balances, ensuring the integrity of the DOD workforce and operations.

55. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you ensure your staff complies with any Inspector General deadlines established for requested communications, documents, and witnesses, and that staff will be protected from reprisal for their testimony?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

56. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are not able to comply with any Inspector General requests and deadlines, will you notify the Republican and Democratic members of this committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

57. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you commit to refusing to follow illegal orders from any individual, including the President?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

58. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what actions would you take if you were given an illegal order from any individual, including the President?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I do not anticipate that I will receive an unlawful order. I swore an oath to support and defend the constitution of the United States 33 years ago. I have reaffirmed this oath eight times and will continue to adhere to it as long as I'm able to serve.

59. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you commit to voluntarily provide a deposition if you are requested by Congress to provide one?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

60. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you commit to voluntarily testify in front of Congress if you are requested by Congress to do so?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

61. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you commit to testify or provide a deposition in front of Congress if you are issued a subpoena to do so?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

62. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you commit to providing information or documents to Congress voluntarily if you are requested to do so?



Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

63. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you provide information or documents to Congress if you are issued a subpoena to do so?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

64. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, will you commit to following current precedent for responding to information requests, briefings, and other inquiries from Congress, including the Senate and House Armed Services Committees and their minority members?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

65. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, will you commit to posting your official calendar monthly?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. I will comply with DOD guidance related to operational security and force protection.

66. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you think the Federal Government has an overclassification problem? If so, please provide examples of overclassification you have encountered.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I can only speak to my experience with the Department of Defense (DoD). Due to the complex nature and multiple factors involved in the classification process, DOD does face challenges with overclassification. While enterprise solutions and training can help to address specific shortfalls, the classification process seeks to strike a balance between required access to capabilities, tools, and information to execute a mission and protecting those elements—to the greatest extent possible—from compromise by adversaries. If confirmed, I will seek to encourage a “write for release” environment and support efforts to limit overclassification.

67. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, do you think your department should pursue strategic technology to support automated declassification?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, based on my experience as a military leader at multiple echelons, the Department possesses a vital need to declassify or sanitize classified information in an operationally timely manner to enhance interoperability and support transparency. I believe there is great potential for emerging technologies to enhance the efficiency, accuracy, and cost-effectiveness of declassifying government records.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are at the forefront of these innovations. Challenges will remain in achieving a balance of transparency with risk to national security, as well as ensuring the responsible and ethical implementation of AI for this application. If confirmed, I will support classification and declassification tools authorized and promulgated by the Department and Joint Staff.

#### PROJECT 2025

68. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Trump campaign, the Trump transition team, or other members of the Trump administration? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

69. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Heritage Foundation? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

#### FOREIGN INFLUENCE

70. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you received any payment from a foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

71. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you communicated with any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator, throughout my 33 years of service, I was required to interact regularly with military and other representatives of foreign governments.

72. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, please disclose any communications or payments you have had with representatives of any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years and describe the nature of the communication.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. My engagement with representatives of foreign governments is consistent with existing U.S. law and those ethical rules, regulations, and restrictions applicable to a serving Officer in the U.S. Military.

#### IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT

73. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you believe the Secretary of Defense has the legal authority to block the disbursement of funds appropriated by Congress?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, it's my understanding that the President must obligate funds appropriated by Congress, unless otherwise authorized by Congress to withhold them. I would defer any specific questions related to legal authorities to my colleagues in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

74. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of the Impoundment Control Act?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. The Impoundment Control Act of 1974 codified the limits of Presidential discretion with respect to either withholding or delaying the spending of funds appropriated by Congress and established legal processes by which impoundment can be executed.

75. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you commit to complying with the Impoundment Control Act?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

76. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you commit to notifying the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, including the majority and minority, if you are asked not to comply with the Impoundment Control Act or not to expend the money that Congress appropriates or authorizes?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

77. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of the requirements for Federal agencies to obligate funding that Congress authorizes and appropriates, in accordance with the time period that Congress deems it to do so?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. It's my understanding that in Federal budgeting, an obligation of funds represents a legal commitment by a Federal agency to use funds for the purposes appropriated, in the year apportioned, and may not be expended in advance of or in excess of an enacted appropriation.

78. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you commit to expending the money that Congress appropriates and authorizes?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

79. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you commit to following and implementing every provision of the annual National Defense Authorization Act passed into law?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator, without reservation, I will follow U.S. law and defend the U.S. Constitution in accordance with my Oath of Office.

80. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you became aware of a potential violation of the Antideficiency Act, Impoundment Control Act, or other appropriations laws, what steps would you take?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. In the event of a violation, I will comply with the legal reporting requirements. I will promptly and thoroughly investigate and report such violations, taking remedial actions to prevent future violations.

#### CIVILIAN HARM

81. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you agree that one difference between the United States and its potential adversaries is the greater value

that the U.S. Government puts on protecting human life and liberty at home and abroad?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

82. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of title 10 U.S.C. 184, which established the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, my understanding is that this law established the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence to institutionalize and advance knowledge, practices, and tools for preventing, mitigating, and responding to civilian harm.

83. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, the U.S. Military has spent many years working to improve its ability to prevent and mitigate civilian harm without sacrificing lethality—including through the development of the DOD Instruction on Civilian Harm under the first Trump administration, which I commend. These efforts received bipartisan support from Congress and grew out of a recognition from the U.S. Military itself that, after over 2 decades of U.S. wars, warfighters needed better tools and trustworthy systems to prevent civilian harm, uphold U.S. values, and prevent the moral injury and psychological trauma that too often comes with deadly mistakes. If confirmed, will you commit to continued leadership on civilian harm issues?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator, I do. In my 33 years of experience, the U.S. Military takes extreme care to avoid civilian harm and are more transparent than any other military in the world.

84. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, what do you understand to be your role and responsibilities regarding civilian harm mitigation and response?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, my understanding is that Combatant Commanders ensure that civilian harm considerations are integrated into all phases of planning and execution, including operational planning, intelligence preparation of the environment, and targeting processes. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to ensure compliance in accordance with Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 5840.01.

85. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what do you understand to be the importance of mitigating civilian harm in military operations?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Civilian harm mitigation and response efforts support Department missions by enhancing operational effectiveness, strengthening partnerships, and reducing the risk of unintended consequences, such as the loss of human life.

86. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what value can advisors with expertise in civilian harm mitigation and response provide to commanders?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I would defer to those with dedicated experience in this field to offer more substantive insights into the potential impact of military operations on civilians. Based on my experience as Commander, SOCAF, I can personally attest to the value of that expertise.

87. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how have SOCOM and AFRICOM, respectively, benefited from the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to assess the specific benefits.

88. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how have SOCOM and AFRICOM, respectively, supported and implemented the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP)?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, I will work with my staff to assess how the Command has implemented the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan.

89. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what have been the benefits for SOCOM and AFRICOM, respectively, in supporting and implementing Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response efforts and the CHMR-AP?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, I will work with my staff to assess how the Command has implemented the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan and what specific benefits have come from those actions.

90. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you believe that our troops are at higher risk for retribution as the number of civilian deaths from U.S. Military operations or U.S.-led military operations increases?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, as a former commander at other echelons, I believe civilian deaths can be a factor in military operations.

91. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how does preventing and mitigating civilian harm help to promote U.S. national security?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, the U.S. Military should minimize civilian casualties in warfare as a matter of moral obligation and strategic imperative. As DOD continues to incorporate civilian harm and mitigation and associated response efforts into planning and operations, we strengthen our standing among allies and partners, separating ourselves from adversaries.

92. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, does having civilian-harm prevention personnel build trust and relationships with local civil society groups help commanders to collect useful intelligence information?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, it can, Senator.

93. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, in what ways do you see civilian harm mitigation and response efforts furthering SOCOM and AFRICOM's missions and the effectiveness of their operations, respectively?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the current efforts of integrating civilian harm and mitigation and response efforts into operations and plans at USAFRICOM.

94. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you commit to supporting and protecting the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, I commit to working with the Department to ensure I comply with all legal and policy directives to ensure our national security objectives are met.

95. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how will you prevent and mitigate civilian harm?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that civilian harm and mitigation and response considerations are integrated into all phases of planning and execution, including operational planning, intelligence preparation of the environment, and targeting processes.

96. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed for these roles, will you commit to working with civil society and interviewing civilian witnesses during civilian harm investigations?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

97. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed for these roles, how do you plan to work with civil society to reduce civilian harm in military operations?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, I will continue to ensure that civilian harm and mitigation and response considerations are integrated into all phases of planning and execution, including operational planning, intelligence preparation of the environment, and targeting processes.

98. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed for these roles, will you commit to supporting thorough investigations of allegations of civilian harm, including by partners and allies?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. I commit to working with the Department to ensure I comply with all legal and policy requirements associated with civilian harm.

99. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how would a potential high-intensity conflict with a peer or near-peer adversary that purposefully embeds itself in densely populated operational environments impact targeting capabilities, precision, and risks to servicemembers?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, based on my experience, a peer adversary embedded within dense urban environments significantly degrades our targeting capabilities and increases risks to U.S. servicemembers. Precision targeting is compromised by the difficulty in distinguishing combatants from civilians, increasing the potential for collateral damage. To mitigate this, we must prioritize refining our rules of engagement, enhancing intelligence gathering, and adapting our tactics to minimize civilian harm and maintain mission legitimacy.

100. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how would current technology, capabilities, planning, and rules of engagement, including efforts to prevent and mitigate civilian harm, help to mitigate such impacts from the previous question?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, our advanced ISR, precision munitions, and specialized units, coupled with rigorous planning and rules of engagement designed to prevent civilian harm, provide a strong foundation for mitigating the impacts of the situation described above. Our deliberate targeting process and civilian harm mitigation frameworks prioritize minimizing collateral damage and ensuring compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict.

101. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed for these roles, will you commit to sharing all findings of each investigation of civilian harm with Congress, including the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee within 15 days of the investigation's completion?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, I will continue to support transparency through the release of information in accordance with existing U.S. law and policy, while protecting operational security.

102. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you commit to supporting and implementing the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP)?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Department to ensure I comply with all legal and policy requirements associated with Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response.

103. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you commit to supporting and implementing the Civilian Harm Mitigation Response and Action Plan (CHMR-AP)?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Department to ensure I comply with all legal and policy requirements associated with Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response.

#### PROTECTING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND FEDERAL RECORDS

104. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of the need to protect operational security, or OPSEC?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, operational security (OPSEC) is paramount to mission success and the safety of our personnel. Failure to protect OPSEC can result in the compromise of sensitive information, data, or capabilities, which may provide advantage to U.S. adversaries as they seek to exploit vulnerabilities.

105. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what are the national security risks of improperly disclosing classified information?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, the disclosure of classified information can have far-reaching and detrimental consequences for national security. Such disclosure can provide adversaries with critical insights into our capabilities, vulnerabilities, and intentions, potentially impacting ongoing operations, compromising relationships with allies and partners, and eroding public trust.

106. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what would you do if you learned an official had improperly disclosed classified information?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I would follow DOD guidance and report the incident in accordance with DOD Directive 5210.50.

107. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of Government officials' duties under the Federal Records Act?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, it is my understanding that the Federal Records Act is the primary law governing the management of records created by U.S. Federal agencies. It establishes a framework for the creation, maintenance, and disposition of Federal records, ensuring the preservation of documents relevant to government activities and decisions.

108. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, should classified information be shared on unclassified commercial systems?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Classified information should be communicated on an appropriately classified system.

109. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, is it damaging to servicemembers' confidence in the chain of command if the pilots flying a mission find out that the official who ordered them to perform that mission shared sensitive information that could have made it more likely that the mission would fail, or they would be killed?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I wouldn't want to speculate or generalize. We should always preserve the element of surprise and never put our warfighters in harm's way.

110. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you had information about the status of specific targets, weapons being used, and timing for imminent United States strikes against an adversary, under what circumstances would you feel comfortable receiving or sharing that information on an unclassified commercial application like Signal?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. As I have throughout my career, I will continue to communicate classified information through the appropriate channels.

#### RETALIATION AND PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

111. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you believe that servicemembers, civilians, grantees, and contractors should be protected from any form of retaliation for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. I understand that Federal law provides whistleblower protections to specific individuals, and I firmly believe that servicemembers, civilians, grantees, and contractors should be protected from retaliation for any protected activity.

112. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what do you consider to be the purpose of Federal whistleblower protection laws?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. evelop to insulate those who make protected communications or engage in other protected activity from retaliation or reprisal for their actions. The legal framework is intended to encourage those persons to report potential wrongdoing so it can be appropriately investigated and, as warranted, addressed.

113. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, have you ever retaliated against any individual for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

114. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you commit to protecting whistleblowers? If so, please specify how you will do so.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator. If confirmed, I will comply with Federal whistleblower protection laws and will not take any adverse actions or condone retaliation against whistleblowers who engage in protected activities.

115. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if you are confirmed, will you commit to preventing retaliation against any individual for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

116. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you consider it to be retaliation to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

117. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you consider it to be retaliation to encourage another person(s) to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

## DATA PRIVACY

118. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of your obligations to protect sensitive servicemember, contractor, and civilian employee information from unauthorized disclosure and from foreign governments?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, all personnel, regardless of component or status, must diligently safeguard personally identifiable information from compromise, including from foreign governments and their agents. This requires strict adherence to established policies regarding data handling, storage and transmission, and destruction, as well as a constant awareness of potential threats and vulnerabilities. Personnel complete annual training to ensure adherence to policies and procedures.

119. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what are the risks of any failure to protect sensitive servicemember, contractor, and civilian employee information from unauthorized disclosure and from foreign governments?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Personal exploitation, and physical harm to individuals and their families. Operationally, compromised data can reveal critical vulnerabilities, enabling adversaries to target personnel, disrupt operations, and undermine strategic objectives. Maintaining robust security measures is therefore not merely a compliance requirement, but an imperative for safeguarding our people, protecting our mission, and preserving national security.

120. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what is your understanding of the Protecting Americans' Data from Foreign Adversaries Act?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, the Act generally prohibits data brokers from selling, licensing, or transferring personally identifiable sensitive data to certain foreign adversary countries or to any entity controlled by those foreign adversary countries. I take the safeguarding of personally identifiable information seriously and will continue to abide by U.S. law and all DOD policies and guidance.

121. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, do you oppose private entities such as DOD contractors and data brokers selling servicemember data to China, Russia, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, and North Korea and entities controlled by those countries?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

122. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, would you support any contracts for the sale or transfer of servicemember data including a prohibition on reselling or transferring servicemember data to China, Russia, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, and North Korea and entities controlled by those countries?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. No, Senator.

123. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, a 2023 Duke University study found that data brokers with datasets about Active Duty servicemembers were willing to sell to buyers in Asia for as little as 12 cents per record. Do you think selling service member data in foreign countries creates a national security risk?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

124. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, would you support stronger enforcement of existing protections for U.S. and servicemember data?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

## INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

125. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how has your experience as a commander been made easier when you have support from the interagency—such as expert negotiators and other tools like economic aid and civic-institution-building—to maintain positive bilateral relations that facilitate your military missions?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, during my career I have worked with the interagency to achieve national security objectives. Going forward, I believe that support from the interagency will be critical to ensure we can maintain close relationships with allies and partners who are willing and capable of meeting shared security objectives. If confirmed, I anticipate building on these partnerships to achieve the security priorities set forth in national strategic guidance.

126. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, how will you work with U.S. Transportation Command and other stakeholders to navigate complex and contested logistical challenges in your commands?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, the presence of terrorists, malign State actors, maritime chokepoints, vast geography, austere environmental conditions, and insufficient infrastructure represent many of the logistical challenges within the area of responsibility. It is essential for USAFRICOM to synchronize and collaborate with USTRANSCOM, the Defense Logistics Agency, and other key logistics support agencies. If confirmed, I will ensure the Command continues to work with these partners to develop a resilient, robust array of methods, modes, and means to deploy and distribute personnel, equipment, and supplies.

127. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, what concrete ideas would you bring into your roles to drive innovation in contested logistics and implement solutions that enable more agile force posture and sustainment?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I am a strong proponent of leveraging the latest concepts and technology to overcome the significant logistical challenges to the Joint Force. Ideas such as additive manufacturing, autonomous drone delivery of essential supplies, and simulation-enabled wargaming to identify optimal logistics methods, among others, offer the potential not only for greater efficiency in our logistics operations but also for possible cost savings once implemented. These same concepts and technologies can also enable greater agility in our ability to support new or emergent posture requirements. Together, such innovations can reduce our dependency on vulnerable or time-consuming transoceanic supply lines. If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to adopt and adapt emerging technologies to address USAFRICOM's most pressing logistical challenges.

128. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, how would you work with our international partners to combat complex and contested logistical challenges and test the concepts that we will need for future warfare?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, the USAFRICOM area of responsibility includes partner nations with significant logistical support capabilities and infrastructure that we leverage for access, basing, and overflight needed for daily mission success, as well as crisis and contingency response. Key to leveraging these capabilities is investing the necessary time and resources to establish and maintain relationships with select governments and their militaries, including incorporating them into logistics-focused exercises. In addition, USAFRICOM must continue to leverage the logistics-sharing arrangements we have with several of our NATO allies, especially for airlift delivery.

129. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, in your experience as the Director for Joint Force Development for the Joint Staff, how has the Joint Staff incorporated lessons from engagements with partners in Africa into the Joint Warfighting Concept and the Joint Concept for Contested Logistics, particularly around agile and resilient logistics, assured joint power projection, and sustainment for distributed operations?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, the Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) aims to address how the Joint Force will overcome future military challenges, including those posed in a highly contested environment by sophisticated adversaries. The JWC emphasizes agility, speed, and the ability to execute multi-domain operations to achieve objectives and maintain strategic advantage. A key element of the JWC is the Joint Concept for Contested Logistics (JCL), which seeks to provide the Joint Force with concepts of operations (CONOPs) for planning, executing, and enabling the movement and support of military forces in austere and wide-ranging operating environments.

The JWC and JCL have global application for the Joint Force, but the specific emphasis on contested and globally integrated logistics is particularly relevant to the USAFRICOM area of responsibility and our ability to conduct operations on—and from—the African continent. The sheer size of Africa, when combined with population growth, harsh environments, austere conditions, lack of infrastructure, and the presence of malign actors and terrorist organizations, creates multifaceted logistical challenges. The JWC and JCL present solutions for navigating complex environments by building agility and resilience, fostering strong partnerships, and leveraging emerging technology to bridge infrastructure gaps. The implementation of the JWC and adaptation of logistics strategies are vital for the United States to



maintain a strategic presence in Africa to ensure power projection and to defend the Homeland from external threats.

UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND POSTURE

130. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, press reports indicate that the Trump administration is considering plans to combine United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) under United States European Command. If confirmed, do you commit to consulting with this committee before recommending or implementing any change to these two commands?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, as a matter of policy, the Office of the Secretary of Defense is charged with revisions to the Unified Campaign Plan. I believe that there needs to be an entity focused entirely on the African continent, whether that takes the form of a sub-unified or unified command. If confirmed, I can offer my assessment of risk to mission and the potential impact to United States strategic interests. If asked, I will provide military advice through my Chain of Command.

131. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what threats do Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) pose to United States Forces in Africa?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, as I testified before the Committee, China is expanding its approach from a focus on economic influence to include military and information operations, while Russia's actions are frequently destabilizing and run counter to United States interests.

132. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, how will you work to deter PRC and Russian influence and activities that undermine democracy and exacerbate conflicts on the Continent?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that malign activity and regional instability are addressed by engaging with those allies and partners with shared interests. If confirmed, I will also work with the inter-agency to prioritize those activities that directly address threats to the United States national security interests and counter China's strategy on the African Continent.

133. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, the PRC continues to pursue control of key port and other dual-use infrastructure as part of its Belt and Road Initiative across Africa that could also support their future military operations. What do you believe is the most productive way AFRICOM and the United States Military can or should check the PRC's expanding military and economic footprint in Africa?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, China's military and economic influence over the continent continues to grow as Beijing continues to exploit Africa as a source of industrial and financial power. China is expanding beyond traditional economic activity with increasing military engagement and information activities, with a clear intent to undermine Western influence and access wherever possible. If confirmed, USAFRICOM will support interagency efforts to disrupt Beijing's military efforts and malign activities in African.

134. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how would AFRICOM manage relationships with partners who do not want to have to choose between the United States and any other security partner, including the PRC and Russia?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I believe a moderate investment can yield out-sized returns in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility. If confirmed, I will pursue focused relationships through operations, activities, and investments that achieve warfighting advantage and support U.S. security interests. African partners are sovereign nations, free to make their own security and economic decisions in accordance with their national interests. As China and Russia's malign activities are exposed over time, African partners will pursue those relationships that best serve their interests. Through prioritized and targeted engagement, the United States must present ourselves as a valuable partner to African nations, specifically those with the will and capacity to address shared threats on the Continent.

135. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, how will you promote maritime security in Africa?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, I will assess opportunities to expand U.S. Military, interagency, partner, and allied engagement on maritime

security across the USAFRICOM area of responsibility. Africa's expansive maritime domain holds both significant challenges and strategic opportunities that demand a robust and collaborative approach. I will pursue enhanced coordination with our European allies and other non-traditional partners to advance shared national security objectives, from strengthening security in NATO's southern flank to combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the Gulf of Guinea.

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Through focused maritime exercises, security cooperation training, information sharing, and bilateral law enforcement engagements, USAFRICOM can empower partners to operate independently, detect and expose malign activity, and achieve vital shared goals. Moreover, I will coordinate with adjacent Combatant Commands to maximize regional outcomes and safeguard U.S. national security interests.

136. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how can AFRICOM support or complement United States efforts to secure sea lines of communication?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, U.S.-led naval exercises present the greatest opportunities to demonstrate freedom of navigation in key sea lines of communication, both military and commercial. These annual exercises, conducted by USAFRICOM's assigned naval forces, demonstrate U.S. capabilities and send the message to malign actors that the United States is ready to defend freedom of navigation and global commerce. Additionally, if confirmed, I will continue to work with our NATO allies to find additional opportunities for maritime cooperation, particularly in the Mediterranean and the Red Seas.

137. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, how will you ensure effective intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance coverage in Africa to combat destabilizing, violent extremist activity from non-State actors?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, as you know, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) is a high-demand/low-density asset. Its availability remains a challenge not only for USAFRICOM but for all other Combatant Commands.

As an economy of force theater, I understand USAFRICOM will have limited ISR assets while the need for ISR coverage remains high. If confirmed, I will assess the current risk and advocate for the required resources to safeguard U.S. national security interests. To maintain timely and relevant indications and warnings, I will also seek to balance the requirement for exquisite, airborne ISR with other cost-effective means to enhance domain and threat awareness. There are suitable emerging technologies we can look to leverage. I would also engage allies and our African partners to strengthen relationships, to include exploring the potential for enhanced intelligence-sharing agreements.

138. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, how would you assess and adapt AFRICOM's posture following recent U.S. troop withdrawals in countries like Niger?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, as I discussed in my testimony, the United States used Niger extensively to support ISR activities. We invested significant resources, particularly at the air base, which was a key foothold for us to monitor regional threats. As a result, we'll have to find creative ways to ensure we have timely, reliable indicators and warnings to counter terrorist threats to the U.S. Homeland and advance U.S. security interests.

You have my assurance that, if confirmed, I will assess USAFRICOM's current posture so we can achieve the objectives identified by national strategic guidance.

139. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, how will you leverage security cooperation, diplomatic engagements, and other tools to build long-term strategic relationships across Africa?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I believe that a modest investment of resources in Africa can yield an outsized return where U.S. security interests are concerned. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAFRICOM strategy is aligned to the U.S. national security priorities identified in national strategic guidance. I will also engage with allies and African partners by leveraging security cooperation and capacity-building activities, and exercises to better enable our African partners to address regional challenges.

140. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, how would you continue to ensure that these efforts remain consistent with U.S. commitments to democratic governance, civilian oversight, and human rights?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, these commitments are critical to the standing of the U.S. Military across the globe. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to ensure USAFRICOM activities are conducted in accordance with those U.S. law and policies.

141. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, can you describe your priorities for burden-sharing and security capacity-building in Africa, should you be confirmed?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. If confirmed, I commit to support the priorities identified in national strategic guidance, to include continuing partnerships with capable and willing African nations to degrade and defeat terrorist organizations who pose a threat to the United States Homeland.

142. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, which countries would you prioritize and deprioritize?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. If confirmed, I will assess the current strategy to ensure that all USAFRICOM activities, operations, and investments align to United States national security objectives, including decisions on the prioritization of African partner nations.

143. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what areas of cooperation would you emphasize or de-emphasize, and why?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, if confirmed, my focus at USAFRICOM will be to: (1) counter terrorism to protect the U.S. Homeland and prevent strategic surprise; (2) counter adversary strategies on the Continent, and (3) ensure Joint Force readiness to respond to crisis. I look forward to working with both allies and partners to enhance their capacity to execute against shared security objectives and enable our African partners to address regional security challenges independently.

144. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, what do you see as the role of our partners in Africa in developing and fielding innovative new technologies for use in security?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. USAFRICOM continuously looks for opportunities to work with our African partners—whether it be through combined military exercises, individual technology demonstrations, or establishing relationships to further research that is mutually beneficial. Many of our African partners also have strong military-affiliated research and development facilities and innovation ecosystems. The ingenuity of our African partners will be critical as USAFRICOM continues to evolve its military technological edge in coordination with allies and partners.

145. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, how do you anticipate AFRICOM to align with the Trump administration's prioritization shift to the Indo-Pacific, as reportedly outlined in the interim National Defense Strategy?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, my understanding is that USAFRICOM staff and components are already operating with a theater strategy and campaign plan in support of U.S. national security objectives. If confirmed, I will assess the strategy and ensure that all USAFRICOM activities, operations, and investments align to national strategic guidance.

#### ETHICS

146. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, would you follow an illegal, unlawful or immoral order?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Senator, I do not anticipate that I will receive an unlawful order. I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States 33 years ago. I have reaffirmed this oath eight times and will continue to adhere to it as long as I'm able to serve.

147. Senator WARREN. Lieutenant General Anderson, if confirmed, do you commit that your deliberations and decisions will only be communicated through official, secure channels and any decisions properly documented for both oversight and institutional memory?

Lieutenant General ANDERSON. Yes, Senator.

[The nomination reference of Lieutenant General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, USAF follows:]

**NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT**

**PN271**

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,  
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
June 3, 2025.

*Ordered*, That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

The following named officer for 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., section 601:

*To Be General*

Lt. Gen. Dagvin R.M. Anderson, 5448

\_\_\_\_\_, 2025.  
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Wicker \_\_\_\_\_  
(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 Lieutenant General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, USAF, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]



## BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

## LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON

Lt. Gen. Dagvin R.M. Anderson is the Director for Joint Force Development, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia. The J7 supports the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and the joint warfighter through joint force development (JFD) in order to advance the operational effectiveness of the current and future joint force. The J-7 is responsible for the six functions of joint force development: Doctrine, Education, Concept Development & Experimentation, Training, Exercises and Lessons Learned.

Originally from Ypsilanti, Michigan, Lt. Gen. Anderson was a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at Washington University in St. Louis. He has flown the KC-135R, MC-130E, and U-28A operationally in several contingencies globally. He commanded a special operations squadron, an expeditionary squadron, an operations group, a special operations wing, and Special Operations Command, Africa. He was also the Commander of Joint Task Force-Quartz, the repositioning of U.S. forces from Somalia. He was a Fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University and was an Olmsted Scholar in the Czech Republic. Lt. Gen. Anderson has completed six joint staff tours at various echelons.

## EDUCATION

1992 Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

1997 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

2003 Master of International Public Policy, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C.

2010 Fellow, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

2018 Capstone, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

2018 Joint Forces Air Component Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2021 Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. May 1993–June 1994, Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training, Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas

2. October 1994–September 1996, KC-135R Pilot, 91st Air Refueling Squadron, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.

3. September 1996–May 1999, KC-135R/T Instructor/Evaluator/Chief Pilot, 91st Air Refueling Squadron, MacDill AFB, Fla.

4. June 1999–May 2000, Student, Czech Language, Defense Language Institute, Monterey, Calif.

5. June 2000–July 2002, Olmsted Scholar, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

6. August 2002–May 2003, Student, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C.

7. September 2003–September 2005, Chief of Current Operations, MC-130E, 8th Special Operations Squadron, Duke Field, Fla.

8. September 2005–August 2007, Deputy Director of the Commander's Action Group, Aide-de-Camp to the Commander, United States Special Operations Command, MacDill AFB, Fla.

9. October 2007–April 2009, Operations Officer, 319th Special Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla.

10. April 2009–June 2010, Commander, 19th Special Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla.

11. July 2010–July 2011, Fellow, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

12. July 2011–July 2013, Commander, 58th Operations Group, Kirtland AFB, N.M.

13. July 2013–June 2014, Senior Aviation Advisor for Counter-Terrorism Operations, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

14. July 2014–June 2016, Commander, 58th Special Operations Wing, Kirtland AFB, N.M.

15. July 2016–June 2017, Special Assistant to the Commander and Director of the Commander's Strategic Initiative Group,

United Nations Command-Combined Forces Command-U.S. Forces Korea, Yongsan Garrison, South Korea

16. June 2017–June 2019, Deputy Director for Operations, Headquarters, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii

17. June 2019–July 2021, Commander Special Operations Command-Africa, Stuttgart, Germany



## EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant

November 19, 1992



First Lieutenant

November 19, 1994



Captain

November 19, 1996



Major

May 01, 2003



Lieutenant Colonel

December 01, 2006



Colonel

October 01, 2010



Brigadier General

August 02, 2017



Major General

May 22, 2020



Lieutenant General

August 08, 2022



18. July 2021–August 2022, Vice Director for Operations, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.  
 19. August 2022 –present, Director for Joint Force Development, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

#### SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. September 2005–August 2007, Deputy Director, Commander's Action Group, Aide-de-Camp to the Commander, United States Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., as a major and lieutenant colonel
2. July 2013–June 2014, Senior Aviation Advisor for Counter-Terrorism Operations, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a colonel
3. July 2016–June 2017, Special Assistant to the Commander and Director of the Commander's Strategic Initiative Group, United Nations Command-Combined Forces Command-U.S. Forces Korea, Yongsan Garrison, South Korea, as a colonel
4. June 2017–June 2019, Deputy Director for Operations, Headquarters, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, as a brigadier general
5. June 2019–July 2021, Commander Special Operations Command-Africa, Stuttgart, Germany, as a major general
6. July 2021–August 2022, Vice Director, Operations, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a major general
7. August 2022–present, Director for Joint Force Development, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a lieutenant general

#### FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: command pilot  
 Flight Hours: more than 3,400 (738 combat)  
 Aircraft Flown: T-37, T-38, KC-135R/T, C-130E, MC-130E/H/P/J, HC-130P/N/J, AC-130U, UH-1N, TH-1, HH-60, MI-17, MH-6, MV-22, CV-22, PC-12 and U-28A

#### MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Superior Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters  
 Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster  
 Bronze Star Medal  
 Defense Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster  
 Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster  
 Air Medal with silver and bronze oak leaf cluster  
 Aerial Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters

#### EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant Nov. 19, 1992  
 First Lieutenant Nov. 19, 1994  
 Captain Nov. 19, 1996  
 Major May 1, 2003  
 Lieutenant Colonel Dec. 1, 2006  
 Colonel Oct. 1, 2010  
 Brigadier General Aug. 2, 2017  
 Major General May 22, 2020  
 Lieutenant General Aug. 8, 2022

(Current as of November 2022)



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#### SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

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2. July 2013–June 2014, Senior Aviation Advisor for Counter-Terrorism Operations, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a colonel
3. July 2016–June 2017, Special Assistant to the Commander and Director of the Commander's Strategic Initiative Group, United Nations Command-Combined Forces Command-U.S. Forces Korea, Yongsan Garrison, South Korea, as a colonel
4. June 2017–June 2019, Deputy Director for Operations, Headquarters, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, as a brigadier general
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6. July 2021–August 2022, Vice Director, Operations, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a major general
7. August 2022–present, Director for Joint Force Development, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a lieutenant general

#### FLIGHT INFORMATION

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#### MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Superior Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters  
 Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster  
 Bronze Star Medal  
 Defense Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster  
 Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster  
 Air Medal with silver and bronze oak leaf cluster  
 Aerial Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters

#### EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

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 Major General May 22, 2020  
 Lieutenant General Aug. 8, 2022

(Current as of November 2022)



[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 Lieutenant General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, USAF in connection with his nomination follows:]

118<sup>th</sup> 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): Dagvin R.M. Anderson
2. Position to which nominated:  
Commander, United States Africa Command
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):
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):

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):**
  - Member of the Air Force Association – I enjoy no benefits as a result of my Membership
  - Member of the Daedalian Pilot's Association – I enjoy no benefits as a result of my membership
  - Member Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 12138 Ewa, Hawaii – I enjoy no 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):**
  - Olmsted Scholar to Masaryk University, Czech Republic, 2000
  - Provost's Award, Defense Language Institute, Czech
  - Academic Scholarship – Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies
  - 4-year Air Force ROTC Scholarship
  - Graduated with honors – Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies
  - Golden Key Honor Society
  - Robert E. Sadler USAF Honor Award

#### **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.
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.

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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

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[The nominee responded to the questions in Parts B–F 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–F are contained in the committee’s executive files.]

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**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.

  
DAGVIN R.M. ANDERSON  
Lieutenant General, USAF

This 28<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2025

[The nomination of Lieutenant General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, USAF was reported to the Senate by Chairman Wicker on July 29, 2025, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on July 31, 2025.]

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