

**Advance Questions for Lieutenant General John F. Kelly, USMC**  
**Nominee for Commander, United States Southern Command**

**Defense Reforms**

**The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DoD) Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the Combatant Commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the Military Departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the Combatant Commanders.**

**Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions? If so, what areas do you believe might be appropriate to address in these modifications?**

No, I do not see any need for modifications to the Goldwater Nichols Act. If confirmed, and if I see a need for modifications, I will not hesitate to provide appropriate recommendations.

**Duties**

**What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, U. S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)?**

The Commander, U.S. Southern Command, is responsible for: detecting and deterring attacks against the U.S. and its territories, possessions, and bases, and for employing appropriate force to defend the Nation, should deterrence fail; carrying out missions and tasks assigned by the President and Secretary of Defense, to include planning for and conducting military operations as directed; planning for and conducting security cooperation activities; assigning tasks to and directing coordination among subordinate commands to ensure unified action; and exercising force protection responsibilities and providing joint training to assigned military forces. For the conduct of normal operations, U.S. Southern Command's geographic area of responsibility includes 31 countries and 15 dependencies and areas of special sovereignty.

**What background and experience do you possess that you believe qualifies you to perform these duties?**

I am honored the President nominated me to be the Commander of U.S. Southern Command. Over the past three and a half decades, I have served in a variety of U.S. Marine Corps and joint assignments, in both operational and staff positions, as well as four combat tours – one in the Gulf War and three in Iraq. If confirmed, these experiences have prepared me well to meet the challenges and opportunities of commanding U.S. Southern Command.

I have served in several command positions where I acquired valuable planning and operational experience at both the tactical and operational levels: as Assistant Division Commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division; Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Forces (Forward), which deployed as Multinational Force West in Al Anbar and Ninewa provinces; and Commander, Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces North. In addition to this command experience, I served in various staff positions, to include Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, including two tours as Congressional liaison officer and legislative assistant to the Commandant; as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, with the Second Marine Division; and my first joint duty as Special Assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. These jobs allowed me to participate in joint, multinational, and interagency strategy and policy development, as well as affording me unique opportunities to engage with international partners across Europe, Russia and Northern and Central Asia.

My current position as Senior Military Advisor to the Secretary of Defense has given me the strategic experience and operational insight necessary to direct the operations of a geographic combatant command. I recently visited Colombia, Brazil, and Chile in support of a trip by the Secretary of Defense, and was impressed by the strong and growing security partnerships the U.S. has with these three countries. If confirmed, I will continue to deepen defense partnerships in the region, especially with key nations that can help share in the responsibility and costs of ensuring hemispheric security.

**Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the SOUTHCOM Commander?**

If confirmed, I will engage with key leaders and personnel within the Executive and Legislative branches of the U.S. government to enhance my knowledge of U.S. foreign policy and interests within U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility. I will also engage with military, defense, and governmental leaders of nations throughout the region to understand their perspectives. I will engage with regional experts in academia and think tanks in both the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean to understand the complexities of issues affecting the region. I will also engage with the other Combatant Commanders to better understand operational synchronization across our respective areas of responsibilities. Finally, if confirmed, I will build on my basic working knowledge of Spanish and familiarize myself with Portuguese in order to enhance my interactions with counterparts in the region.

**Relationships**

**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. Other sections of law and traditional practice, however, establish important relationships outside the chain of command. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, U.S. Southern Command, to the following:**

### **The Secretary of Defense**

The Commander performs his duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, and is responsible for accomplishing the military missions assigned by the President and the Secretary of Defense and for exercising command authority over the forces assigned by the Secretary of Defense.

### **The Deputy Secretary of Defense**

The Deputy Secretary of Defense performs duties delegated by the Secretary and performs the Secretary's duties in his absence. The Commander communicates regularly with the Deputy Secretary and provides information and support necessary for the Deputy Secretary to perform these duties.

### **The Under Secretaries of Defense**

The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Under Secretaries of Defense. The Commander does regularly exchange information, interacts with, and coordinates with the Under Secretaries on strategic and regional security issues.

### **The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

The Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President and Secretary of Defense and serves as the key communication link between the Combatant Commanders and the President. The Vice Chairman performs the duties prescribed by the Chairman, and performs the Chairman's duties in his absence or disability. To enable the Chairman and Vice Chairman to perform their respective roles and duties, the Commander of U.S. Southern Command routinely provides information to the Chairman and Vice Chairman on significant events and issues in the command's area of responsibility.

### **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America's Security Affairs**

The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America's Security Affairs, but regularly exchanges information and coordinates with the Assistant Secretary on issues related to homeland defense.

### **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities**

The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, but regularly exchanges information and coordinates with the Assistant Secretary on issues of mutual concern and interest.

## **The Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs**

The Service Secretaries are responsible for administration and support to the forces assigned to the combatant commands. The Service Chiefs are responsible for organizing, training, and equipping forces in their respective departments for assignment to the combatant commands. The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs, but regularly exchanges information and coordinates on issues of mutual concern and interest, working closely with them to understand service capabilities, discuss combatant command requirements, and effectively employ service capabilities to successfully conduct U.S. Southern Command's mission.

## **The other Combatant Commanders, particularly U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM)**

The Commander, U.S. Southern Command, maintains a close relationship with other Combatant Commanders, especially with the Commander of U.S. Northern Command. The Combatant Commanders are in frequent contact, coordinating on issues of mutual concern, and exchanging information. When directed or specified by the Secretary of Defense, the relationship between Combatant Commanders becomes formalized in order to plan and execute specific operational plans.

## **U. S. Chiefs of Mission within the U. S. Southern Command area of responsibility (AOR)**

The Commander does not have a formal relationship with the Chiefs of Mission. The U.S. Ambassador is responsible for directing and supervising all U.S. government activity in the host nation, with the exception of U.S. military activities under the direction and coordination of the Combatant Commander. Geographic Combatant Commanders routinely discuss issues of mutual interest and concern with the Chiefs of Mission in the command's area of responsibility. The Combatant Commanders negotiate force protection arrangements with the Chiefs of Mission as appropriate. If confirmed, I intend to maintain close coordination and contact with the Chiefs of Mission throughout the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility, and I will continue to host annual sub-regional conferences with the Chiefs of Mission to exchange perspectives and gain regional insights.

## **Major Challenges**

**If confirmed as the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, you will be responsible for all military operations in that region. These include operations supporting homeland defense and security, counter-narcotics efforts in source and transit countries, responses to natural disasters, detainee and interrogation operations at Guantanamo Bay, and the development of democratic values within the militaries of the region, among others. At the same time, the Department of Defense is currently considering how to absorb reductions in planned programs through FY2021 as a result of the discretionary spending caps enacted through the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25).**

**In your view, what are the major challenges and problems you would confront if confirmed as the next Commander of SOUTHCOM?**

I do not see any traditional military threat emanating from U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility. Instead, the region is characterized by several non-traditional security challenges, including illicit trafficking, transnational organized crime, narco-terrorism, and violent extremist organizations. Persistent vulnerability to natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, and volcanoes, as well as socio-economic stratification, poverty, and inequality, are enduring challenges. Additionally, the security of the Panama Canal is of critical importance to U.S., regional, and global economic security.

The illicit trafficking of cocaine, precursor chemicals, weapons, and bulk cash is a major security issue affecting almost every country in the region. As the principal actors involved in illicit trafficking, transnational criminal organizations' reach, spreading power, and growing influence are also a concern, particularly in Central America and Colombia. Criminal activities and illicit trafficking operations weaken legitimate governmental and financial institutions and erode rule of law through corruption, bribery, and intimidation. Rampant impunity, coupled with the activities of violent drug traffickers and youth gangs, is contributing to rising criminal violence in many countries.

Although weakened, groups like the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and Sendero Luminoso in Peru continue to fund their insurgencies through narcotics trafficking, terrorizing populations and undermining domestic and regional stability. Violent extremist organizations are also present in the region, primarily involved in proselytizing and fundraising for parent organizations; of constant concern are the potential for evolution in operational capacity and increased radicalization of these groups. Some supporters of international terrorist groups like Hizballah and Hamas raise funds through illicit activities in the region, such as trafficking in drugs and counterfeit goods, document fraud, and money laundering. The possible convergence of criminal and asymmetric threats bears watching to ensure the forward defense of the United States.

**If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges and problems?**

If confirmed, I will work with U.S. interagency and partner nations to enhance our collective ability to confront shared security challenges. Although resources across the U.S. government are declining, there has not been a corresponding reduction in security concerns, which underscores the need for collaboration and coordination. The complex and irregular challenges in the region cannot be solved by any one nation or U.S. federal agency; they require enhanced cooperation and enduring partnerships. I will continue to evaluate, assess and execute U.S. Southern Command's support to efforts by other U.S. agencies and nations in the region to counter transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking. I will continue to engage with militaries and security forces in the region; as appropriate, I will encourage bilateral and multilateral training, security cooperation activities, and exercises to build the capacities of

nations to address transnational threats such as illicit trafficking and humanitarian crises and disaster response. Additionally, I will continue to reach out to those militaries in countries that have distanced themselves from the United States, to demonstrate the enduring values and vision of the U.S. I will also deepen our engagement with key strategic partners such as Brazil, Chile, and Colombia to promote shared responsibility in regional and global leadership. I will continue to ensure the safe, humane, and legal treatment of detainees at JTF-Guantanamo, until otherwise directed. Finally, if confirmed, I will maintain focus on the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay to ensure all laws, regulations, and policies are followed, until otherwise directed.

### **Engagement Policy**

**One of the central pillars of our national security strategy has been military engagement as a means of building relationships around the world. Military-to-military contacts, joint combined exchange training exercises, Combatant Commander exercises, humanitarian assistance operations, and similar activities are used to achieve this goal.**

**If confirmed, would you support continued engagement activities of the U.S. military in the SOUTHCOM AOR? If yes, would you advocate for expanding U.S. military-to-military engagement? If not, why not?**

If confirmed, I would support continued engagement activities by the U.S. military in the U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility. The new Defense Strategic Guidance explicitly calls for agile, small footprint, innovative approaches to ensuring U.S. national security through annual exercises, rotational presence, and advisory roles. Furthermore, the Department of Defense is placing greater emphasis on security cooperation and strengthening security partnerships with key partners, to include the Americas. As an economy of force, U.S. Southern Command is representative of this new model called for by the Department of Defense, utilizing small-footprint engagements and an innovative, partnered approach to achieving strategic objectives in the region and advancing a common security vision of the future. If confirmed, I will continue to seek opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships and foster regional cooperation through agile engagement activities. I will also deepen U.S. engagement with key partners such as Colombia, Chile, and Brazil—countries that have demonstrated growing military capabilities and a commitment to work cooperatively in Central America, Africa, and across the world—to promote the shared costs and responsibilities associated with regional and global leadership.

**In your opinion, how do these activities in the SOUTHCOM AOR contribute to U.S. national security?**

As stated above, many of the challenges in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility are transnational in nature, transcending borders, boundaries, and domains. Security threats such as illicit trafficking and the spread of transnational organized crime

in the region cannot be solved by any one nation or agency; these threats require cooperation and willing, capable partners who can help the U.S. meet the security challenges of the future. Security cooperation in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility strengthens the capacities of partner nations to respond to domestic and regional threats, both individually and collectively, and also helps sustain a peaceful and cooperative international order.

In my opinion, working with and through regional partners helps ensure the forward defense of the United States by promoting capable regional militaries that share in the responsibility of ensuring hemispheric security and stability. This type of smart engagement will be even more important as we enter into an era of constrained resources; a cooperative, partnered approach not only helps ensure U.S. national security interests, it also helps contribute to U.S. economic security by promoting capable partners willing and able to help the U.S. confront the security challenges in the hemisphere.

### **Building Partner Capacity**

**In the past few years, Congress has provided DoD a number of temporary authorities to provide security assistance to partner nations, including the global train and equip authority (“Section 1206”) and Global Security Contingency Fund.**

**What is your understanding of the purpose of the Section 1206 global train and equip authority and Global Contingency Security Fund?**

I understand that Section 1206 authority enables Combatant Commanders, in coordination with U.S. Ambassadors in host nations in which 1206 activities are proposed, to build the host nation’s capacity by rapidly training and equipping their armed forces to conduct counter-terrorism or stability operations against urgent or emerging threats. As I understand it, the Global Contingency Security Fund is a new initiative established by the Departments of State and Defense and authorized by Congress to encourage joint, integrated planning by pooling resources. The fund can provide up to \$250 million to meet emergent challenges or opportunities in security and justice sector assistance to partner countries. The fund is designed to be a temporary assistance mechanism to address emerging U.S. national security priorities, and will not be used to supplement existing programs or for projects that lack funding due to earlier prioritization. As I understand it, detailed reporting structures and procedures for implementation are being developed to address the specifics of the Congressional legislation.

**In your view, what should be our strategic objectives in building the capacities of partner nations in the SOUTHCOM AOR?**

In my view, the strategic objectives of building partner capacity are to increase the capability of militaries in the region to address security challenges and threats within their own territories; to promote regional cooperation among and between partner nations to address shared challenges to

hemispheric stability and security; and to advance a common security vision of the future and promote a peaceful, cooperative international order.

### **Use of Military Forces for Civilian Law Enforcement**

**Throughout the Western Hemisphere, there is increased use of militaries to conduct policing and public security roles.**

**Putting aside issues of corruption and capabilities, what is your assessment of this trend? In your view, are these permanent shifts or temporary measures taken while the capabilities of police forces are improved?**

As I understand it, some countries—particularly in Central America, where law enforcement institutions face many challenges—are deploying their militaries in non-traditional policing and internal security roles to help address growing threats to citizen security and stem the rising tide of illicit trafficking and counter the spread of transnational organized crime. I believe these are and should be temporary measures that are taken while the capabilities of civilian police forces are improved and the judicial sector is strengthened, roles in which the Department of State is the lead U.S. federal agency.

**In your view, what are the benefits and risks of militaries taking on more public-security tasks?**

As I understand it, regional militaries provide support to law enforcement that are involved in efforts to counter illicit trafficking, stem the rising tide of violence related to gangs and violent drug traffickers, and counter the spread of transnational organized crime. In Central America, these challenges are threatening to overwhelm the capacities of some regional law enforcement. Regional militaries are helping fill a crucial capability gap, but this approach is unsustainable in the long term. As militaries take on more public-security tasks, there is a potential risk for increased human rights violations or increased corruption in the military ranks. I understand that U.S. Southern Command has a robust Human Rights Initiative program, which plays a critical role in ensuring that regional militaries involved in internal security missions retain respect for human rights and civilian authority. If confirmed, I will ensure continued engagement with regional militaries on the importance of human rights.

### **Defense Strategic Guidance**

**The Defense Strategic Guidance, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense”, announced by President Obama on January 5, 2012, includes, among other things, the intention of the Administration and the Pentagon to “rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region.” In his associated remarks, Secretary Panetta explained**

**that the “U.S. military will increase its institutional weight and focus on enhanced presence, power projection, and deterrence in Asia-Pacific.”**

**What do you anticipate will be the impact on the operations and activities of SOUTHCOM?**

If confirmed, I do not anticipate a negative impact to the command due to the increased emphasis on other regions. As the U.S. drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan continues, I believe there will be more U.S. military assets available to the geographic combatant commands, including ISR, maritime platforms, and other Service-specific capabilities. As I understand it, U.S. Southern Command faces limited and steadily decreasing availability of surface and air assets to conduct detection and monitoring and support interdiction operations. As currently allocated to U.S. Southern Command, limited assets permit the targeting of only 33 percent of actionable illicit trafficking events. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Services to advocate for available assets to enable U.S. Southern Command to more effectively meet its Title 10 requirements. The U.S. Army’s new plan to designate regionally aligned forces with each regional combatant command is a promising approach that would significantly enhance U.S. Southern Command’s ability to conduct its mission. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to identify emerging and available opportunities to enhance the operations and activities of U.S. Southern Command.

### **DoD Counter-narcotics Activities**

**DoD serves as the single lead agency for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime foreign shipments of drugs flowing toward the U.S. On an annual basis, DoD’s counter-narcotics (CN) program expends approximately \$1.5 billion to support the Department’s CN operations, including to build the capacity of U.S. Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, and certain foreign governments, and provide intelligence support on CN-related matters and a variety of other unique enabling capabilities. Much of this funding is directed towards the SOUTHCOM AOR.**

**In your view, what is the appropriate role of DoD – and by extension SOUTHCOM – in U.S. counterdrug efforts?**

I believe the Department’s current role is appropriate. U.S. Southern Command can provide unique support only through U.S. and partner nation drug law enforcement agencies. This ensures that the U.S. military does not find itself in a law enforcement role, yet maximizes the support to law enforcement agencies’ interdiction operations. As outlined in Title 10 of the U.S. Code, the Department of Defense is the lead federal agency in the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of narcotics destined for the United States. The Department of Defense also provides logistical and intelligence support to U.S. law enforcement end-game operations. U.S. Southern Command accomplishes this mission through its component Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF South). U.S. Southern Command also works to build the capacities of partner nation militaries to conduct successful detection, monitoring, and

interdiction operations in support of U.S. and partner nation law enforcement efforts. These efforts complement other U.S. counterdrug programs, such as the Department of State's eradication and alternative economic development programs and the Drug Enforcement Agency's arrest, extradition, and prosecution of illicit traffickers.

**How would you rate the effectiveness of U.S. and DoD counter-narcotics programs?**

As I understand it, Department of Defense counternarcotics programs are effective both operationally and in terms of return on investment. In 2010, JIATF South supported the interdiction of eight times the amount of cocaine than was interdicted on the U.S. southwest border, at a third of the cost and in an operating area that covers 42 million square miles. Challenges remain, however. Illicit traffickers are, by their very nature, highly adaptive, flexible, and resourceful. In response to U.S. counter-narcotics successes, they can quickly shift methods and employ new routes to evade detection. These criminal networks also have the resources to invest in technologically advanced conveyances such as semi and fully submersibles, which can transport up to 8 metric tons of cocaine and are extremely difficult to detect in open water. To counter this adaptive, networked threat, U.S. counternarcotics programs must be more flexible, innovative, and synchronized. Additionally, demand reduction efforts also play a critical part in the effectiveness of the overall program. If confirmed, I will regularly assess and evaluate ways to improve U.S. Southern Command's role and contributions to U.S. counternarcotics programs.

**In your view, what should be the role of the U.S. in countering the flow of narcotics to nations other than the U.S.?**

In my view, the U.S. should work to build the capacity of partner nations to counter illicit trafficking, both individually and collectively, through a whole-of-government approach in all domains and flow vectors.

**How would you recommend that the success of the SOUTHCOM's counter-narcotics programs be measured?**

No single metric can gauge the overall success of a counternarcotics program that encompasses diverse elements from both U.S. and international governments. As the lead federal agency for detection and monitoring, the Department of Defense's corresponding responsibility is the successful detection of illicit drug activity and, as appropriate, the support of U.S. law enforcement endgame operations. I understand that in 2011, U.S. Southern Command's JIATF South conducted successful counterdrug operations that resulted in the disruption of 117 metric tons of cocaine, denying illicit traffickers approximately \$3 billion in revenue. In addition, U.S. Southern Command provides ongoing training to partner nations' militaries and logistical support to partner nation and U.S. law enforcement agencies, which enhances overall counternarcotics capabilities. While these efforts are only a portion of a comprehensive whole-of-government program, they do demonstrate the positive impact U.S. Southern Command

is making on U.S. and regional counternarcotics efforts.

**The use of the Caribbean as a transshipment point for illicit drugs from South America to the United States has diminished over the past decade as drug traffickers have shifted primarily to using the Mexico-Central America corridor.**

**What is your understanding of the current status of drug transshipment through the Caribbean?**

As I understand it, there have been substantial decreases in illicit maritime and air tracks from South America into the Caribbean, most notably into the Dominican Republic, due to sustained interdiction successes by U.S. and partner nations and a corresponding shift in illicit trafficking tactics. However, its geographic proximity to the U.S. and vast stretches of porous maritime borders ensures that illicit trafficking in the Caribbean remains a persistent challenge. Given the demonstrated adaptability of illicit traffickers, I think it is important to continue strengthening the counter illicit trafficking capabilities of militaries in the Caribbean as a preventative measure to ensure traffickers do not shift back to the Caribbean as a primary transshipment zone.

### **National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime**

**Criminal networks are not only expanding their operations, but they are also diversifying their activities, resulting in a convergence of transnational threats that has evolved to become more complex, volatile, and destabilizing. The Director of National Intelligence recently described transnational organized crime as “an abiding threat to U.S. economic and national security interests,” and stated that “rising drug violence and corruption are undermining stability and the rule of law in some countries” in the Western Hemisphere. In July 2011, the President released his Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security. One of the priority action areas designated in the strategy is “enhancing Department of Defense support to U.S. law enforcement.”**

**What is your assessment of the threat to the United States posed by transnational organized crime?**

As I understand it, transnational organized crime has evolved into a volatile and potentially destabilizing threat to regional, international, and U.S. national security. The illicit activities and operations of this adaptive, networked threat undermine legitimate governmental and financial institutions, erode rule of law, weaken governance, and threaten citizen security through corruption, penetration of government institutions, and associated violence. Of primary concern for U.S. national security is the potential convergence of criminal and asymmetric threats. Groups in Colombia and Peru fund their ongoing insurgencies through illicit trafficking, while international terrorist groups like Hizballah and Hamas receive an unknown portion of funding

from supporters involved in drug trafficking and money laundering. Increasingly, these criminal networks have diversified their illicit enterprises—trafficking in drugs, precursor chemicals, weapons, humans, and bulk cash—and are increasingly involved in cybercrimes. The size, scope, and reach of transnational organized crime far surpasses the ability of any one law enforcement agency or nation to confront this threat alone.

**What is your understanding of the President’s strategy to combat transnational criminal organizations?**

As I understand it, the President’s strategy aims to build, balance, and integrate the tools of American power to combat transnational organized crime and related threats to U.S. national security to ensure the threat is degraded to a manageable public safety problem. The President’s strategy outlines five key objectives: protect Americans from harm, violence, and exploitation by transnational criminal networks; help partner nations strengthen governance and sever state-crime alliances; break the economic power of transnational criminal networks and protect the U.S. and other strategic markets; defeat those networks that pose the greatest threat to national security by targeting their infrastructure, depriving them of enabling means and preventing the criminal facilitation of terrorist activity; and build international consensus and cooperation to defeat transnational organized crime.

**What role does SOUTHCOM play in combating transnational organized crime and in training and equipping partner security forces that have been tasked with combating it?**

As I understand it, the U.S. Southern Command role is one of support. With the exception of fulfilling the statutory responsibility as the lead agency for detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs, the Department of Defense plays a supporting role in all counternarcotics and other related efforts. U.S. Southern Command supports efforts by lead U.S. agencies such as the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Justice to combat transnational organized crime in the region through detection and monitoring efforts; support to U.S. and partner nation interdiction operations; and by building the security capacities of vetted military units through counternarcotics training, equipping, and infrastructure support.

**What kind of additional support, if any, would you envision DOD – and SOUTHCOM in particular – providing to U.S. law enforcement?**

In my opinion, this particular challenge highlights the different but not incompatible roles between military and law enforcement, further underscoring the imperative of security partnerships. U.S. Southern Command provides ongoing support to U.S. law enforcement end-game interdiction operations, including intelligence and logistical support to DEA, FBI, and CBP, among others. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. law enforcement and the interagency to identify how we could enhance current levels of support, such as network analysis, information sharing, or lift capabilities, while maintaining the distinction between direct military support and support to law enforcement agencies.

**What gaps, if any, do you see in U.S. efforts to support partner government's efforts against these violent and increasingly sophisticated criminal organizations?**

As I understand it, this is a complex problem with no single, simple solution; combating an adaptive, networked threat such as transnational organized crime will require a strong unity of effort, both within the U.S. government and by partner nations. I understand the U.S. interagency, including the Department of Defense, is working diligently to better synchronize and coordinate efforts to combat transnational organized crime, particularly in the Western Hemisphere. In my opinion, effectively combating this threat will take concerted collaboration between the U.S. and partner nations. It will take sustained engagement with regional militaries—building the capacities of key vetted units, defense, and security institutions, and continuing human rights training—and a corresponding strengthening of civilian law enforcement institutions. It will take innovative approaches, creative public-private collaboration, and synchronization of efforts between numerous U.S. federal agencies—the Department of State, U.S. Northern Command, USAID, DEA, and DHS, as well as numerous partner nation institutions—to create a cooperative network that is stronger and more resilient than any criminal network.

**Central American Security Strategy**

**Security and defense officials from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras - the so-called Northern Triangle - recently reviewed progress made toward implementation of the Central American Security Strategy those countries approved in June 2011. The ministers of security and defense agreed to improve coordination mechanisms and intelligence sharing; continue with proposals for a tri-national police force; and that the armed forces should be involved in combating organized crime.**

**In your view, how effective is security coordination among El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras?**

As I understand it, security coordination among the Northern Tier countries is improving, thanks in part to the new multilateral security strategy developed by the Central American Integration System (SICA), supported by the Department of State through the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). I also understand that these three countries are providing important contributions in support of Operation MARTILLO, a U.S. and European-led operation currently underway in the Central America littorals. I understand that one of the indirect benefits of the operation has been increased interoperability and enhanced levels of coordination among participating partner nations. If confirmed, I would continue to build on these types of successes.

**Is SOUTHCOM supporting these efforts or State Department efforts such as the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)?**

Yes. As I understand it, U.S. Southern Command is supporting efforts by the Department of State through CARSI, primarily by supporting the disruption of movement of criminals and contraband to, within, and from Central America and by fostering enhanced levels of regional cooperation. I also understand that U.S. Southern Command, in conjunction with U.S. Northern Command, is supporting a Border Security Initiative between Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico to strengthen security cooperation among these three countries.

**What are the pros and cons of deploying the U.S. armed forces to combat organized crime?**

In my view, the U.S. military is clearly in a supporting role in this effort. Through training, exercises, and security cooperation activities, the U.S. military can help build the capacities of partner nation militaries to counter transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking by increasing domain awareness, strengthening interdiction capabilities, and promoting regional cooperation. The U.S. military can also directly support other U.S. agencies by providing operational, planning, and logistic support, as well as support to U.S. and partner nation law enforcement end-game operations through logistical assistance and information sharing.

**Is SOUTHCOM providing any assistance in policing activities to the militaries in the region?**

My understanding is that U.S. Southern Command provides security assistance to vetted military units in Central America with the aim of building the capacities of regional militaries in areas such as counternarcotics, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peace support operations. Some partner nation militaries that have been recipients of U.S. security assistance—such as counternarcotics training or subject matter expert exchanges—may be later deployed by the partner nation in a new mission, such as policing activity.

**Is SOUTHCOM engaged in any efforts to strengthen the region’s civilian security forces?**

My understanding is that the Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (DOS-INL) is the lead federal agency in this endeavor. In Central America, neither Panama nor Costa Rica has a standing military, and U.S. Southern Command does conduct training and security assistance with their respective defense and security forces. Engagements such as Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), which provides training to U.S. and host nation security forces, can provide indirect benefit to civilian law enforcement personnel, such as first responders, who may be participating in the exercise.

**Counter Threat Finance**

**A number of officials in DoD and the Intelligence Community have called for investing additional resources in identifying and tracking the flow of money associated with terrorist networks and illicit trafficking.**

**What are your views on the role of DoD in counter threat finance activities?**

In my view, in accordance with the Department of Defense Directive 5205.14 on counter threat finance policy, the Department of Defense should use its unique capabilities, such as network analysis, to support the interagency and work with partner nations to deny, disrupt, and degrade the ability of adversaries' ability to use global and illicit financial networks to negatively affect U.S. interests.

**What do you believe is the appropriate role, if any, of SOUTHCOM in supporting counter threat finance activities?**

As I understand it, the intertwined systems of illicit trafficking and money laundering in the region can benefit both illicit traffickers and international terrorists alike. In South America, funding for Hizballah is raised through licit avenues, such as charitable donations, and illicit means, including trafficking in drugs, counterfeit, and pirated goods and money laundering. Illicit proceeds from drug trafficking are increasingly entered into the global financial system, often under the use of legitimate trade. I understand that JIATF South has a counter threat finance cell that is supporting efforts by DEA and Treasury Department to better understand the complex financial flows of the global illicit economy and combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

**Mexico**

**Much of the illegal narcotics supply comes into Mexico from the SOUTHCOM AOR. While Mexico is in the U.S. Northern Command AOR, the rest of Latin America is in the SOUTHCOM AOR.**

**What is your vision of how SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM could work together in a fully coordinated effort with respect to Mexico and other security challenges?**

The continued violence in Mexico and the spread of Mexican criminal organizations into Central America is extremely concerning for both commands. I am told that the staffs of U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Northern Command collaborate regularly to address this and other security issues, especially along the Mexico-Guatemala-Belize border and in JIATF South's Joint Operating Area, which crosses both commands' areas of responsibility. I understand that there are liaison officers at both commands to ensure daily collaboration; that the staffs closely coordinate efforts of mutual interest on monthly teleconferences; and that senior command leaders hold quarterly staff talks. If confirmed, I will continue to support this coordination and seek additional ways to foster collaboration between the Mexican and Central American militaries to encourage cooperation on shared security challenges, including illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime.

## **Terrorism Threat from Caribbean and Central America**

**In your view, what is the extent of the current threat of terrorist extremists from the Caribbean and Central America?**

As I understand it, violent extremist organizations are present in the Caribbean and Central America, but their activities are generally focused on fundraising and proselytizing. While terrorism emanating from the region is rare, the potential presence of individuals with operational terrorism experience is a cause for concern. If confirmed, I will keep U.S. Southern Command vigilant to detect and defend against terrorist threats to the U.S. and our partners.

**How would you broadly characterize the terrorism threat – low, medium, or high?**

I understand that violent extremist organizations are active in the region, primarily focused on fundraising support and proselytizing. Hizballah supporters, primarily in South America, are involved in both legal and illegal businesses that help fund the parent organization; illegal activities include the illicit trafficking of drugs and counterfeit goods, document forgery, and money laundering. Additionally, as described above, homegrown radicalization is a constant concern, as is the potential presence of individuals with operational knowledge seeking to do harm to the U.S. or our interests. For that reason, I would characterize the threat as low to medium.

## **Interagency Collaboration**

**The collaboration between U.S. Special Operations Forces, 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 interagency collaboration on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere?**

In my opinion, military and civilian organizations learned to better leverage one another's strengths and capabilities over the past decade of military operations, despite institutional barriers to cooperation such as policy gaps, differences in resources and organizational culture, and inconsistent interagency participation in planning, training, and operations. Military and civilian organizations both recognized the need to improve integration and took deliberate steps to achieve greater unity of effort in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The military also gained a greater understanding of the capabilities of non-governmental organizations, especially in terms of understanding the population in the host country, and made a concerted effort to better coordinate stabilization efforts wherever possible with NGOs on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**How do you believe these efforts can be improved?**

I think the most important initial effort is to ensure the U.S. does not forget these lessons; these collaborative “best practices” need to be institutionalized in both the military and civilian agencies through ongoing training, education, exercises, as well as the development of policies to ensure greater involvement of the interagency in planning, training, and execution of military activities. The lack of mandated interagency coordination and framework was particularly challenging for the U.S. government as a whole.

**How can the lessons learned in recent years be captured in military doctrine and adopted as “best practices” for future contingency operations?**

The U.S. military is taking concrete steps to capture “lessons learned,” through formal studies, reviews, and analysis within and across each of the Services. Correctly identifying and documenting best practices employed in the past decade of war will enable the U.S. military to build a more responsive, versatile, and adaptive force. Once identified, documented, validated, and reviewed, these lessons will be incorporated into the continuous joint force development cycle and institutionalized in the professional military education of our joint forces.

**As DoD assistance to Colombia gradually declines, DoD aid to Mexico and Central America appears to be increasing. This increased assistance has supported State Department-led programs such as the Mérida Initiative and the Central American Regional Security Initiative.**

**What is your assessment of the current level of coordination between DoD and civilian agencies in SOUTHCOM’s AOR?**

As I understand it, the Department of Defense and civilian agencies coordinate very effectively, both in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility and within the command headquarters. There are thirty-three interagency representatives integrated into the U.S. Southern Command headquarters staff, allowing the command to capitalize on in-house expertise and align engagement activities with interagency frameworks, programs, and activities. Military Groups (MILGRPs), mostly co-located in U.S. Embassies, in the region work side-by-side with civilian counterparts from various U.S. agencies to ensure seamless execution of U.S. activities in the host nation. I understand there is routine discussion and coordination between senior leaders from U.S. Southern Command, USAID, and the Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Finally, I am told that the Department of State convenes a monthly executive committee to ensure interagency coordination of activities in support of CARSI, which has significantly helped synchronize and de-conflict Department of Defense and interagency programs.

**If confirmed, how would you work to ensure that DoD efforts in your AOR complement the efforts of civilian agencies?**

If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen this coordination. I will also conduct periodic assessments of U.S. Southern Command's activities to identify areas for improving synchronization of efforts between U.S. Southern Command and civilian agencies, while also engaging with counterparts at the Department of State and other interagency entities to identify new areas for collaboration or needed improvements.

## **Cuba**

### **What is your view of the need to review and, potentially, revise U. S. policies regarding Cuba?**

I think all U.S. policy, including our policy toward Cuba, should be periodically reviewed. If confirmed and so directed, I will be ready to implement any changes to U.S. policy.

### **What is your opinion about the need for, and the pros and cons of, military-to-military contact with Cuba?**

I think military-to-military engagement with any nation's armed forces, consistent with U.S. laws and policies, is valuable. As I understand it, under current Helms-Burton legislation, any significant U.S. military engagement with Cuba must be met with Cuban willingness to discuss defense policy; military subordination to democratically-elected leadership; and military disengagement from domestic economic policy. Presently, the only military-to-military contacts between the U.S. and Cuba are administrative "fence-line" meetings conducted by the Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, and his Cuban military counterparts. If confirmed, I will continue to assess the value of military engagement with Cuba, in accordance with U.S. law and policy.

**The United States and Cuba have cooperated on anti-drug efforts for over a decade, with a U.S. Coast Guard Drug Interdiction Specialist stationed at the U.S. Interest Section in Havana. Coast Guard officials have also engaged with Cuban officials regarding oil spill prevention, planning and response issues under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).**

### **How would you characterize the current state of U.S. counter-narcotics cooperation with Cuba?**

I understand that the U.S. and Cuba have maintained the same level of limited counterdrug cooperation over the past few years. The Cuban Border Guard (TGF) maintains an active presence along Cuba's coastal perimeter, primarily to deter illegal emigration, but also to conduct maritime counter-drug operations and coastal patrols. The U.S. Coast Guard shares tactical information related to narcotics trafficking and responds to information provided by Cuba on vessels suspected of smuggling drugs through Cuban territorial waters.

**What is your view regarding increased counter-narcotics cooperation with Cuba – should it be increased, and if so in what ways?**

I understand that Cuba continues to maintain that it wants to cooperate with the United States to combat drug trafficking, and that in 2011 Cuba presented the U.S. government with a draft bilateral agreement for counternarcotics cooperation that is still under review. If confirmed, I will continue to periodically assess the value of counter-narcotics cooperation with Cuba, in accordance with current U.S. law and policy.

**Venezuela**

**U. S. -Venezuelan relations have continued to be strained as President Chavez continues to propagate anti-American rhetoric, import increasing amounts of military armament, politicize the Venezuelan military forces, traffic illegal narcotics throughout the region, and export his brand of populism to the region.**

**What is your view of President Chavez's intentions in the region?**

I think President Chavez has sought to establish Venezuela as the leader of a broad anti-U.S. populist movement with like-minded countries in the region.

**What is your understanding of the current state of military-to-military relations between the U. S. and Venezuela?**

My understanding is that military-to-military relations with Venezuela are minimal, despite U.S. Southern Command's efforts to maintain interaction and dialogue with the Venezuelan military. U.S. Southern Command invites Venezuela military personnel to international and regional military forums, but no invitation has been accepted. JIATF-South maintains an open position for a Venezuelan liaison officer; however, for several years, Venezuela has chosen to leave the position unfilled. If confirmed, I will continue to seek engagement opportunities with the Venezuelan military, in accordance with U.S. policy.

**How would you assess Venezuelan relations with China, Cuba, Iran, and Russia vis-à-vis the national interests of the United States?**

I think Venezuela has strengthened its bilateral ties with Cuba, China, Iran, and Russia over the past few years. Venezuela's relationship with China is based primarily on economics, as Venezuela is a leading provider of petroleum exports to China. Cuba relies on Venezuela for subsidies, and President Chavez has a long-standing relationship with Fidel Castro. Iranian President Ahmadinejad has an especially strong personal relationship with President Chavez; the two leaders have signed numerous agreements in areas such as energy, finance, technology, and military cooperation. Venezuela's relationship with Russia is primarily centered on arms sales; last year, Venezuela became the largest importer of Russian arms in the world. If confirmed, I

will monitor developments in Venezuelan relations closely, particularly as they relate to U.S. national security interests.

**What is your assessment of the current role of Venezuela as a drug transit country?**

I understand that Venezuela is a major drug transit country for cocaine shipments by air, land, and sea. The Department of State has noted that Venezuela's porous borders, weak judicial system, inconsistent counternarcotics cooperation, and corrupt political environment have made Venezuela one of the preferred trafficking routes for cocaine departing South America, destined for the Caribbean, Central America, the United States, western Africa, and Europe.

**What is your understanding of the extent to which Venezuelan government or military forces are involved in the drug trade?**

My understanding is that there are widespread allegations of Venezuelan government and military involvement in the drug trade, and that last year the U.S. government designated four Venezuelan officials under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Act—identical to the 2008 designation of General Henry Rangel Silva, the new Minister of Defense—for supporting the FARC's narcotics and arms trafficking.

**What is your understanding of U.S.-Venezuelan cooperation on counter-narcotics efforts, including any cooperation between the U.S. and Venezuelan militaries?**

My understanding is that U.S.-Venezuelan cooperation on counter-narcotics efforts is limited and occurs only on a case-by-case basis, as a result of Venezuela's decision to reduce bilateral contact and formal cooperation with the United States. In 2005, the Venezuelan government ceased formal cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Administration, and Venezuelan law enforcement authorities have not participated in U.S. counternarcotics training programs since 2009. As I understand it, limited cooperation consists mainly of coordination of fugitive deportations from Venezuela to the U.S. and the U.S. Coast Guards' maritime interdiction activities.

**Brazil**

**In recent years, Brazil has stepped up its counter-narcotics efforts, increasing its border presence, and signing agreements with its neighbors to target trafficking in arms, drugs, and people. It has also been a major proponent of the South American Defense Council, which is designed to boost regional cooperation on security policies.**

**What is your understanding of Brazil's security role in South America and the broader region?**

As I understand it, Brazil is seeking to take a greater leadership role in South America and the

region as a whole, particularly on issues related to border, environmental, and cyber security. Brazil has deployed security forces to the Amazon to address illicit trafficking and deforestation, and is increasing its security cooperation with Africa. Last year, Brazil played an important role in facilitating improved trilateral counterdrug efforts with Bolivia and the U.S.

**How would you assess U.S.-Brazil security cooperation?**

As I understand it, the U.S. and Brazilian militaries cooperate on a number of issues, including counternarcotics, counterterrorism, disaster preparedness, humanitarian assistance, and aviation and port security. This year, the first-ever Defense Cooperation Dialogues were held between Brazil and the U.S. The Secretary of Defense has indicated that the U.S. and Brazilian military will deepen cooperation on cyber security, science, innovation, and technology transfer, logistics, communications, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, and cooperation in support of African nations.

**If confirmed, how might bilateral security coordination be improved?**

If confirmed, I will continue to build on the positive developments in U.S.-Brazil security cooperation, and will strengthen U.S. Southern Command's engagement program with Brazil, focusing on areas for potential cooperation such as cyber, space, and environmental security. I will also continue to encourage Brazil to take on greater role in addressing regional security issues to encourage shared responsibility and a peaceful, cooperative international order.

**Panama**

**Panama is a major transit country for illicit drugs from South America because of its geographic location and because of the Panama Canal and associated containerized seaports.**

**What is your assessment of U.S.-Panamanian cooperation on counter-narcotics efforts?**

My understanding is that Panama actively cooperates with the U.S. on counternarcotics efforts, to include supporting U.S. Coast Guard maritime operations; responding to interdiction cues from JIATF South; collaborating with the Drug Enforcement Administration; and actively participating in and contributing to Operation MARTILLO, a Western Hemisphere and European partner nation effort that aims to shift maritime illicit trafficking away from the Central American littorals.

**In your view, how vulnerable is the Panama Canal to attack by non-state actors, and what would be the consequences of an attack to U. S. national security interests?**

In my view, the Panama Canal is the most strategically important infrastructure in U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility and is critical to regional, hemispheric, and global security.

Freedom of movement in and strategic access through the Panama Canal is of utmost importance for U.S. national security interests; the U.S. is the destination or origin for approximately two-thirds of all the goods that pass through the canal. Approximately 5% of all global trade passes through the canal, a number that is expected to increase with the planned expansion. Any disruption of canal operations would create a significant impact on U.S., regional, and global economies.

As I understand it, the government of Panama has primary responsibility for the canal's defense, but it is in the interest of all nations in the Western Hemisphere to support the government of Panama, if so requested. Annually, U.S. Southern Command conducts PANAMAX, a joint and combined training exercise with 17 participating partner nations that is focused on the defense of the Panama Canal. In my opinion, this type of engagement promotes regional cooperation on a security issue of utmost importance to both the U.S. and countries in the hemisphere.

### **Forward Operating Locations**

**One of the elements of the regional counter-narcotics strategy is SOUTHCOM's establishment of forward operating locations (FOL) and cooperative security locations (CSL) in the source and transit zone.**

**In your view, what is the role that these FOLs and CSLs play in the Department's counter-narcotics efforts?**

My understanding is that the CSLs in Curaçao, Aruba, Antigua, and Comalapa, and the FOL—now called a Forward Operating Site (FOS)—in Soto Cano, Honduras, remain critical to the success of Department of Defense detection and monitoring mission and support to law enforcement interdiction operations. As forward locations, CSLs and FOS' are geographically closer to the source and transit zones of South and Central America and the Caribbean, which helps increase the effectiveness of detection and monitoring operations by significantly reducing aircraft transit time to and from the suspected transshipment areas.

**In your view, does current use continue to justify the costs of sustaining these locations?**

I think the cost of supporting the CSLs and FOS is justified. As mentioned earlier, JIATF South successfully disrupted 117 metric tons of cocaine, denying illicit traffickers approximately \$3 billion in revenue, at a third of the operating cost than operations along the U.S. southwest border. In particular, the CSL in Comalapa and the FOS in Soto Cano are significant operational enablers to the continued successes of Operation MARTILLO. Access to and use of these locations ensures that operating costs remain comparatively low; without such access, operating costs would be significantly higher due to increased flight hours and number of aircraft required to accomplish the detection and monitoring

mission.

**What assurances do we have from host nations that these locations will continue to be available to us, and under what conditions?**

Beyond the current agreements, there are no assurances from any of the host nations. My understanding is that our relationships with the Dutch government, the El Salvadoran government, and the Honduran government are strong, as these agreements are mutually beneficial to both the U.S. and host nation. If confirmed, I will support the continuation of these operating agreements.

### **Ecuador**

**The 2009 closing of the CSL at the air force base in Manta, Ecuador, and the ejection of the U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador in April of last year have stressed U.S.-Ecuadorian bilateral ties.**

**How would you characterize the current status of counter-narcotics cooperation between the United States and the government of Ecuador?**

Ecuador does receive U.S. counternarcotics assistance for training, equipping, and infrastructure support, as well as support to police operations and military operations on Ecuador's northern border with Colombia. As I understand it, Ecuador failed to sign an amendment to the bilateral letter of agreement for FY 2010 Department of State International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funding, which has resulted in a significant loss of counternarcotics resources, as well as a decline in maritime cooperation in 2011.

### **SOUTHCOM's Military Service Component Commands**

**Like all of the Combatant Commands, SOUTHCOM has military service component commands that implement the plans and policies of the Combatant Commander. Each of the component commands also has responsibility to the Services they represent. It seems SOUTHCOM, however, exercises limited command and control in directing specific activities and limited oversight of the activities of the component commands.**

**If confirmed, will you review the command and control relationship?**

It is my understanding that U.S. Southern Command, like all geographic combatant commands, exercises effective direction of component command activities and conducts rigorous oversight of planned activities, to include an annual review and validation to ensure alignment of strategic

objectives and operational activities with the command's theater campaign plan. If confirmed, and as appropriate, I will review all command and control relationships to ensure continued mission effectiveness.

**SOUTHCOM does not have any assigned forces and – as a result – is required to compete for forces within the global request for forces process. Given the Department's focus on the greater Middle East and Asia-Pacific, do you believe the SOUTHCOM Commander will be able to secure the necessary personnel to accomplish its partnering and engagement mission within its AOR? If not, how would you assess the risk to U.S. strategic interests in the region?**

As I understand it, U.S. Southern Command does have minimal assigned forces, and as such relies heavily on the force allocation process. If confirmed, I will work diligently to ensure U.S. Southern Command has the necessary personnel to accomplish its mission. The new regional alignment proposed by the U.S. Army is a promising opportunity that will be an enormous benefit to all the geographical combatant commands. I recognize that adjustments will be required as the U.S. enters into an era of constrained resources. In an economy of force theater, U.S. Southern Command has long relied on innovative, small footprint approaches to accomplish its mission, which is an approach the Department of Defense has explicitly endorsed in its new Strategic Guidance. In my opinion, a foundation of partnership and routine engagement activities can avoid exponentially larger expenditures in the future; building, maintaining, and sustaining capable security partners is a wise investment to hedge against future security challenges, support a peaceful international order, and promote collective responsibility for shared threats.

## Colombia

**Plan Colombia has enabled the Colombian government to make significant gains against the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and other paramilitary forces in Colombia, as well as enabled the government to secure many previously ungoverned areas. Since fiscal year 2000, the United States has provided more than \$7 billion to support Colombia's efforts to counter the threat of transnational criminal organizations and various terrorist groups.**

**What are your views regarding the current situation in Colombia focusing upon: (1) the current military and political situation in Colombia; (2) the ability of the Colombian military to control its territory; and (3) ongoing DoD programs? If confirmed, what component of SOUTHCOM's activities in Colombia is of most importance to the United States?**

In my opinion, Colombia has made enormous progress in its fight against narco-terrorists. I think it is important to note that Department of Defense support to Colombia has been an enabler, not a provider, of Colombian security; Colombian political will and resources have been

the key deciding factors in Colombia's successes; on average, U.S. assistance to Colombia has accounted for a mere 7% of the overall contributions made by Colombia to ensuring its internal security.

As I understand it, once on the brink of becoming a failed state, Colombia has effectively prosecuted its war against the FARC and other illegally armed groups and successfully applied a whole-of-government approach to strengthening rule of law, the judiciary, and social programs. FARC numbers have been significantly reduced; paramilitaries have disbanded; terrorist attacks have been reduced by 71%; homicides have been reduced by 45%, kidnappings by 90%, and cocaine production by 61%; and the government of Colombia has established a presence in its 1,098 municipalities. Colombia has emerged as a strong, capable regional leader, sharing its security expertise and building the capacities of countries in Central America and Mexico.

President Santos continues to build on President Uribe's successes, but has also recognized that there is still progress to be made in consolidating these gains into permanent stabilization in every part of the country. Though weakened, the FARC still poses a threat to citizen security, primarily through its continued reliance on drug trafficking as a major source of income, as well as more recent efforts to branch into other illicit activities such as illegal gold mining, oil pipeline attacks, kidnapping, and extortion. The "criminal bands" (BACRIM), which are comprised of remnants of disbanded paramilitary groups now involved in drug trafficking, pose an emerging and evolving threat. Colombia recently unveiled a new counterinsurgency strategy that focuses on countering the FARC in 10 strategic areas of intersection between insurgent operations and the state's economic interests.

If confirmed, I will continue to sustain support to Colombia, which has proven to be one of our most important partners in the region in terms of organic capability and contributions to regional security efforts. U.S. Southern Command programs that build the counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and counterinsurgency capabilities of the Colombian military will continue to be of importance as Colombia focuses its campaign to defeat the FARC and permanently sustain stabilization successes.

**In your view, is the Colombian government capable of sustaining the last decade's gains during this economic downturn and the scheduled decline in U.S. security assistance?**

Yes. Colombia has demonstrated enormous and sustained political will through a whole of government approach, and continues to do so with its shift to a new counterinsurgency strategy. Although U.S. security assistance has contributed to Colombia's successes, Colombia has spent more than \$100 billion of its own funds to date on security efforts. While the current global economic downturn may have an impact, I believe Colombia is not only capable of, but also committed to, sustaining the gains they have made. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee to continue U.S. support to Colombia.

**In light of budget conditions, do you believe continued U.S. security assistance to Colombia at the current levels is sustainable?**

As I understand it, U.S. security assistance has declined significantly over the past few years as Colombia has taken a greater role in its internal security. Current U.S. assistance is approximately 4% of the total amount Colombia itself spends. I believe U.S. security assistance to Colombia remains extremely important in order to ensure Colombia sustains the enormous progress it has made over the past decade. More so than any partner in the region, Colombia demonstrates the enormous return on investment that U.S. efforts to build partner capacity can yield. If confirmed, I will encourage Colombia to continue taking a greater role in regional security efforts and help build the capabilities of other nations facing similar challenges.

**When the U. S. began providing increased support through Plan Colombia for efforts to significantly reduce or eliminate illegal narcotics trafficking organizations operating in their country, many expressed concern about the Colombian military's human rights record.**

**What is your assessment of the record of the Colombian military with regard to respect for human rights over the past three years?**

I am told that the Colombian military is now one of the most respected institutions in Colombia and continues to make great strides to improve its human rights record. The Ministry of Defense established a comprehensive human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) program, and continues to implement measures on human rights developed in the aftermath of the 2008 "false positives" scandal. The Ministry has also begun to implement an agreement with the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR) to monitor seven of those measures; this type of monitoring arrangement is the first and only one ever reached between UNHCHR and a military, an important testament to Colombia's commitment to protecting human rights. I understand that Colombian military personnel are required to receive mandatory human rights training at every stage of their military careers. The Colombian military continues to partner with civil society groups, universities, and international organizations to strengthen their human rights programs. These programs have been instrumental in reducing the number of human rights complaints against the Colombian military. Colombia continues to aggressively address human rights infractions and actively prosecutes and convicts military members accused of extrajudicial killings. Colombian officers are also sharing their human rights expertise with other nations, including Honduras, Dominican Republic, Panama, and El Salvador.

**What remains to be done and how would you approach the issue of respect for human rights in the Colombian military?**

If confirmed, I will maintain the U.S. Southern Command's Human Rights Initiative and ensure that respect for human rights is a key element of the U.S. military's interaction with Colombia.

**Over the past four years, U.S. assistance to Plan Colombia and its follow on plans has gradually declined as several counter-narcotics and aviation programs have been turned over to Colombian control in a process of nationalization.**

**What are the remaining U.S. supported programs that will need to be continued to “lock in” the progress that has been made?**

As described above, the Human Rights Initiative remains a critical component of support to Colombia. Additionally, counternarcotics and counterterrorism training will continue to play important roles in the U.S. whole-of-government approach to Colombia, as will appropriate levels of support through equipment, FMS, FMF, alternative development, community, and rule of law programs. Specifically, U.S. counternarcotics support ensures that we have a capable and willing partner in Colombia, which remains single largest exporter of cocaine to the U.S.

**In your assessment, what is the appropriate role of U.S. engagement in Colombia’s security situation in the near term, the medium term, and the long term?**

I believe it is important to continue U.S. engagement with Colombia. Sustained engagement with Colombia has yielded a strong, capable partner that is providing significant contributions to regional security. As Colombia continues to make progress in its internal security situation, there will be other avenues of engagement on issues of mutual concern, including cyber defense and energy security. Earlier this year, Colombia and the U.S. signed an Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation. Under this plan, Colombia and the US will develop complementary security assistance programs and operational efforts to support hemispheric and international partner nations afflicted by effects of transnational organized crime. If confirmed, I will continue to support Colombia’s progress and deepen our existing partnership, seeking new opportunities to collaborate issues of mutual interest.

**Together Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia produce nearly all of the world’s supply of cocaine. In recent years, progress in controlling cocaine production in Colombia seems to be resulting in an increase in cocaine production in Peru and Bolivia.**

**If confirmed, what would be your plan to prevent further cocaine production increases in Peru and Bolivia without losing the progress made in Colombia?**

My understanding is that U.S. agencies such as the Department of State (Bureau of International Law Enforcement), USAID, and the DEA are the lead U.S. agencies in combating cocaine production, including eradication efforts and alternative development programs. If confirmed, I would sustain support to the Colombian military, strengthen current engagement initiatives with Peru, and continue outreach to the Bolivian military on the issue of counternarcotics.

**The Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) which aligns U.S. assistance with Colombia’s National Consolidation Plan accounts for an increasing portion of SOUTHCOM-supported programs in Colombia.**

**What is your understanding of SOUTHCOM’s role under the CSDI?**

My understanding is under CSDI, U.S. Southern Command continues to coordinate its support

for activities with the Department of State, USAID, DEA, and other U.S. federal agencies to focus its programs in the geographic areas identified by the Government of Colombia as locations in which Colombian agencies will concentrate military, counternarcotics, law enforcement, and social and economic development efforts to establish a continuing government presence.

**What are the biggest challenges to SOUTHCOM in complementing Colombia's whole-of-government approach to increasing state presence in remote, but strategically important rural areas?**

The Colombian government has achieved great success with its whole-of-government approach, but logistical and mobility challenges of projecting power in Colombia's largely uninhabited areas have made extended deployments and a permanent stabilizing presence extremely taxing for the Colombian military and other government agencies. As with any whole-of-government approach, coordination, synchronization, and de-confliction of efforts are a constant challenge, but not an insurmountable one. If confirmed, I will conduct routine assessments of U.S. Southern Command's support to both Colombia and the U.S. whole-of-government approaches to identify areas of improvement or capability gaps.

**In 2010, the Colombian Constitutional Court issued a decision striking down a defense agreement with the United States that would have allowed U.S. personnel to use several Colombian military facilities for ten years.**

**What is your understand of the impact of the court decision on U.S. military support activities in Colombia?**

My understanding is that Colombian Constitutional Court ruled the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) invalid without ratification by the Colombian legislature. To date, the Government of Colombia has not sent the DCA to the legislature for consideration.

### **Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA) Countries**

**Several militaries of the member countries of the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA), including Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and Nicaragua, have received U.S. assistance for decades.**

**In general, how would you characterize the current state of military-to-military relations between the United States and the ALBA countries that have been receiving U.S. assistance?**

In general, I would characterize U.S. military-to-military relations with the ALBA countries as limited. My understanding is that this is due solely to the preferences and decisions of the governments of these respective countries, and that the U.S. military continues positive outreach

efforts. As discussed previously, the U.S. does not have active military-to-military relations with the Venezuelan military. As I understand it, military-to-military engagement with Bolivia is generally limited by the Bolivian government, while the Ecuadoran and Nicaraguan militaries have demonstrated a greater willingness to engage with the U.S. military on issues of mutual concern and interest.

### **Central America and Mexico**

**During a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in 2011, General Douglas Fraser – the Commander of SOUTHCOM – and Admiral Winnefeld – the former Commander of U.S. Northern Command – discussed the increasingly dangerous region between Colombia and Mexico, and the devastating impact transnational criminal organizations are having on the people and security in this region. The U.S. has increased its assistance in this region, but – to date – the Department of Defense has had only a small role.**

**What is your assessment of the threats posed by transnational criminal organizations in this region?**

My understanding is that in recent years due to sustained pressure and successes in Colombia and Mexico, Mexican-based transnational organizations—primarily the Sinaloa Cartel and Los Zetas—have expanded and consolidated control over key illicit trafficking routes in Central America. These groups engage in a range of illicit activity, trafficking in precursor chemicals from India, China, and Bangladesh; commercial weapons from the United States; people, including the forced trafficking of humans and the smuggling of migrants and special interest aliens; and drug proceeds in the form of bulk cash from the United States. These Mexican-based criminal organizations, as well as Central American drug trafficking organizations, ensure freedom of movement through corruption of law enforcement officials, bribery of border security agents, penetration of government institutions, laundering of money into the global financial system, and intimidation of judges and prosecutors. Violent criminal organizations, coupled with the isthmus' youth gang problem and weak rule of law, are contributing to rising homicide rates; Central America is now one of the most violent regions in the world.

**What is your understanding and assessment of DoD's current activities in Mexico and Central America?**

My understanding is that U.S. Northern Command, in support of the Merida Initiative, has a strong cooperative relationship with the Mexican military and provides support to U.S. interagency partners operating in its area of responsibility, while U.S. Southern Command's activities in Central America are executed in support of the CARSI, and focus on building the capacity of regional militaries to counter illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime. As I understand it, U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command work to ensure seamless cooperation between the two command's areas of responsibilities, and foster enhanced levels of

cooperation between Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala along their shared borders.

**What changes, if any, would you recommend to DoD's current activities in this region?**

If confirmed, I will conduct continuous assessments of current Department of Defense activities to identify areas for increased efficiency and efficacy, as well as identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration with other U.S. agencies.

**If DoD expands its activities in Central America, where – in your view – can U.S. assistance have the greatest impact?**

In my opinion, U.S. efforts to build the capacity of regional militaries and the strengthen the capacities of defense and security institutions are important components of overall whole-of-government efforts, which help strengthen government institutions' accountability and transparency; foster resilient communities; combat crime; and support economic and social development, all of which are critical issues for many countries in Central America.

**What changes, if any, would you recommend to the Department's support to civilian agencies operating in the region?**

I believe it is important to coordinate activities and enhance Department of Defense support to civilian agencies, especially in areas of identified capability gaps, such as logistics support to U.S. law enforcement. If confirmed, I will conduct continuous assessments of current Department of Defense support and identify areas for improvement and opportunities for increased collaboration.

**Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation**

**The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), which replaced the School of the Americas in 2001, has the mission of contributing to theater cooperation activities through the education and training of students in the Western Hemisphere from Canada to Chile.**

**What is the relationship between SOUTHCOM and WHINSEC?**

WHINSEC does not fall under U.S. Southern Command's command authority, but it is one of many valuable tools available to strengthen military-to-military relations in the region. I also understand the Commander of U.S. Southern Command is a member of WHINSEC's Board of Visitors. If confirmed, I look forward to joining this distinguished group.

**In your view, does WHINSEC promote the national security interests of the United States in the Western Hemisphere?**

WHINSEC provides important training and education to regional military personnel, promotes a shared vision of regional cooperation and a peaceful international order, and helps build relationships with future military leaders, all of which enhances security cooperation and advances U.S. security interests in the Western Hemisphere. In my view, the Congress was correct when it wrote in section 1257 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 that WHINSEC “is an invaluable education and training facility which the Department of Defense should continue to utilize in order to help foster a spirit of partnership and interoperability among the United States military and the militaries of participating nations.” If confirmed, I will continue U.S. Southern Command’s support of WHINSEC.

**In your view, what more – if anything – does WHINSEC need to do to emphasize human rights in its curriculum?**

From what I understand, WHINSEC has a very comprehensive human rights curriculum in place and intersperses human rights instruction throughout its program. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor and assess the human rights curriculum and will stress the value of WHINSEC attendance for personnel from regional militaries and security forces.

**Will you attend the regularly scheduled WHINSEC Board of Visitors meetings?**

If confirmed, I will attend the regularly scheduled Board of Visitors meetings.

### **Iranian Influence in Latin America**

**There has been increased concern in recent years about Iran’s growing interest in Latin America, particularly its relations with Venezuela, which in turn has played a key role in Iran’s expanding relations with Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. There has been disagreement, however, over the extent and significance of Iran’s relations with the region. Nevertheless, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s January 2012 trip to Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Ecuador again increased concerns by some about Iran’s efforts to forge ties with the region. Outgoing SOUTHCOM Commander Douglas Fraser maintained in congressional testimony last year that the focus of Iran in the region primarily has been diplomatic and commercial, and that he has not seen an increase in Iran’s military presence in the region.**

**What is your assessment of Iran’s military presence in the region?**

My understanding is that Iran’s overtures to the region are primarily undertaken to circumvent international sanctions and, with like-minded nations, attempt to undermine U.S. influence in the region. I do not see evidence of an increase in uniformed Iranian military presence in the region.

**What is the extent of Iran’s military-to-military engagement with Latin American countries?**

As mentioned above, Iran's engagement strategy has primarily been centered on diplomatic and economic endeavors with sympathetic countries like Venezuela and Bolivia. Iran has increased its high-level engagements, but as I understand it, has not significantly increased its military-to-military engagements. Iran continues to pursue arms deals with Latin America but has made little concrete progress.

**One of the concerns about Iran's increased focus on the region is its support for Hezbollah, which along with Iran, was alleged to be responsible for two bombings in Argentina in the early 1990s.**

**What concerns do you have about Hezbollah's current activities in the hemisphere?**

As I understand it, Lebanese Shi'a Diaspora communities in the AOR transmit tens of millions of dollars in financial support to family members in Lebanon; an unknown portion of this money helps cover Lebanese Hizballah's operating costs. Supporters and sympathizers in the region are focused on licit and illicit fundraising, although proselytizing, recruitment and some elements of radicalization exist as well. I understand that illicit activities and trade-based money laundering by supporters and sympathizers are concentrated primarily in areas like the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina, and locations like the Colon Free Trade Zone in Panama. If confirmed, I will keep U.S. Southern Command vigilant to detect and defend against terrorist threats to the U.S. and to our partners.

**How significant is Hezbollah's involvement in drug trafficking in the region?**

As mentioned previously, my understanding is that some supporters of Hizballah in the region are involved in raising money for the parent organization via both legal and illegal means, including drug trafficking. As the 2011 case of Ayman Joumaa demonstrates, drug trafficking, financial support to Hizballah, and money laundering in the region are overlapping and interconnected threats.

**How would you compare the financial support that Hezbollah derives from its activities in Latin America to the support that it receives from Iran?**

My understanding is that Hizballah derives an unknown portion of financial support from the region.

### **Global Peace Operation Initiative**

**In 2005, the U.S. along with our partners in the G-8 launched the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) to train peacekeepers. This program is run by the Department of State. DoD has provided varying degrees of support since the program's inception. A number of national militaries in the SOUTHCOM AOR have benefitted from this program and have provided peacekeeping troops to multilateral peacekeeping operations around the globe.**

**What is your understanding of the GPOI program?**

My understanding is that the Global Peace Operations Initiative is a security assistance program designed to build the capacity of participating partners to conduct United Nations and regional peace support operations. GPOI is a Department of State program that is supported by U.S. Southern Command through training and exercises to build the peacekeeping capacity of 11 participating partners in the AOR.

**Would you support or oppose SOUTHCOM's continued involvement in the program?**

I will support U.S. Southern Command's continued involvement in this program, which promotes shared responsibility and costs associated with global stability and peacekeeping operations. I understand that militaries in the region have contributed approximately 8,000 personnel to peace support and stability operations throughout the world, including critical and ongoing support to the U.N. Missions in Haiti, Lebanon, and the Sudan. In my opinion, the GPOI is another valuable tool to promote partnerships, collective responses, and a peaceful international order.

**Special Operations Forces**

**As forces have been reduced in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is an expectation that additional special operations forces may be available for missions in other combatant commands, including SOUTHCOM, which have had only a small presence of such forces in recent years.**

**What special operations capabilities are in highest demand by SOUTHCOM?**

It is my understanding that U.S. Southern Command relies heavily on Special Operations Forces' ability to engage with partner nation security forces for the development of tactical skills, the integration of intelligence, operations and command and control, and the application of Civil Military and Military Information Support Operations. If confirmed, and as more forces become available, I would use them to conduct persistent engagement with our critical partners to develop these important capabilities.

**Which countries in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility do you believe have the greatest need for increased engagement with U.S. Special Operations Forces?**

I believe that Colombia and Peru would benefit from increased engagement with U.S. Special Operations Forces, as both countries continue to work to defeat the narco-terrorist threats within their borders. If confirmed, I would ensure continued support to these important partners, and also identify Special Operations Forces engagement opportunities with vetted units in Belize,

Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador to support these countries' efforts to counter transnational organized crime.

### **Special Operations Personnel in Embassies**

**U.S. Special Operations Command deploys personnel to work with country teams in a number of priority countries where the United States is not engaged in direct action operations, but rather trying to stop the spread of violent extremism. Their mission is to support the priorities of the Ambassador and the Geographic Combatant Commander's theater campaign plan against terrorist networks. At times, Ambassadors have complained that they have not been adequately informed of activities by special operations forces in their country.**

**If confirmed, what do you intend to do to make sure the goals of special operations personnel deployed to these countries are aligned closely with those of the Ambassadors they are working with?**

If confirmed as Geographic Combatant Commander, U.S. Southern Command, I would be the final authority on which Department of Defense forces deploy to the area of responsibility, with the exception of any deployments directed specifically by the Secretary of Defense and the President.

If confirmed, and prior to deploying any forces, I and my staff would provide planning direction through the Theater Campaign Plan. This direction is used by military groups embedded within country teams to develop Country Cooperation Plans, which directly support and are aligned with Ambassadors' Mission Strategic Resource Plans. Prior to and during execution of activities, my staff would review all deployments, including that of Special Operation Forces, to ensure they meet requirements, which have been vetted by the Ambassador through the military groups within country teams. I and my staff would also receive weekly activity updates from both the Military Groups and the Theater Special Operations Component Commander. Finally, both I, the Civilian Deputy to the Commander, and U.S. Southern Command staff would personally reach out to Ambassadors in the region to ensure our activities remain aligned with their objectives.

### **Special Operations Authorities**

**Some have advocated providing the Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command with new authorities designed to, among other things, better resource the Theater Special Operations Commands and provide special operations forces with additional flexibility and funding to build the capacity of partner nation security forces.**

**Do you believe additional special operations-specific authorities are appropriate? If so, what types of authorities would you suggest?**

In my opinion, absent a contingency, there are inherent limitations to building partner capacity that require additional effort to ensure the U.S. military provides flexible and value-added assistance. During peacetime phase 0 operations, Special Operations Forces could make a more meaningful contribution if current authorities were expanded to allow Special Operations Forces to advise, assist, train and equip partner nations, as well as develop infrastructure, in support of partner nation efforts to counter transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking. With respect to better resourcing of the TSOCs, if confirmed, I would welcome any initiatives that provide GCCs with a more robust ability to support their theater campaign plans.

### **Section 1208 Operations**

**Section 1208 of the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (Public Law 108-375), as amended by subsequent legislation, 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. Special Operations Forces to combat terrorism.**

#### **What is your assessment of this authority?**

I think this authority is sufficient for its intended purposes. However, I believe it should be complemented by authorities that facilitate support to the development of partner nation capabilities' on a long-term basis, as they combat national and regional irregular threats to stability, which may ultimately affect the United States.

### **Defense Cooperation**

**Governments in the region are increasingly cooperating in forums that do not include the United States. In terms of defense cooperation, the most advanced forum is the South American Defense Council, part of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).**

#### **How does SOUTHCOM view this and other defense-cooperation bodies to which the United States is not invited?**

From my understanding, U.S. Southern Command views efforts by regional militaries to enhance defense cooperation as a positive development, and welcomes all efforts by South American militaries to improve security and stability throughout the region. If confirmed, I will support the Department of State's efforts to engage with these multilateral forums on issues of mutual interest.

## **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response in U.S. Southern Command**

**The Department of Defense has developed comprehensive policies and procedures to improve the prevention of and response to incidents of sexual assault. However, new allegations of sexual assault continue to be reported, and many question the adequacy of the chain of command's response to these allegations.**

**A frequent complaint of victims of sexual assault and their advocates is that military commanders frequently fail to hold assailants accountable for their criminal acts. Some in Congress have proposed that commanders' authority to address sexual assaults be removed and given to an independent entity.**

### **What is your view of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program in U.S. Southern Command?**

I am told that U.S. Southern Command has a dedicated Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Coordinator who is trained to respond to allegations of sexual assault and ensure victim advocacy. The SHARP coordinator is extremely knowledgeable of reporting requirements and victims' rights regarding medical care, investigation, legal assistance and restricted reporting, and maintains direct personal contact with all military assistance providers.

### **What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources in U.S. Southern Command to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault?**

I am told that U.S. Southern Command provides its personnel all that is necessary to investigate and respond to sexual assault allegations. As the headquarters executive agency, the Department of the Army has instituted a comprehensive Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program training support package to provide training to all military personnel.

### **What is your view of the proposal to give the authority to an independent agency, not part of the chain of command, to address allegations of sexual assault, including the authority to hold assailants accountable for criminal acts?**

In my opinion, commands should be aware of all allegations of Sexual Assault on their respective installations to ensure the safety of the victim and others stationed there. It is also important to keep the tools of good order and discipline in the hands of the Commander, a cornerstone of military discipline. The chain of command reinforces the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program's commitment to eliminate incidents of sexual assault through a comprehensive policy that centers on awareness and prevention, training and education, victim advocacy, response, reporting, and accountability. The Department of Defense has developed effective policies that promote sensitive care and confidential reporting for victims of sexual assault and accountability for those who commit these crimes.

**What is your understanding of the adequacy of the resources and programs in place in U.S. Southern Command to offer victims of sexual assault the medical, psychological, and legal help that they need?**

As described above, I understand that U.S. Southern Command has a robust Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program in place that ensures victims receive all the help and legal, medical, and psychological support they need. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. Southern Command's zero tolerance policy, actively support its programs, and regularly monitor and assess its operations and resources.

**Do you consider the current sexual assault policies and procedures, particularly those on confidential reporting, to be effective?**

Yes. I am told that the policies and procedures, outlined above, are effective.

**What is your view of steps taken to prevent sexual assaults in U.S. Southern Command?**

The command has a Zero Tolerance Policy and ensures all incidents are handled using the exact procedures outlined in Department of Defense directives and policy, which promote sensitive care, confidential reporting for victims of sexual assault, and 100% accountability for those who commit these crimes.

**What are the unique challenges relating to accountability for pursuing allegations of sexual assaults within deployed forces in a joint environment, and how would you, if confirmed, ensure such accountability?**

Deployed joint forces confront command and control issues inherent to the differences between Services and variable durations of missions. However, sexual assault is a violation of the UCMJ and will be investigated accordingly under all applicable regulations and policies regardless of a deployed environment and the services of those involved. If confirmed, I will ensure that such challenges do not prevent commanders in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility from holding those accountable under the law. I am aware of recommended improvements proposed by U.S. Southern Command to address command and control issues stemming from the allegations of misconduct in Cartagena, Colombia. If confirmed, I will take steps to enact these recommendations, if so directed.

**Mental Health of Servicemembers and Stress on the Force**

**The Committee is concerned about the stress on military personnel resulting from lengthy and repeated deployments and their access to mental health care to deal with this increased stress. The increased suicide rates in each of the services are clear reminders that servicemembers, particularly those who have been deployed multiple times, are under tremendous stress and need access to mental health care.**

**In your view, are there sufficient mental health assets embedded within U.S. Southern Command to address the mental health needs of the military personnel, particularly for those who have experienced multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as military families?**

As I understand it, the majority of forces that deploy within the U.S. Southern Command region rely on their parent service for medical care during post-deployment, including the very important post-deployment monitoring of mental health. During deployment, I am told that the U.S. Southern Command Surgeon closely monitors all command mental health issues and ensures that the command provides immediate support, if necessary. The approximately 1500 personnel assigned to the U.S. Southern Command Headquarters have their medical needs met through a small U.S. Army Health Clinic located at the Headquarters. I have been told that a mental health professional is assigned to this clinic and that patients may also be referred to the local VA hospital, clinics, and civilian providers to address their mental health needs. I understand that family members and retirees are supported by the Garrison Employee Assistance Program, as well as Tricare.

**If confirmed, what actions will you take to address the mental health needs of military personnel and their families in U.S. Southern Command?**

If confirmed, I will continue to place emphasis on ensuring that military personnel and their families have adequate access to mental health services, including programs on suicide prevention and substance abuse prevention and treatment. I will also work to improve the coordination between U.S. Southern Command's military doctors and local civilian providers to ensure that we understand and address the mental health needs of our personnel.

**Do you have any views on how to reduce the stigma, real or perceived, for seeking mental health care?**

In my opinion, advocacy and public support by senior leadership is important to help reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health care. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to ensure that all assigned military personnel and their families are aware of the full range of support services available at U.S. Southern Command and that they receive whatever support they may need.

### **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief**

**What should be the role for the U.S. military in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the SOUTHCOM AOR?**

Countries in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility are vulnerable to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, and flooding. As outlined in the Unified

Command Plan, the U.S. military is responsible for conducting foreign humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility in support of the lead federal agency (USAID/OFDA), at the direction of the President or the Secretary of Defense in response to a request from the affected host nation.

**Are the resources necessary to fulfill this role currently available to the SOUTHCOM Commander? If not, what additional resources are necessary?**

Yes, I think the U.S. Southern Command Commander has adequate resources to fulfill this role.

### **Law of the Sea Convention**

**The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is pending consideration in the United States Senate.**

**What is your view on whether or not the United States should join the Law of the Sea Convention?**

As an official policy matter, I defer questions associated with the U.N. Law of the Sea Convention to the Chief of Naval Operations. However, as a joint officer, I support the U.S. accession to the Convention.

**How would being a party to the Law of the Sea Convention help or hinder the United States' security posture?**

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea codifies navigation and overflight rights in the high seas and ensures rights of transit through international straits, both of which are essential for the global mobility of U.S. armed forces. UNCLOS supports our National Security Strategy and helps advance our economic and security objectives. It is my understanding that as a matter of customary law, the U.S. is already in compliance. I also understand that Article 298 of the Convention permits the United States to completely exempt its military activities from dispute resolution.

### **Illicit Arms Trafficking**

**Countering illicit arms trafficking is a focus area for SOUTHCOM. In July, governments of the world will gather at the United Nations to negotiate a global Arms Trade Treaty which would set global standards on the international transfer of conventional weapons.**

**What is your understanding of the problem of illicit arms trafficking in the SOUTHCOM AOR and of SOUTHCOM's role in the U.S. efforts to deal with the problem?**

As I understand it, 45-80 million illicit and registered small arms and light weapons are in circulation throughout the region. The region's generally poor stockpile security and enforcement of arms laws, coupled with civil war era weapons surpluses, account for many weapons in circulation today. The U.S. firearms market is a major source of commercial firearms smuggled into Mexico and Central America. Central America is the largest source of illegal weapons transported to Colombia, the primary destination for illicit arms in the AOR, but an increasing amount of weapons are headed north to transnational criminal organizations based in Mexico. Caribbean authorities believe the majority of trafficked firearms are concealed in commercial cargo shipments. I understand that U.S. Southern Command's role is to support law enforcement efforts to monitor, detect, and interdict suspected illicit arms shipments, primarily through intelligence support and information sharing.

**In your view, to what extent, if at all, does the lack of national controls and enforcement on arms flows contribute to the illicit trafficking problem in the region, and could those response efforts be improved if other country's adopted and enforced national regulations on arms import, export, and transit similar to those of the United States?**

As I understand it, many factors contribute to the illicit trafficking problem in the region, such as porous borders, corruption, lack of rule of law, weak institutions, low domain awareness, ineffective law enforcement, criminal penetration of government institutions, and wide swaths of under governed areas with little to no state presence, to list but a few. Partner nation efforts to improve and enforce regulations against illicit trafficking and other illegal activity such as money laundering could be beneficial, but to be effective, these efforts should be complemented with investments by the partner nation in other areas, such as strengthening government and civilian law enforcement institutions; fostering economic growth to promote legitimate alternatives to illicit trafficking; establishing effective state presence in under governed areas; and promote anti-crime initiatives in at-risk communities.

**Do you think an arms trade treaty, such as is being contemplated in the United Nations, would enhance SOUTHCOM's efforts in the region? What is your view on whether or not the United States should be a party to this effort?**

As I mentioned above, efforts that enhance regional security can have a positive impact on partner nation initiatives. As this is an international arms trade treaty, I defer matters of foreign policy to the Department of State.

### **Science and Technology**

**As with other Combatant Commands, a Science and Technology (S&T) advisor is assigned to support SOUTHCOM.**

**If confirmed, what would be your priorities for the SOUTHCOM Science and Technology advisor?**

If confirmed, my direction to the Science and Technology (S&T) advisor would be to speed fielding of solutions to help address the Command's most pressing capability gaps in the detection and monitoring and foreign humanitarian and disaster response missions, enhance support to the overarching theater campaign plan, and make lasting contributions to the broader defense and U.S. S&T enterprise. In my view, technology can be leveraged to make our forces, as well as those of our partner nations, more effective and efficient.

**The Department of Defense has, in recent years, put greater emphasis on research and development of persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities.**

**In your view, how can persistent ISR improve operations in the SOUTHCOM AOR theater, and how would you utilize new platform and sensor technologies?**

In my view, persistent ISR will help close the current gaps in coverage due to limited theater ISR allocations for U.S. Southern Command's detection and monitoring mission, while also providing the Department of Defense, U.S. interagency partners, and partner nations with improved domain awareness that will enable maximize collective efforts. Illicit trafficking is most prevalent in areas that are particularly challenging to the D&M mission. These areas include dense jungle foliage which conceals illicit activities such as cultivation of illicit crops, drug processing laboratories, and the construction of semi-submersible (SPSS) and fully submersible vehicles (FSVs); expansive river networks and busy littoral routes that serve as a main line of communication for transit of illicit traffic; the broad ocean passageways used by SPSS and FSV; and lastly the vast network of highways and secondary roads that allow traffickers to breach national borders undetected. New platform and sensor technologies will need to be integrated into a holistic theater ISR architecture that incorporates and leverages partner nation and U.S. interagency capabilities, and will require inherent automated re-tasking, exploitation, fusion and reporting capabilities.

**Do you believe that airship platforms can be effectively employed in the SOUTHCOM AOR?**

Yes, I believe employing these platforms at strategic locations inside the theater would bring significant benefits. For example, a radar equipped airship would deliver persistent, regional coverage of air and maritime activity (accessible by on-line information sharing tools), and provide valuable regional domain awareness to those countries with very limited to no organic capabilities for monitoring these areas. Outfitting these long dwell platforms with more advanced sensors will provide a capability to detect and monitor the illicit activities of transnational criminal organizations in sanctuaries provided by the dense jungle environment, riverine, littoral, and broad ocean areas. If confirmed, I look forward to identifying opportunities to make U.S. Southern Command operations more efficient and effective through the use of technology.

## **Congressional Oversight**

**In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.**

**Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?**

Yes, I do.

**Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the administration in power?**

Yes, I do.

**Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Commander, U.S. Southern Command?**

Yes, I do.

**Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?**

Yes, I do.

**Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?**

Yes, I do.