

Advance Questions for Honorable Michael L. Dominguez
Nominee for Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense 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.

In your responses to advance questions prior to your previous nomination hearing on July 31, 2001, you indicated that "there are dynamics today different from 15 years ago that may warrant review of some provisions [of Goldwater-Nichols], such as the personnel assignment rules and how we select joint specialty officers." You expressed an interest in exploring these issues to ensure the services have "sufficient flexibility in the management of our personnel resources in a joint environment."

Based on your experience as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, are there specific modifications to the Goldwater-Nichols Act for which you see a need?

The Goldwater-Nichols Act deserves credit for creating a strong framework for today's joint warfighting capabilities. Two decades of U.S. military successes bear witness to this. However, while operational jointness has matured, the personnel system for Joint Officer Management has not kept pace. In the Global War on Terrorism, members are integrated within Joint Task Force organizations, serving various tour lengths on a rotational basis. The intensity of these joint experiences is almost certainly beyond the scope framers of Goldwater-Nichols contemplated. We should build on the foundation established by Goldwater-Nichols and devise mechanisms to recognize joint competencies accrued in these joint operational experiences, as well as those derived from joint training and exercises we now routinely conduct in preparation for combat.

Finally, I believe that "jointness" is no longer a desirable attribute limited merely to the Active component, and the time has come to integrate the Reserve component in this valuable framework, and to recognize the role of senior non-commissioned officers and senior civilians. This means offering joint education,

training and experiences that will fully acculturate all of these key contributors to joint performance; which necessarily entails tracking/recognizing joint qualifications. If confirmed, I would enter policy discussions from this general platform.

If confirmed, what actions would you take in the areas you have identified?

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary, Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, Military Services and the Congress to advance the vision documented in the Department's recently developed Strategic Plan for Joint Officer Management and Joint Professional Military Education.

Duties

Section 136a of Title 10, United States Code, provides that the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall assist the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in the performance of his or her duties.

Assuming you are confirmed, what duties do you expect you will be assigned?

If confirmed, I will assist the Under Secretary of Personnel Readiness in carrying out every aspect of his responsibilities, functions, relationships, and authorities in law consistent with DoD Directive 5124.2, "Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R))" and DoD Directive 5124.8, "Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (PDUSD(P&R))." I will be his principal staff assistant and advisor in all matters relating to the management and well-being of military and civilian personnel in the DoD Total Force structure. I will provide oversight for the direction of policies, plans, and programs governing Total Force management as it relates to manpower; force management; planning; program integration; readiness; National Guard and Reserve component affairs; health affairs; training; personnel requirements and management; and compensation. This includes equal opportunity, morale, welfare, recreation, and quality of life matters for both civilian and military personnel and their families.

Relationships

If confirmed, what would your working relationship be with:

The Secretary of Defense

If confirmed, I expect to serve the Secretary as an advisor and advocate for the management of human resources in the Department.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

If confirmed, I would expect my relationship with the Deputy Secretary to be fundamentally the same as that with the Secretary of Defense.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

If confirmed, I would work directly for the Under Secretary. I would take my direction from Dr. Chu and assist him in carrying out his duties and responsibilities to ensure personnel readiness and quality of life for our military and civilian personnel. I would expect to interact with the Under Secretary on a daily basis and assist him in formulating policies and providing advice and recommendations.

The Assistant Secretaries of Defense for Reserve Affairs and Health Affairs

If confirmed, I would anticipate a close working relationship with the Assistant Secretaries toward the achievement of Department objectives with respect to our mutual goals. I would expect each Assistant Secretary to provide expertise and leadership in his or her area of responsibility, to help carry out the responsibilities for which I might be held responsible.

The DOD General Counsel

The General Counsel performs a vital function in support of Departmental policy making and the review of myriad decisions. If confirmed, I would anticipate regular communication, coordination of actions, and exchange of views with the General Counsel and the attorneys assigned to focus on personnel policy matters. I would expect to seek and follow the advice of the General Counsel on legal, policy and procedural matters pertaining to the policies promulgated from the Personnel and Readiness office.

The Service Secretaries

If confirmed, I would hope to work closely with the Secretaries of the Military Departments on all matters relating to the management and well-being of military and civilian personnel in the DoD Total Force structure.

The Assistant Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

If confirmed, I would hope that I could look to these officials as partners in carrying out the human resource obligations of the Services.

The Deputy Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force for Personnel, the Chief of Naval Personnel, and the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

If confirmed, I would hope to have effective working relationships with these officers to ensure that DoD attracts, motivates and retains the quality people it needs.

The Joint Staff, particularly the Director for Manpower and Personnel (J-1)

If confirmed, I would hope to have a close coordinating relationship and open channels of communication with the Joint Staff regarding manpower and personnel policy issues.

The combatant commanders

If confirmed, I would hope to foster mutually respectful working relationships that translate into providing the Total Force capabilities needed to complete combat missions.

Major Challenges

Prior to assuming the duties of Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, in responding to advance questions, you anticipated that your top challenges would be "recruitment, retention, civilian force management, and preservation of quality military health care."

What do you consider to be your most significant accomplishments in meeting these challenges?

Less than a month after my confirmation as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, our problem set was changed by Al Qaeda's attack on the U.S. Homeland. Instead of recruiting and retention, the Air Force's principal force management challenge of the last four years has been force shaping—re-sizing career fields within the

force to distribute stress equitably and meet the demand for skills needed to fight the Global War on Terrorism.

In the area of civilian force management, the standout achievement of the last four years is authorization by the Congress of the National Security Personnel System, and the subsequent design and development of the specific policies that will improve the agility of the Defense Department's civil workforce and emphasize achievement of the Department's national security mission over seniority in setting compensation.

The quality of the Military Health System remains superb, and we should all note with pride the system's astounding achievements in battlefield care and rapid evacuation of casualties. The cost of the system—particularly the rapid increase in costs of care for our retired constituents—remains of concern.

I also look back with pride at achievements in two areas that, in 2001, were not anticipated as problems. First, sexual assaults at the U.S. Air Force Academy highlighted this serious problem in the Air Force. The Air Force's aggressive attack on this crisis laid much of the foundation for the policy architecture the DoD deployed to deal with this tragedy. Second, the War on Terror has placed demands on the Reserve components unprecedented in their depth and duration. I am proud to have facilitated and enabled the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve in meeting those demands to the greatest extent possible with volunteers, and through the practices they developed, to have defined much of what it means to be an "operational reserve".

What do you anticipate would be the most significant challenges you will face if confirmed as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and how would do anticipate addressing these challenges?

Recruiting and retaining quality men and women to serve in the military and as civilians in the Department is a significant challenge. Building and sustaining a correctly shaped and skilled force to meet the validated demands of the Combatant Commanders will remain a challenge and we will need additional authorities from the Congress to ensure success. We must not only attract the people who are able to carry out the duties required of a 21st century Department of Defense, we must retain them by providing appropriate compensation and benefits, predictable deployment schedules, care for their families while they are away, and work environments free of harassment and prejudice. In light of ever-changing threats and operational demands, we must see to it that the Total Force, made up of well-balanced active and reserve components, is trained and ready to defeat our adversaries. And when these men and women have completed their service, we

must help them or their survivors transition to different lives, letting them know that their contributions made a difference and are appreciated. To meet these challenges, I will review current policies and initiatives from the broad OSD perspective and recommend adjustments in order to accomplish the goal of building and maintaining a military and civilian force that can carry out the duties required of a 21st century Department of Defense.

Active-Duty End Strength

For fiscal year 2006, the Department of Defense requested an authorized active-duty end strength for the Army of 482,400. In order to meet the manpower demands for current operations, however, the Army's actual active-duty end strength on a daily basis has averaged over 495,000, and strong arguments have been advanced that the Army must have substantially more active-duty personnel to support transformation and operational demands.

What is your view of the required active-duty Army end strength needed to perform its various missions?

Since 2001, the Army has grown by almost 12,000 soldiers in order to support the current national emergency. However, this does not imply a need to permanently raise the active end strength of the Army. The Army is taking measures to create a more capable force within its current resources. The measures include:

- Reallocating personnel from low demand skills to those experiencing greater stress.
- Rebalancing skills between and within the active and reserve components (70K through FY2005; 55K more through FY2010).
- Converting historically military positions to civilian performance.

The net result of these actions should allow the Army to add additional Brigade Combat Teams to the Force which will increase the combat capability of the Army and reduce operational stress.

The Air Force is under budgetary pressure to reduce its active-duty end strength, as well as its reserve components and civilian workforce by as much as 40,000 individuals.

What is your understanding of the steps that will be taken in 2007 and beyond with respect to the military and civilian employee manning of the Air Force and what impact do you foresee on Air Force readiness?

I firmly believe that the decisive and timely actions Air Force is taking to shape a stream-lined and more cost effective team of uniformed, civilian and contractor personnel will prevent a future readiness problem. Moreover, the Air Force will achieve its personnel reductions in three broad areas: organizational efficiencies, process efficiencies, and manpower reductions tied to legacy force structure changes. This, in turn, will free up the resources necessary to address compelling recapitalization needs. This manpower realignment will be deliberate and carefully controlled. As we secure our future capabilities we will not sacrifice today's readiness.

If confirmed, what role would you expect to play in assisting the Air Force in balancing its manpower needs against other requirements?

Manpower is not a requirement in itself. Our manpower investments must complement those in many areas, such as platforms, weapons, maintenance and training, to deliver capabilities (such as combat air dominance or logistics air lift). These capabilities are the real requirements. For manpower we believe it is important to help the Air Force, and all the Services, define their workload requirements such that capabilities can be operationalized in a cost-effective manner. Otherwise we would fail to have adequate funds to pay for other required capability enablers. In addition to helping the Air Force arrive at a fiscally informed Total Force manpower solution, we must work with them to ensure they have the tools to build and shape the cost-effective force we have defined.

Reserve and National Guard Deployments

Current policy of the Department provides that under section 12302 of title 10, United States Code, members of reserve components shall not be required to involuntarily deploy more than 24 months cumulatively in response to the existing national emergency. This policy has exempted thousands of members of the Selected Reserve from additional involuntary call ups in support of overseas operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What is your understanding of the number of members of the Selected Reserve, by service, who are unavailable for deployment as a result of the 24 month policy?

As of November 30, 2005, the current Selected Reserve population was 826,171. Of that population, 381,180 (or 46.1%) have been or are currently mobilized. Based on the best available data there are 37,007 Service members who have

served more than 21 months, with the overwhelming majority of these personnel being volunteers.

What is your assessment of the Army's ability to support scheduled troop rotation planning beyond 2006, particularly in combat support and combat service support missions, given the 24-month policy?

The Army in coordination with the Joint Staff is currently planning for rotations in 2007 and beyond. It is important that we recognize that neither the Army nor the United States are in this conflict alone. The Army's Sister Services, our coalition partners, or our immensely capable contractor partners can provide capabilities to offset any shortfalls that might emerge.

What measures are being taken in the Department to respond to operational requirements for low density, high demand units and personnel whose skills are found primarily in the Reserve components, e.g., civil affairs, special operations, military police, truck drivers?

The Services are conducting a "Rebalancing" program where structure that is in low demand or no longer required is converted to skills and capabilities that is in high demand. Over time, rebalancing will help ease the stress on the force caused by repeated deployments in these skill or capability areas. In the near-term, while the Services are conducting rebalancing, the Department is also using Joint solutions to meet Combatant Commander Requirements.

Operations and Personnel Tempo

In your view, what would be the effect on recruiting, retention, and readiness of the Army and Marine Corps of continuation of the current rates of operations tempo and personnel tempo through 2010?

High tempo is stressful, and protracted high tempo compounds the stress. Recruiting and retaining the right numbers of people in the right skills has always been a challenge and continues to be our challenge today. Yet the Department has well demonstrated, with strong support of the Congress, that we can sustain recruiting and retention despite those challenges.

In your judgment, what would be the impact on the current rates of operations and personnel tempo of assigning principal responsibility for crisis and consequence management for natural, domestic disasters to either our active or reserve component forces?

Historically, we have always responded to natural, domestic disasters as a Total Force, employing state or federal authority, as appropriate. This allows the President and the Secretary of Defense the greatest possible flexibility in meeting both forward defense and defense at home needs. Because future demand in these two conflict domains is uncertain, specialization is apt to be exactly wrong—increasing stress in some areas and creating surplus capacity in others. In my opinion, the nation is best served with robust general purpose forces in both active and reserve components.

Individual Ready Reserve Recall Policy

The Department of Defense established a policy in July 2005 mandating the discharge of officers in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) who are beyond their military service obligation (MSO) unless the officer specifically requests retention in the IRR. These policies have not been applied to enlisted personnel.

Such a policy cannot be applied to enlisted personnel since they are governed by their enlistment contracts, whereas officers serve indefinitely, even after completion of their MSO. This policy emphasizes communication as a critical aspect in managing the officer corps. It focuses on ensuring that our IRR is a viable military asset comprised of officers who desire to remain available to the military after completing their obligation.

What are your views about policies affecting continued service by officer and enlisted personnel in the reserve component who have fulfilled their MSO?

The Department views all service, including that served beyond MSO, for both officers and enlisted members, to be voluntary, and our policies support that view. Simultaneously, we recognize the value of retaining trained and motivated members in the service and we therefore continue to offer opportunities to retain our members.

In your view, should members of the Reserve who are deployed when they reach the end of their MSO be treated differently?

Department policy treats deployed and non-deployed members the same regarding expiration of their MSO unless a stop-loss policy has been implemented. Currently, only the Army has a stop loss policy in effect. For Army Reserve component members, this means that they will be retained on active duty for the duration of their mobilization tour plus 90-days to ensure proper post-deployment

transitioning. Use of stop-loss policy is sometimes necessary for force stabilization and continuity purposes to ensure the safety and security of units and members.

Mobilization and Demobilization of National Guard and Reserves

In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the National Guard and Reserves have experienced their largest and most sustained employment since World War II. Numerous problems have been identified in the planning and procedures for mobilization and demobilization, e.g., inadequate health screening and medical readiness monitoring, antiquated pay systems, limited transitional assistance programs upon demobilization, lack of access to members of the Individual Ready Reserve.

What is your assessment of advances made in improving mobilization and demobilization procedures, and in what areas do problems still exist?

There have been advances in the mobilization and demobilization procedures. Notification lead time for mobilization has a goal of 30 days or greater for individuals and units ensuring individuals have sufficient time to prepare prior to their mobilization. Mobilization lengths are being more closely examined to ensure prudent and judicious use of Reserve component units and individuals. Post mobilization training is more efficient, shortening post mobilization training time without endangering the individuals due to insufficient or incomplete training. Demobilization advances include providing medical screening as soon as possible, sometimes even conducting screening in the theater of operations prior to redeployment. An issue we will be watching as part of the demobilization process is the re-equipping of the Reserve component, particularly the Army Reserve and Army National Guard.

What do you consider to be the most significant enduring changes to the reserve components aimed at ensuring their readiness for future mobilization requirements?

Among the most significant and enduring changes for our Reserves in the Total Force is the shift in the paradigm of their use – from the traditional strategic reserve to today’s operational reserve. As such, our Reserves are an integral part of all service operations across the whole spectrum of conflict. To ensure the maximum readiness of the Reserves, the Department in conjunction with the Services, is actively working a number of initiatives. We are actively reshaping both our Active and Reserve forces through Rebalancing. We are establishing

predictable timetables for Reserve component use. With the “train, mobilize, and deploy” approach to Reserve component employment we are working to capitalize our efforts on scarce resources, reduce cross-leveling of units, and limit unit disruptions. Lastly, the improvements legislated in recent years to improve the timely access to TRICARE for Reserves, both the members and their families, have allowed the Reserves to be ready to be employed with less disruptions.

Medical and Dental Readiness of the Reserves

Medical and dental readiness of reserve component personnel has been an issue of significant concern to the Committee, and shortfalls that have been identified have indicated a need for improved policy oversight and accountability. For example, significant problems occurred when mobilizing and demobilizing soldiers were placed on medical hold for extended periods of time due to lack of coordination and insufficient medical resources. More recently, the threatened cancellation by the Department of Health and Human Services of a contract for health care services for reservists revealed a lack of communication between the Army Reserve, Office of Health Affairs, and Reserve Affairs.

If confirmed, how would you seek to clarify and coordinate reporting on the medical and dental readiness of the reserves?

Tracking the medical readiness of the force is an important issue. Health Affairs has established a standardized management framework for quality assurance and a compliance monitoring program to measure Individual Medical Readiness (IMR). On January 3, 2006, DODI 6025.19 was published. It implements responsibilities, and prescribes procedures to improve medical readiness through monitoring and reporting on IMR.

How would you improve upon the Department's ability to produce a healthy and fit reserve component?

A fit and healthy Reserve force is a shared responsibility between the Department and each individual member of the reserve components. Ensuring a fit and healthy force is of prime importance to the Department and several key initiatives are currently underway to support that goal. Making the reservist a partner in managing and reporting on their physical, medical and dental readiness through periodic health assessments and annual dental screenings is already having a positive effect on individual medical readiness. This approach is not only revolutionary but is proving to be successful.

Implementation of TRICARE for Reservists

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 authorized new categories of eligibility for TRICARE for members of the Selected Reserve, which are required to be implemented by October 1, 2006.

What is your assessment of the Department's ability to timely implement the new benefits and the challenges it will have to overcome?

In order to implement the expanded TRICARE Reserve Select program on October 1, 2006, we will need to determine the program design and documentation requirements for reservists who are eligible unemployment recipients or not eligible for an employer-sponsored health plan, establish procedures for an open enrollment season, publish regulatory changes, modify the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System to include new categories of eligible beneficiaries, modify our TRICARE contracts, and work with the Reserve components to educate Selected Reservists on their new health care opportunities. This is clearly a daunting set of tasks, but I am confident that it can be accomplished. Last year, through the untiring efforts of many dedicated OSD and Military Department staff members, we implemented the initial TRICARE Reserve Select program in a six-month time frame.

If confirmed, what role would you play in coordinating the efforts of the Assistant Secretaries of Health Affairs and Reserve Affairs in the implementing these new benefits?

As noted, several steps are required to meet the deadline of October 1, 2006 for implementation, and these steps involve several elements within the Personnel & Readiness organization -- including Reserve Affairs, Health Affairs, and the Defense Manpower Data Center. My role would involve tracking progress on the needed tasks, coordinating our efforts with those of the Military Departments, and quickly resolving issues.

Training Transformation

The Department has implemented its Training Transformation plan and made progress in articulating milestones for establishment of a joint national training capability. Despite the importance of achieving realistic joint training, however, achievement of key goals aimed at supporting joint training, such as

establishment of a fully trained Standing Joint Force Headquarters, will not be achieved until October 2009.

If confirmed, what role would you expect to play in overseeing the DOD Training Transformation Implementation Plan?

Realistic joint training within the DoD is not solely dependent upon Training Transformation (T2). The Department conducts many realistic joint training events. Training Transformation has a key role in accelerating progress toward more effective and efficient joint operations. I, along with my Service and OSD counterparts, have been actively engaged in shaping the strategy and implementing direction since the inception of the T2 Program.

Since we began this program in 2001, the spirit of cooperation and collaboration among the Services, Joint Forces Command, Special Operations Command, the other combatant commands, and the Joint Staff only deepens and broadens. The T2 business process can be described as open, collaborative, incentivized and transparent.

What do you consider to be the greatest challenges to be overcome in establishing realistic and required joint training opportunities?

DoD must persist and expand in its transformation of joint training and education of the Total Force (active military, reserve components, career civilian, and contractor). The goal is to better enable joint force operations. We will also build partner capacity and enable the continuous, capabilities-based transformation of the Department.

The emergence of new joint mission areas and the inevitability that more irregular warfare challenges will surface in the future necessitate innovative, effective, and efficient training and education concepts to address them without increasing the stress on the force. These imperatives require a new approach in providing training and education initiatives to equip civil and military warfighters to overmatch any future opponent. The Department should continue to pursue increased joint training efficiency and capability through live, virtual, and constructive technology tradeoffs and explore alternative business practices to ensure efficient alignment and consolidation of joint training programs and resources with joint training priorities based on mission needs.

How do you evaluate the performance of the services to date in supporting joint training initiatives?

We have, with your support of the T2 Program and the President's budget, made significant progress in the creation of T2's three supporting joint capabilities: Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution Capability (joint training and education for individuals); Joint National Training Capability (joint unit and collective training), and Joint Assessment and Enabling Capability (assessments to answer the question are we truly transforming training).

The Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution Capability has fielded its JKDDC.Net website to provide a centralized location for accessing Service and DoD Agency learning management systems, populated with 19 joint courses for wide area distribution on prioritized combatant command needs and with their sponsorship. Another success for JKDDC is their hosting of the Combating Trafficking in Persons course which was developed collaboratively with the Department of State and our Academic Advanced Distributed Learning Co-laboratory at the University of Wisconsin. Over this year the office of primary responsibility for JKDDC will transition from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Commander, Joint Forces Command.

Joint National Training Capability (JNTC) works to provide realistic distributed joint context to Services' sites and events and to the combatant commands as well. JNTC has already moved from discrete events to one that is venue centric with significantly decreased planning time for the distribution of joint training by moving electrons and not people.

Participation by the Services in Joint National Training Capability (JNTC) events has not interfered with their Title 10 responsibilities to train their forces for the combatant commands. JFCOM achieved JNTC Initial Operational Capability in 2004 and we are on track to meet Full Operational Capability in 2009 although we will never really have an end point to transformation. The asymmetric threats in the 21st century will require new, realistic, innovative, and adaptive joint training constructs and capabilities to be able to provide robust joint training prior to deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism operations, so that those who serve never experience a joint task in combat for the first time.

The Department is also migrating from the construct under which staff and other collective training was planned and completed in an 18-24 month pre-deployment cycle. JNTC has allowed us to insert appropriate joint training into these Service events and mission rehearsal exercises. Through your support the JNTC program has started to create, for the Department, a Live, Virtual, Constructive (LVC) environment that will support efficient participation of joint forces in appropriate training across the country and around the world. When not utilized for joint

training, this LVC environment is being used by the Services to improve their own training capability.

We will, with your help, over the next year expand the persistence of JNTC to be more globally postured. The need to build this capacity to train with our multinational partners is imperative. When we look at the breadth and depth of current and recent operations we have seen the need for a persistent global joint training environment so that the Department can habitually interact with allies and partners in the joint, multinational, intergovernmental, training environment to avoid playing a game of pick up football. JNTC will become a Joint Global Training Capability or JGTC in the future.

Regarding our Joint Assessment and Enabling Capability they created this past year a T2 performance assessment architecture and used it as a start point for the conduct of a block assessment and balanced scorecard assessment. Our first block assessment, due shortly, will serve as a baseline set of metrics to measure T2. Are we enabling the joint force and are we indeed transforming training? Upon completion of these assessments and outcome measurements of T2 missions and programs we will adapt and revise our strategic guidance and programmatic.

Sustainable Ranges Initiative

The adverse effects of encroachment pressures, including private development, restrictions imposed by environmental regulation, and growing competition for airspace and frequency spectrum, on the ability to conduct realistic training are well recognized.

The Department has implemented its Sustainable Ranges Initiative as a comprehensive strategic plan at local, state, and national levels aimed at preventing further deterioration of the utility of military training ranges.

What do you consider to be the most serious dangers at present to essential military training as a result of encroachment?

Encroachment is a many-faceted challenge, and requires the Department pay comprehensive attention to a number of issues. At the root of many of these issues lies incompatible development and urban growth adjacent to our training ranges or under key airspace or low-level training routes, whether within the US or worldwide. DoD is working to improve its cognizance of land use activities outside our fence line and to partner with states and communities to promote more compatible uses around our installations and ranges. Congress has provided us with valuable tools in this endeavor, such as the authority and funding to partner

with conservation organizations and states to secure buffer lands around ranges. Success on land use will also help address many other encroachment concerns, such as noise complaints, further loss of endangered species habitat off DoD lands, and some types of frequency interference, to name a few.

What additional steps are needed, in your judgment, to address problems caused by encroachment of all types to enhance the effectiveness of the Sustainable Ranges Initiative?

The key to counteracting encroachment is understanding and managing all the diverse issues and their interdependencies. I believe the Department has a comprehensive approach to range sustainment in place that will enable us to stay ahead of encroachment. But we must remain vigilant, and continue to recognize the importance of test and training resources to live training, readiness and national defense. As resource competition increases and undeveloped lands shrink, we must place a high priority on protecting the land, air, sea and spectrum resources necessary to prepare our forces for combat. Congress clearly recognizes this need; we ask for your continued support in our efforts to craft encroachment solutions that protect readiness while also safeguarding our environment and the health and welfare of our neighbors.

Defense Readiness Reporting Systems

The Department is developing guidelines and procedures for a comprehensive readiness reporting system that evaluates readiness on the basis of the actual missions and capabilities assigned to the forces. DoD Directive 7730.65, “Defense Readiness Reporting System” (DRRS), directed the implementation of a capabilities-based, adaptive, near real-time readiness reporting system. This system is required to measure and report the readiness of military forces and supporting infrastructure to meet missions and goals assigned by the Secretary of Defense.

What is the status of the DRRS, and what advantages over existing systems does it possess?

DRRS is a single, comprehensive readiness reporting system for the Department of Defense. DRRS achieved initial operating capability in October 2004, and is on schedule to be fully operational by the end of FY 2007. DRRS is data driven, and uses web-based software on DoD's classified internet to provide near real time readiness information. DRRS is mission and capability focused, and provides global visibility of DoD forces. DRRS provides more accurate, thorough, and

comprehensive readiness information of DoD force capabilities to aid in war planning, force management, and risk assessment.

Given the importance to the success of DRRS of Department-wide collaboration and cooperation, what is your assessment of the support provided by the stakeholders?

We have broad DoD support for DRRS. DRRS was fully supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff at a recent DRRS update briefing. Furthermore, the Secretary of Defense is briefed every other month on the status of DRRS implementation. The Combatant Commanders are some of the strongest DRRS supporters, with PACOM, STRATCOM, and NORTHCOM leading the way in realizing the DRRS vision.

Under section 117(e) of title 10, U. S. Code, a report on the results of the most recent joint readiness review, including current information derived from the readiness reporting system, must be submitted on a quarterly basis to the Congressional defense committees.

What steps would you take, if confirmed, to ensure that the readiness information available through DRRS and its web-based reporting system is made available to the Congressional defense committees in a timely manner?

We are currently developing a DRRS module that will greatly reduce the time required to prepare the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress. We have also used DRRS functionality to assist in answering readiness questions of the Congressional defense committees.

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO)

In 2005, the leadership of DPMO came under criticism from survivor family groups who alleged that insufficient attention and resources were being committed to recovery of U.S. personnel missing from conflicts from World War II to the present.

In view of the mission of the DPMO, do you think that this organization, as well as the U. S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI) would more appropriately be placed under the proponenty of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness?

I believe the DPMO program is appropriately aligned within the purview of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs under the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Moreover, the USD (P) can best meet the predictable and often complex challenges associated with the necessity to coordinate with foreign governments for the recovery of remains. Additionally, the USD (P) works, on a daily basis, with the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands, to include the Pacific Command, on the worldwide use of military assets. This is important because the utilization of these assets is often central to the planning and conduct of DPMO related operations.

Note: The U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory no longer exists under that title. In 1993, the Laboratory was merged with Pacific Command's Joint Task Force-Full Accounting. It is now the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and remains a Pacific Command asset with a worldwide mission.

Do you believe that the Personnel and Readiness organization should have a larger role in the oversight of the DPMO?

I believe P&R has an effective relationship with USD (P) and that there is no requirement for a direct P&R oversight role. Indeed, because of the considerations discussed in the previous answer, attempting to inject such oversight in matters dealing with international coordination issues could actually have a negative impact. Having said the above, I am keenly aware of P&R responsibilities to the families of all Service members—especially those whose loved ones are missing or deceased. If I am confirmed, I will ensure P&R coordination with DPMO is all that it should be. Moreover, once an individual's remains have been identified through work completed by DPMO, P&R should continue to work with the Military Services to honor the family's desires as to disposition of remains and any military funeral honors.

Employment of Military Spouses

In your view, what progress has been made, and what actions need to be taken to provide increased employment opportunities for military spouses?

DoD has been committed to helping military spouses start rewarding careers and to remove barriers to career advancement. We have made significant progress in the last two years.

We have begun to raise awareness among employers about the value of hiring military spouses and we have increased our efforts at the state level where licensing and certification requirements differ state to state.

In the nine months since www.military.com/spouse site was launched, over 800,000 spouses have visited the site; over 500,000 have signed up for the newsletter, over 400,000 have visited the chat rooms and over 1.5 million job searches have been conducted. In recent months, DoD has also co-sponsored specialty career fairs that focus employers on severely injured service members and military spouses.

We commissioned research studies to determine which careers were most popular and which states provided the most opportunity for removing these barriers. We were able to determine that teaching, real estate, nursing and medical assistant positions were popular spouse careers that have state-specific licensing requirements. Since then, we have worked to use the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), a national passport credentialing organization supported by No Child Left Behind, as a beneficial alternative transportable teaching credential for military spouses. Five states have adopted ABCTE's credential and more states with many military families are considering it. We are identifying other career opportunities where employer affiliations will aid spouses in staying on track, such as in real estate; and industries that offer portable credentials, such as computer networking.

Family Support

In your view, do the Services have adequate programs in place to ensure support for active and reserve component families, particularly those who live great distances from military installations?

Yes, two-thirds of military families do not live on DoD installations. Reserve and Guard families are often long distances from support systems. Therefore, DoD leveraged technology to reach all military families by providing easy access to accurate and timely information wherever they may live around the world. Every Service and the Reserve components are now plugged into Military OneSource. This is an innovative way of providing information and assistance to troops and families 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by a toll-free number or online, from any place, tailoring services specifically to individuals and families. This service also provides counseling and emotional support when needed by Master's degree level staff.

Each of the Military Services, including their Reserve Components, also has important, unit-based family support programs. These programs provide a human face to families in need, and reinforce the unit commander's role in supporting and caring for the families of those who are serving.

If confirmed, what additional steps would you take to enhance family support?

The Department has done an excellent job designing flexible family support programs that meet the needs of our Service members and their families who live on military installations, near military installations, and those who live at a distance. Spreading the word about these innovative support programs to the members of the Total Force and their families is high on my priority list. Next steps are to make sure everyone knows about the services, uses them to their advantage, and recognizes it is a wise choice to seek help to cope with military life's challenges.

General and Flag Officer Nominations

Under DOD Instruction 1320.4, adverse and alleged adverse information pertaining to general and flag officers must be evaluated by senior leaders in the Services and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense prior to nomination.

If confirmed, what role would you play in the officer promotion system, particularly in reviewing general and flag officer nominations?

If confirmed, I would perform those duties and responsibilities assigned by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Those duties may include management of compliance with governing statutes and policy, as well as sustainment of consistency in the Department's approaches to major policies.

What is your assessment of the ability of the services to timely document credible information of an adverse nature for evaluation by promotion selection boards and military and civilian leaders?

The Military Services are diligent in ensuring that timely documentation is available for evaluation by promotion selection boards, and that it is available to military and civilian leadership who oversee that process. If confirmed, I will promulgate policy guidance to ensure that the newly-enacted provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006 are accomplished. That statute

directs that all substantiated adverse information be made available to general and flag officer promotion boards convening after October 1, 2006.

National Security Personnel System

The Committees on Armed Services and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs have closely monitored the implementation of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) throughout its first year of development and implementation.

If confirmed, what would your role be in the management, implementation, and oversight of policies relating to NSPS?

If confirmed, I anticipate that I will continue as the Co-Chair of the NSPS Overarching Integrated Product Team (OIPT) along with Mr. George Nesterczuk, our Office of Personnel Management partner. The OIPT is Secretary England's mechanism for providing advice and counsel to the NSPS Program Executive Officer and for quickly resolving design, development and deployment issues that do not require his personal involvement. Secretary England, Dr. Chu, and I are committed to making sure we do this right for the benefit of our people and our national security mission.

How do you evaluate the concerns of employee groups with respect to changes in collective bargaining, content and collaboration over Department of Defense issuances, the independence of the National Security Labor Relations Board, and procedures associated with performance appraisals?

The unions have raised a variety of concerns, and the Department has done its best to respond to these concerns. Even so, the employee representatives may disagree with how these concerns were addressed.

The continuing collaboration process offers many opportunities for employee representatives to participate. It is a very robust process that provides employee representatives an opportunity for greater involvement in workforce issues, including areas previously excluded by law or other agency rules.

The National Security Labor Relations Board is designed to be independent. Members are appointed by the Secretary to fixed terms of three years. Members will be independent, distinguished citizens known for their integrity, impartiality and expertise in labor relations and/or the DoD mission, and/or related national security matters. Finally, members may be removed only for inefficiency, neglect

of duty or malfeasance in office, which is a standard similar for removing members of the Federal Labor Relations Authority and the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Based on feedback from a number of stakeholders, including employee representatives, the NSPS Program Executive Office is currently undergoing a redesign effort to simplify the performance management system.

What steps, if any, do you believe the Department should take to address these concerns?

The Department has already taken extraordinary steps to address these concerns. For example, we revised the final regulations to permit collective bargaining on certain operational matters if the Secretary determines that bargaining would advance the Department's mission accomplishment or promote organizational effectiveness. The proposed regulations did not permit such bargaining. This change was in response to concerns raised by several members of Congress, as well as the unions.

In response to suggestions raised by employee representatives during the meet and confer process, we revised the final regulations to make clear that each national labor organization with bargaining units affected by an implementing issuance will be provided an opportunity to participate in the continuing collaboration process. We also modified the regulations to make clear that the Department will consider the views and recommendations of employee representatives before taking final action. The Department will provide employee representatives a written statement of the reasons for taking final action regarding an implementing issuance.

In response to concerns by several members of Congress and employee representatives, we revised the final regulations to require the Secretary to consider labor organization nominations for two of the Board members. This is fair and assures labor organizations a voice in the National Security Labor Relations Board selection process.

In response to concerns regarding the performance management system, the implementing issuances will address the specific processes and practices that will be used within the Department. The Department will ensure that the NSPS performance management system complies with the law. It will establish effective safeguards to ensure that the management of the system is fair and equitable. Continuing collaboration will provide employee representatives the opportunity to provide input as needed.

What metrics do you believe are necessary to assess the impact of NSPS on mission readiness of the Department of Defense?

The Department's readiness is high. Our employees are effective, dedicated contributors today. NSPS will not change that. It will improve human resource management practices to heighten commander and supervisor attention to their civilian employees' performance, increase employees' and supervisors' confidence in their own and each other's accountability for mission accomplishment, and be more competitive in hiring the people we need in mission-critical occupations and labor markets where we have lagged.

I believe we must monitor employees' satisfaction with working for the Department, their jobs, and leadership. We must monitor how important employees think their work is and how well prepared they and their organizations are to accomplish the mission.

Measuring employee and supervisor opinions of how effectively we deal with poor performers and disruptive employees is as important as accounting for associated management actions. We should measure relative changes in where supervisors, managers, and commanders invest their human resource management time. For example, are they increasingly engaged with employees on performance and mission objectives, while spending less effort on administrative demands like job descriptions, personnel action requests, and answering discovery requests in adverse action appeals?

NSPS effects may be assessed through a combination of job-offer acceptance rates, the speed with which we fill vacancies, and supervisor satisfaction with candidate quality. NSPS should also increase the Department's agility in realigning the workforce to meet changing mission demands emanating from a more dynamic security environment; we'll need to develop measures to see that we have done that. I expect to look at how much use we make of new or more flexible employment authorities for emergency hiring to meet urgent mission demands, and for term or temporary appointments that help the Department get through transformational periods such as BRAC.

It will take time to see the effects of NSPS -- not all authorities will be used heavily or early, and there will be a learning curve. Additionally, many factors contribute to mission readiness. We therefore must use a judicious mix of metrics to assess NSPS impact and be wary of pronouncing on the meaning of the metrics too early.

Management of Senior Executive Service Civilian Personnel

Although the Office of Personnel Management has recently approved the Department's performance management and pay system for senior executives, it did so only after finding that the Department's initial performance plan was not satisfactory.

What is your understanding of the status of the DOD transition to performance-based management of Senior Executive Service (SES) personnel?

OPM approved the Department's Executive and Senior Professional Performance System on April 1, 2005, and it was implemented on June 30, 2005. Since that time, the Department has been on a pay for performance system for its Executives and Senior Professionals. The new Executive and Senior Professional Pay and Performance System made fundamental changes in the way the Department establishes performance requirements, assesses performance, and compensates and rewards senior executives. In our just completed Fiscal Year 2005 rating cycle, we were able to accurately reflect, assess, and recognize individual and organizational performance using the Fiscal Year 2005 performance standards, and we were able to make clear distinctions in performance. The Department did very well overall in OPM's 2005 assessment, achieving a score of 100 percent in four of the six rating areas. It was only in one area in which the Department needed improvement.

Because our Executives and Senior Professionals will have been on a pay for performance system a couple years in advance of the implementation of NSPS, they understand the magnitude of the changes as well as the level of commitment and leadership essential to drive a pay for performance culture. The lessons learned will be invaluable as we move the rest of the Department into a new pay for performance system. Continued training is essential and the Department will be redoubling its efforts to train the Executive and Senior Professionals on the new pay and performance system. We are confident that our executives will be able to lead the way for the Department's transition to a pay for performance culture.

Do you believe that delays in achieving an acceptable plan will have an impact on approval of the performance pay for the SES?

OPM already approved the Department's Executive and Senior Professional Performance System on April 1, 2005, and DoD implemented it on June 30, 2005.

Since that time, the Department has been on a pay for performance system for its Executives and Senior Professionals. The new Executive and Senior Professional Pay and Performance System made fundamental changes in the way the Department establishes performance requirements, assess performance, and compensate and reward senior executives. The Department already made its first pay outs under the pay for performance program.

If confirmed, how would you propose to ensure that performance pay is made in a timely manner, not only for senior executives but for all civilian employees within the NSPS?

Training is key to the success of moving toward a pay for performance culture. Making our managers comfortable with the new methodology for calculating payouts will ensure that they are completed in a timely manner. Our training plan should be comprehensive and incorporate a robust learning strategy that will prepare our managers to transition to the new pay for performance system. The NSPS implementation plan calls for training of every employee and mock performance assessments and payouts.

Management and Development of the Senior Executive Service

Under the NSPS, the Department has broad latitude over the management of its SES personnel.

What is your vision of the approach the Department should take to improve its management of the SES under the authorities provided by the NSPS?

Today, our senior executives require an extraordinary skill set to meet the challenges of the Global War on Terrorism. These challenges have accelerated our efforts to make our Department more agile, responsive and more joint in the way we do our business. I envision an SES Corps that is prepared to lead in a joint environment; has a diverse perspective based upon varied experiences at different levels of DoD and, as necessary, outside the Department; is mobile and ready to assume leadership responsibilities where needed; has substantive knowledge of national security mission; a shared understanding, trust, and sense of mission with military leaders; and strong leadership and management skills.

To this end, the Department is currently examining its SES corps and will be making recommendations to move toward a more flexible, agile, and joint SES corps. As the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, I am involved in these efforts, and I expect to see significant progress within the next few months.

Some SES members within the Department have voiced concerns over the lack of professional development and career management efforts for the SES within the Department, in contrast with other federal agencies. The Air Force, however, has initiated a senior leader management model to enhance and improve management, development, and assignment of SES and general officers.

What is your assessment of how the Air Force program is working?

The Air Force program is, to the best of my knowledge, unique within the federal government, and an unqualified success. About 15 years ago, the Air Force's senior career civilian executives initiated a comprehensive effort to increase the executive competencies of members of the SES serving the Air Force, and a companion effort to deliberately develop and prepare high grade civil servants for executive leadership. Their efforts are now embedded into Air Force culture. Aspirants to the SES know they must learn the business by moving to different positions, different Air Force commands, and even to different functional specialties. More junior Senior Executives know that, should they aspire to more senior levels, they must broaden and deepen their leadership competencies in the same way. Military leaders now embrace members of the SES as peers. The Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff manage both General Officer and SES assignments. Some Air Force senior leader positions are filled interchangeably with a General Officer or an SES—depending on the best candidate available and the needs of the job. There is now an Air Force SES leading one of the Air Force's major repair depots. The Air Force invests in executive development and provides both General Officers and members of the SES continued professional development opportunities. The concept of competency-based management was pioneered by the Air Force SES, spread into Air Force General Officer management concepts, thence into Joint Officer Management concepts, and now is influencing the Department's Human Capital Strategy.

Please understand that even though I am the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, I claim no credit for this "best practice". Career Air Force executives conceived of and implemented this program. It was in full swing when I arrived in August of 2001. I have supported and encouraged progress, shared the model with the Departments of the Navy, Army, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and championed the extension of that model into the development of Joint competencies and Joint perspectives in our senior civilian executives.

In your view, should a similar program be designed and expanded throughout the Department?

We should certainly consider expanding this model more broadly across the Department of Defense. The Department of the Navy is already moving quickly in this direction. As we think about extending this model, we must also be mindful that each component of the Department is different, faces a different set of challenges, and will likely need to tailor application of this executive management “model” to its own circumstances. If confirmed, I would expect to shepherd and encourage this process. I will, in particular, champion the Department’s efforts to do for the SES corps what Goldwater-Nichols did for the Department’s officer corps—create a powerful imperative for knowing, thinking, and acting joint.

If confirmed, would you support an initiative to require SES members to obtain broadening experiences and assignments in the military departments, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, combatant commands, and elsewhere? If so, how would you plan to achieve this?

Yes, if confirmed I would support an initiative that prepares individuals for senior leadership positions in a "joint" environment. We are currently examining a proposed concept of operations for a joint-qualified SES corps as a potential model for the Department. We are bringing a group of our best talent together to review the proposal and make recommendations for a broader, DoD application.

Sexual Assault

On February 25, 2004, the Senate Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Personnel conducted a hearing on policies and programs of the Department of Defense for preventing and responding to incidents of sexual assault in the Armed Forces at which the service vice chiefs endorsed a “zero tolerance” standard. Subsequently, in response to Congressional direction, the Department developed a comprehensive set of policies and procedures aimed at improving prevention of and response to incidents of sexual assaults, including appropriate resources and care for victims of sexual assault.

Do you consider the new sexual assault policies and procedures, particularly those on confidential reporting, to be effective and, what problems, if any, are you aware of in the manner in which this new reporting procedure has been put into operation?

The Department is fully committed to combating sexual assault and eliminating this societal problem from the ranks of the military. DoD’s comprehensive policy

provides commanders at all levels the direction and tools necessary to deal with this crime, and the Military Services have been vigorously implementing its provisions.

I am unaware of any problems instituting confidentiality, and initial data have been very positive. This provision enables many victims to receive medical care and treatment who previously would not have come forward. Significantly, some of these victims changed from a restricted report to an unrestricted report within weeks of receiving medical care, thereby enabling law enforcement to conduct investigations and increase offender accountability.

We will evaluate and refine, as necessary, our comprehensive policy to ensure it best meets the needs of our service members and becomes the benchmark for other organizations to follow.

What is your vision for the future role of the Joint Task Force for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, and, if confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure senior management level direction and oversight of Departmental efforts on sexual assault prevention and response?

The Joint Task Force is transitioning into the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), a permanent organization within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. It currently enjoys ready access to senior leadership, and, if I am confirmed, it will have equal access to me.

SAPRO will remain the Department's single point of accountability for sexual assault prevention and response policy. This office will continue to work closely with the Military Services to evaluate and refine sexual assault policies. It will also collaborate with other federal agencies and be a conduit for advocacy groups to interface with the Department. SAPRO will spearhead the Department's efforts to institute cultural change with the goal of eliminating this societal problem from the military.

If confirmed, I will facilitate SAPRO efforts by ensuring the full commitment of Health Affairs, Reserve Affairs and the Service M&RAs in implementing and resourcing sexual assault policies throughout the Active and Reserve components.

Service Academies

What do you consider to be the policy and procedural elements that must be in place at each of the service academies in order to prevent and respond

appropriately to sexual assaults and sexual harassment and to ensure essential oversight?

The Department's sexual assault and sexual harassment policies provide the foundation for combating sexual misconduct at the service academies as well as the Active and Reserve components.

The three superintendents have initiated in-depth programs, and we are making progress. While more work remains to achieve our goal of zero sexual assaults, I believe the service academies' programs are setting the standard for collegiate America.

Augmenting the significant efforts of the superintendents are several echelons of oversight to include the Boards of Visitors of each institution.

What is your assessment of corrective measures taken at the U. S. Air Force Academy to ensure religious tolerance and respect, and of Air Force guidelines regarding religious tolerance that were promulgated in August of 2005?

The Air Force Academy is committed to developing leaders of character and to providing cadets with an atmosphere that promotes religious tolerance and respect. I personally tasked the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, to form a cross-functional team to assess the religious climate at the Academy and the Academy's progress in integrating principles of respect into its character development program. I believe the Academy has implemented an effective program, but it is one it and the senior leadership of the Air Force will continue to monitor and improve.

The realization of the need for guidelines concerning free exercise of religion and non-establishment of religion emerged from our assessment of the Academy. While we had no evidence of religious tolerance issues in the larger Air Force, we developed the guidelines to ensure the entire Air Force understood its responsibilities in this area. In promulgating the interim religious guidelines, the Acting Secretary of the Air Force recognized that, in spite of how hard we worked developing them, they would not be perfect. He solicited comment, therefore, from a wide range of groups, from Members of the Congress, from commanders, and from Airmen. The comments received have convinced the current Secretary of the Air Force, the Honorable Michael Wynne, of the need to revise the guidelines to make them simpler and easier to understand, and to more carefully balance our responsibility to promote free exercise of religion, with our responsibility to avoid any appearance of government establishment of religion,

and with our national security mission. Secretary Wynne has, in addition, committed to sharing with our Sister Services and with senior officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the lessons learned from the national dialog stimulated by the Air Force's interim guidelines. I believe the Air Force and the DoD will derive significant benefit from this dialog. Our understanding of and sensitivity to these responsibilities is and will continue to be much increased. We are, therefore, better servants of the nation and its Constitution.

TRICARE Fee Increases

Recent press reports have described an initiative within the Department of Defense to significantly increase enrollment fees and deductibles for retirees and their families.

What is your view of the need for and the effectiveness of increased beneficiary payments in reducing overall Defense Health Program costs to the Department?

The Department must continue to modernize and sustain the health benefit program to provide a health benefits package that is effective, efficient and well suited to the structure of the force. Our Department healthcare costs have risen from \$19 Billion to \$37B in just five years. Good stewardship compels us to consider cost-sharing and to evaluate the effects of restoring the balance that existed when TRICARE was established in 1995.

What other changes in infrastructure, benefits, or benefit management, if any, do you think should be examined in order to control the costs of health care?

The Department has made concerted efforts over the past several years to obtain cost savings wherever possible.

- We have established annual efficiency and productivity targets for our medical treatment facilities and instituted a value based performance system using a prospective payment methodology – which pays these facilities for the actual work they perform.
- In the pharmacy management we seek to achieve considerable savings from our federal pricing structure.
- We have reduced our supply costs by leveraging modern strategies such as Prime Vendor and “just in time” delivery services with our vendors.

- We have streamlined our managed care support contracts to reduce costs and will continue to do so in future contracts.
- We've worked closely with our Department of Veterans Affairs colleagues to share services and reduce duplication of services, wherever possible.
- We are making tremendous strides in our infrastructure to maintain modern facilities and the recent BRAC efforts will help us consolidate services in key areas such as here in Washington and in San Antonio.

Foreign Language Transformation Roadmap

A Foreign Language Transformation Roadmap announced by the Department on March 30, 2005, directed a series of actions aimed at transforming the Department's foreign language capabilities, to include revision of policy and doctrine, building a capabilities based requirements process, and enhancing foreign language capability for both military and civilian personnel.

What is your understanding of the status of the actions identified in the Defense Language Transformation roadmap?

The roadmap outlined 43 actions to support four overarching goals: create foundational language and regional expertise within the Department; create surge capacity; establish a cadre of highly proficient language professionals, and oversee career management of members with language skills. I understand that six major tasks are completed and the remaining tasks are on track for completion within the specified timelines.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to identify foreign language requirements, and to design military and civilian personnel policies and programs to fill those gaps?

The current roadmap is still quite new. I will maintain a sharp focus on the Roadmap to ensure we maintain momentum, evaluate results, and capitalize on the progress already achieved.

What is your assessment of an appropriate time frame within which results can be realized in this critical area?

While considerable progress has been made, I believe this will be a long-term effort. Language acquisition, particularly at advanced levels, takes a long time. This is particularly true in the more difficult languages such as Arabic and

Chinese. To improve language proficiency and regional expertise in our officer corps, we need to start early in their careers and grow capability over time. I also expect that our language needs will change with world events and new ones will need to be addressed. Finally, a real key to success rests with a change to our educational system that graduates students, both at high school and college level, with language proficiency. The National Security Language Initiative, announced by President Bush, begins to mobilize the nation's educational systems toward greater emphasis on foreign languages and culture.

Intelligence Community Growth

The Intelligence Community is in the midst of a period of rapid growth and reorganization. The number of flag and general officer billets that must be filled and senior leader positions in the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service can be expected to increase. The Department has asked to increase the size of the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES) by 150 employees by the end of Fiscal Year 2007 and has been given authority to appoint its own Defense Intelligence Senior Leaders.

If confirmed, what role would you play, in coordination with the Services and the Combat Support Agencies, in the management of this growth?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Under Secretary of Defense (Intelligence), who has the responsibility for exercising overall supervision and policy oversight of all defense intelligence human capital (to include DISES) to ensure that the defense intelligence components are manned, trained, equipped and structured to support the missions of the Department and fully satisfy the needs of the Combatant Commands, the military departments and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence as appropriate.

In your view, should Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service personnel and general and flag officers of the intelligence community be managed as a single entity more in line with the Air Force model?

An effective senior leader management system requires selection and assignment of the best candidate for each position in an organization. Thus, it is essential to consider knowledge, skills, and abilities of all senior leaders available to an organization. Moreover, it is imperative that we, as leaders, take measures to ensure that a deep "bench" of superbly qualified candidates is available for each potential vacancy. There are, however, many paths to that goal. If confirmed, I will work closely with the leaders of the intelligence community to ensure they

have the information, tools, and support necessary to effectively manage this cadre of executives.

Armed Forces Retirement Home

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, hundreds of elderly residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) in Gulfport, Mississippi, were evacuated and now reside at the Armed Forces Retirement Home facility in Washington, D.C.

What is your understanding of the official relationship between the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Chief Operating Officer of the AFRH?

The AFRH is an independent establishment in the executive branch. Chapter 10 of title 24, U.S.C., requires the Secretary of Defense to appoint the AFRH Chief Operating Officer, who serves at the pleasure and is under the authority, direction and control of the Secretary of Defense; appoint the Home Directors, Deputy Directors, Associate Directors and members of the Local Boards of each Home; evaluate the performance of the Chief Operating Officer; prescribe pay for the Chief Operating Officer within limits of the Executive Schedule; acquire and dispose of AFRH property and facilities; make available DoD support necessary for the Retirement Home to carry out its functions on a nonreimbursable basis; and transmit a report to Congress on an annual basis on financial and other affairs of the Home. The Secretary of Defense delegated these responsibilities to the USD(P&R) and the PDUSD(P&R) in a memorandum dated March 20, 2003.

If confirmed what steps would you anticipate taking with respect to restoring and improving the AFRH facility in Gulfport, ensuring the financial stability of AFRH funding, and responding to concerns by residents about the conditions at the AFRH facilities?

If confirmed, I will ensure AFRH carries out its responsibilities. I will establish regular contact with the AFRH Chief Operating Officer to ensure care and services meet or exceed those established in law. I will ensure health care accreditation is maintained and support continued efforts to build the trust fund and seek efficiencies that do not diminish the high quality of care the Home's residents expect and deserve. I will require periodic resident and staff climate assessments and be responsive to complaints and concerns and ensure appropriate corrective actions are taken.

Military Quality of Life

In May 2004 the Department published its first Quadrennial Quality of Life Review, which articulated a compact with military families on the importance of key quality of life factors, such as family support, child care, education, health care and morale, welfare and recreation services.

How do you perceive the relationship between quality of life improvements and your own top priorities for military recruitment and retention?

The Department implemented very successful programs to support OEF/OIF troops and families. I believe these programs have contributed to DoD's impressive retention rates. We should continue to conduct analyses and assessments of these programs, individually and in aggregate, to ensure they are meeting the needs of our Service members and are contributing positively to recruiting, retention, and readiness.

If confirmed, what further enhancements to military quality of life would you make a priority, and how do you envision working with the Services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress to achieve them?

If confirmed, I will aggressively pursue the President's "Managing for Results" agenda, developing the clearest possible understanding of the needs of our force, how our individual and collective programmatic response meets those needs, and how those programs contribute, individually and collectively, to recruiting, retention, and readiness. Gaps or shortfalls will be filled rapidly with the most cost-effective program possible. Results—measured in satisfied, healthy families and combat ready Service members—will drive our efforts.

Commissary and Military Exchange Systems

Commissary and military exchange systems are critical quality of life components for members of the active and reserve forces and their families.

What is your view of the need for modernization of business policies and practices in the commissary and exchange systems, and what do you view as the most promising avenues for change to achieve modernization goals?

Commissary System: The Department's strategy remains to sustain the value of the commissary benefit without increasing its cost. The Defense Commissary

Agency's (DeCA's) re-engineering efforts are aimed at reducing overhead by centralizing support and streamlining store operations. Although still in the early stages of re-engineering, DeCA has demonstrated successes.

Exchange System: All three of the exchange systems are continually trying to modernize their policies and practices in order to remain competitive in a challenging retail market. Force repositioning, BRAC and the Global War on Terror, with its attendant increased costs to provide the exchange benefit, will continue to challenge Exchange profitability. As the Department has reported to you over the past two plus years, we have embarked on a process to cut operational costs within our exchange system by combining backroom functions from all three exchanges into a common provider. We currently estimate a 2-plus billion dollar reduction over fifteen years in total operational costs for our three Exchange Services by streamlining process delivery combined with elimination of redundancy. By taking an approach focused on backroom processes only, the service member's relationship to the Exchange is preserved while the total costs he pays to the Exchange are reduced.

In the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, Congress required the Secretary of Defense to establish an executive governing body for the commissary and exchange systems to ensure the complementary operation of the two systems.

What is your understanding of the purpose and composition of the executive governing body?

The Department established the DoD Executive Resale Board as the governing body to provide advice to the USD (P&R) regarding the complementary operation of Resale Activities. The Board works to resolve issues within the elements of the military resale system. The Board is chaired by the PDUSD (P&R), and members include both the senior military officers and civilians who oversee and manage the commissary and exchanges systems.

If confirmed, what would your role be with respect to the governing body, and what would your expectations be for its role?

The Secretary designated the PDUSD(P&R) as the chairman of the Executive Resale Board. I envision the Board would continue to meet regularly to review operational areas of mutual interest to the commissary and exchange systems. Matters reviewed by the board include both cooperative efforts and areas of disagreement. The Board should not duplicate the roles of the Commissary

Operating Board or the Exchange Boards or Directors. Thus far, the Board has proved to be an effective mechanism to vet operational matters of mutual interest to the exchanges and commissary. The Board provides a forum for seeing that operating decisions are made in the best interests of the patron and of the total resale community

Legislative Fellowship Program

Each year, the Services assign mid-career officers to the offices of members of Congress under the Legislative Fellows Program. Upon completion of their legislative fellowships, officers are supposed to be assigned to follow-on positions in their services in which they effectively use the experience and knowledge they gained during their fellowships.

What is your assessment of the value of the Legislative Fellows program to the Department and the utilization of officers who have served as legislative fellows?

I support this important training and career development program and believe it has great value to the Department and the Congress. The Department's Legislative Fellows program provides an annual opportunity for 22 officers and 5 civilians to broaden their education, experience, and knowledge in operations and organization of Congress. Senior civilian leadership of the Military Departments validate the selection; and in my capacity as Principal Deputy, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, if confirmed, I would approve them on behalf of the Secretary. We place these fellows with Members who are in Committees with significant relevance to the Department. The Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs ensures the right officers are detailed to the right Congressional leadership, Defense or Intelligence oversight Committee. Such high-level oversight for this program is entirely appropriate as we seek to develop people capable of sustaining strong and effective dialogue with the Legislative Branch.

The Legislative Fellows program is now a highly competitive program, sought after by some of our most promising mid-career leaders. The knowledge they gain from this program will contribute to their personal and professional growth, as well as to the Department's effectiveness, throughout their careers. We should consider, therefore, whether some limited flexibility in the follow-on assignments might be warranted. It would be unfortunate, for example, if a rising star missed an opportunity to command because he or she was selected while a Legislative

Fellow and constrained, therefore, in the follow-on assignment. If confirmed, I will look closely at this important area.

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.

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 Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness?

Yes.

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.