

Answers to Advance Questions for Robert F. Hale Nominee for Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)

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.

Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions?

- **I believe the Goldwater-Nichols Act is one of the most important and effective defense reforms enacted by Congress. I do not see any need for modifications. However, if confirmed, I will keep an open mind regarding changes.**

If so, what areas do you believe might be appropriate to address in these modifications?

- **As noted, I do not see any need for modifications.**

Relationships

What is your understanding of the relationship between the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and each of the following?

The Secretary of Defense

- **The Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is the principal assistant and advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense on fiscal and budgetary matters. The Under Secretary (Comptroller) also performs such other duties as the Secretary or Deputy Secretary may prescribe.**

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

- **Please see the answer above.**

The other Under Secretaries of Defense

- **My relationship with all other senior officials of the Department will, for the most part, be based on the role described above. If confirmed, I will work closely with the other Under Secretaries to carry out the policies and guidance of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary.**

The Assistant Secretaries of Defense

- **My relationship with the Assistant Secretaries of Defense and other senior officials of the Office of the Secretary of Defense would be similar to that described above in relation to the other Under Secretaries of Defense.**

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

- **The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Chairman and Joint Staff on resource and financial management issues.**

The Secretaries of the Military Departments

- **The Secretaries of the Military Departments carry out the policies of the President and the Secretary of Defense in their respective Military Departments and formulate recommendations to the Secretary and to the Congress relating to their Military Departments and the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Secretaries of the Military Departments, and specifically, their Assistant Secretaries for Financial Management who I intend to meet with regularly. I will ensure that they are aware of the President's and the Secretary of Defense's policies and priorities and assist them in contributing to the successful development and implementation of effective DoD policies and programs.**

The heads of the defense agencies

- **As the Department's Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer, I will, if confirmed, work closely with the heads of the defense agencies, and specifically, with our financial management counterparts in those agencies. I will ensure that they are aware of the President's and the Secretary of Defense's policies and priorities and assist them in contributing to the successful development and implementation of effective DoD policies and programs.**

The Assistant Secretaries for Financial Management of the Services

- **In the role of Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer for the Department, I will, if confirmed, work closely with the Assistant Secretaries of the Military Departments for Financial Management in the development and execution of the budgetary and fiscal policies and initiatives of the President and the Secretary of Defense.**

The General Counsel of the Department of Defense

- **As the Department's Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer, I will, if confirmed, rely on the General Counsel, who is the Chief Legal Officer of the Department of Defense, on all legal matters, and will consult and coordinate with the General Counsel on all matters relating to programs, projects, and activities of Department of Defense, as well as matters relating to financial management,**

accounting policy and systems, management control systems, and contract audit administration, that may have legal implications.

The Inspector General

- **As the Department's Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer, I will, if confirmed, consider it my responsibility to support the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) in carrying out his or her duties as set forth in the Inspector General Act.**

The Director, Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation

- **If confirmed, I will ensure a high level of coordination with the Director of the Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation in fulfilling his or her role of providing independent assessments for acquisition systems. I will also work with the Director of PA&E to ensure the success of the combined program/budget review.**

The Deputy Chief Management Officer

- **I would, if confirmed, establish an appropriate relationship based on the responsibilities assigned to that official and do everything possible to improve management of the Department's complex operations and organization.**

The Director, Office of Management and Budget

- **If I am confirmed, my relationship would include periodic interaction with the OMB leadership on the sound preparation and execution of DoD budgets and the advancement of both OMB and DoD management improvements.**

The Comptroller General

- **If I am confirmed, my relationship would be to analyze and address recommendations of the Comptroller General and the Government Accountability Office regarding DoD matters, and to solicit recommendations in areas I think could use additional perspectives.**

Duties of the Comptroller

The duties of the Comptroller of the Department of Defense are set forth in Section 135 of Title 10, United States Code, and in DOD Directive 5118.3. Among the duties prescribed in statute are advising and assisting the Secretary of Defense in supervising and directing the preparation of budget estimates of the Department of Defense, establishing and supervising Department of Defense accounting policies, and supervising the expenditure of Department of Defense funds.

Assuming you are confirmed, what duties do you expect that Secretary Gates will prescribe for you?

- **Provide high quality, timely advice to the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary on issues related to financial management in the Department.**
- **Ensure that the men and women in the military services have the resources they need to meet national security objectives.**
- **Ensure that funds are spent in accordance with laws and regulations and that the American taxpayers get the best possible value for their tax dollars.**
- **Account in an accurate manner for the funds spent by the Department.**

What background and experience do you possess that you believe qualifies you to perform the duties of the Comptroller?

- **I have more than 30 years of experience with defense and its financial management tasks including:**
 - **Seven years as Air Force Comptroller overseeing many of the types of tasks I would, if confirmed, oversee for the Department as a whole.**
 - **Twelve years at the Congressional Budget Office heading the group dealing with national security issues.**
 - **Work in support of professional development initiatives to improve the training of defense financial managers.**
 - **Service as a member of the United States Navy, both on active duty and in the reserves.**
 - **Completion of the Certified Defense Financial Manager (CDFM) program, a test-based certification program set up to provide objective verification of knowledge of the rules and processes governing defense financial management.**

Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform these duties?

- **I believe I can continue to increase my expertise by learning more about current, specific issues regarding the DoD budget through study of source documents and discussions with subject matter experts.**

Do you expect Secretary Gates to make any changes in the duties of the Comptroller as set out in DOD Directive 5118.3?

- **I have not yet discussed this question with Secretary Gates.**

Chief Financial Officer

DOD Directive 5118.3 designates the Comptroller as the Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Defense.

Does Secretary Gates intend to continue to designate you, if confirmed as the Comptroller, as the Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Defense?

- **I have seen no indications that he would do otherwise, but will address this issue expeditiously if I am confirmed.**

If so, what would be your major responsibilities as Chief Financial Officer?

- **Oversee all financial management activities relating to the programs and operations of DoD;**
- **Develop and maintain integrated agency accounting and financial management systems;**
- **Direct, manage, and provide policy guidance and oversight of DoD's financial management personnel, activities, and operations;**
- **Prepare audited financial statements; and**
- **Monitor the financial execution of budgets.**

Major Challenges

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer?

- **If confirmed, the foremost challenge is to prepare and manage defense budgets so that the department obtains the resources necessary to accomplish national security objectives -- especially the resources needed to meet wartime requirements and for our military forces to successfully conduct their operations. This includes:**
 - **Ensuring that the pay, benefits, healthcare, and quality of life support is commensurate with the sacrifices we are asking our troops and their families to make.**
 - **Making sure the troops have the training and equipment needed to meet the challenges they will face.**
- **If confirmed, I must also improve the financial information available to DoD managers including achieving, where appropriate, auditable financial statements and improving financial systems. Better information will also help control defense spending in ways that assist in reducing long-term deficits.**
- **If confirmed, I need to support the components in their critical efforts to recruit, train, and retain a work force that can meet defense financial management needs into the 21st century.**

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

- **If confirmed, I will work closely with other senior principals in DoD and the Comptroller staff, military departments, defense agencies, Office of Management and Budget, and Congress to develop policies to meet these challenges.**
- **I will also provide aggressive leadership and support for my staff in executing these policies.**

Authorization for National Defense Programs

Do you believe that an authorization pursuant to section 114 of Title 10, U.S. Code, is necessary before funds for operation and maintenance, procurement, research and development, and military construction may be made available for obligation by the Department of Defense?

- **I understand that it has been the Department's practice to work with all the oversight committees to resolve these matters. If confirmed, I will respect the prerogatives of the Department's oversight committees and will work closely with the committees to achieve a consensus necessary to meet our defense needs.**

Supplemental Funding for Military Operations

Section 1008 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109-364) requires the President's budget to include funding for ongoing military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq in the Department's annual budget requests, along with a detailed justification for that funding. It also requires the President's budget to include an estimate of the total funding to be required in that fiscal year for such operations. The Department fully complied with these requirements in the fiscal year 2008 budget, but more than a year elapsed before Congress approved the bulk of the requested funding. The Administration then failed to comply with these requirements in the fiscal year 2009 budget request.

To what degree do you believe it is possible, in the near term, to include the full cost of these ongoing operations in the base budget request?

- **If confirmed, I would hope to work with Congress and the Office of Management and Budget to try to move away from supplementals. The feasibility of moving away from supplementals depends on the budget year.**
 - **For FY 2009, DoD needs a supplemental, because the base budget has been enacted.**
 - **For FY 2010, with limited time available for submission of a base budget request, and with continuing uncertainty about changing war requirements, the President may decide he will need to have a supplemental.**
 - **In later budgets, we should be better able to minimize dependence on supplementals.**
- **Regardless of the year, we should avoid including predictable costs in supplemental requests.**

Do you believe the costs of ongoing military operations can be fully incorporated into a unified budget request such that the use of supplementals could be discontinued? If so, what criteria would need to be met to achieve that objective?

- **Full elimination of supplementals would require substantial reduction in the uncertainties associated with wartime operations. However, the negative aspects of supplementals can be minimized by ensuring DoD scrutiny of supplemental requests similar to that afforded the base budget (a policy endorsed by the President-elect) and by providing Congress with early information regarding supplemental requests.**

In recent years the Department has had to prepare a base budget and two separate supplemental funding requests each year.

Do you believe the Comptroller organization has the personnel and other resources needed to adequately manage this increased workload?

- **I am concerned about the adequacy of resources in the Comptroller organization to manage the increased workload associated with wartime operations.**

- **If confirmed, I will carefully review the staffing and organization and recommend any changes that I believe are required.**

Program and Budget Review

The Department has operated under a planning, programming and budget (PPBS) system for decades. The programming and budgeting functions have sometimes been combined in a single reporting chain and at other times, as is currently the case, been run by distinct offices (Program Analysis and Evaluation and the Comptroller, respectively) that report separately to the Secretary of Defense. The program and budget review processes have also been revised in recent years and have been made more concurrent than was previously the case.

What are your views on the proper relationship between the program and budget processes and the offices responsible for those functions?

- **I believe there must be regular and effective coordination between the Comptroller and Program Analysis and Evaluation organizations. If confirmed, I will keep an open mind about possible changes regarding the proper relationship between the program and budget processes and the offices responsible for those functions. I will also, if confirmed, consider whether to recommend changes in the concurrency of the program and budget processes.**

Management of Defense Spending

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently released its list of “urgent issues” for the next Administration and Congress. Among those issues was defense spending. According to the GAO: “The department’s current approach to planning and budgeting is based on overly optimistic planning assumptions and lacks a strategic, risk-based framework for determining priorities and making investment decisions. As a result, it continues to experience a mismatch between programs and budgets, and it does not fully consider long-term resource implications and the opportunity cost of selecting one alternative over another.”

What are your views on the concerns raised by the GAO?

- **The Department’s Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process provides DoD with a sound process with which to develop a strategic plan and build a 6-year program and budget to achieve that plan. Within the PPBE process there is ample opportunity to debate and determine priorities and make resource decisions that take into account relative risks. The key is how that process is managed. If confirmed, my goal will be to assist in ensuring that the PPBE process does in fact achieve its designed purpose and to recommend changes where they are appropriate.**

If confirmed, what actions would you take, as the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), with respect to those aspects of the management of the Department that are within the purview of the Comptroller that may be relevant to the concerns raised by the GAO?

- **As I noted above, I will review the current implementation of the PPBE process and recommend improvements where appropriate.**

Earmarks

On January 29, 2008, President Bush signed Executive Order 13457, which states that agency decisions to commit, obligate, or expend funds may not be “based on language in any report of a committee of Congress, joint explanatory statement of a committee of conference of the Congress, statement of managers concerning a bill in the Congress, or any other non-statutory statement or indication of views of the Congress, or a House, committee, Member, officer, or staff thereof.” Congress responded to this Executive Order by including a provision in the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 that incorporated by reference the funding tables in the conference report on the bill. Similar provisions were included in several other bills.

Do you see the need for any changes to Executive Order 13457? If so, what changes would you recommend?

- **I would expect that all executive orders from prior Administrations will be reviewed by the new Administration. I would want to see the results of that review before making any specific recommendations regarding changes.**
- **However, I believe that there should be a careful review of the effectiveness of defense spending including all spending, not just earmarks. Such a review would be consistent with policies likely to be promulgated by President Obama after his inauguration.**

If confirmed, what would your duties be with respect to implementing this Executive Order with respect to funding for the Department of Defense?

- **I expect that the White House will provide direction on earmarks and, if confirmed, I will ensure that direction is followed.**

If confirmed, what steps would you expect to take to ensure that DOD abides by congressional funding decisions and that funds available to the Department are expended only for the purposes for which they have been appropriated?

- **If confirmed, I would work with DoD Components to ensure that the funds are spent for the purposes for which the Congress appropriated the funds.**

The Committee has considered the possibility of including the funding tables in bill language, instead of report language, in future bills. Concern has been expressed that this approach could limit the flexibility of the Department of Defense to transfer funds to meet emerging high-priority needs.

What is your view on the advisability of incorporating funding tables into the text of bills authorizing and appropriating funds for the Department of Defense?

- **I am concerned that DoD must have enough flexibility to meet national security requirements by, among other things, accomplishing needed reprogramming. As for this specific question, I am not familiar enough with the legal implications of incorporating the tables into the bill. If confirmed, I would examine this issue, discuss it with the Department's lawyers, and then work closely with the committees and others before implementing a solution.**

Contracting for Services

In recent years, the Department of Defense has become increasingly reliant on services provided by contractors. Over the past eight years, for example, DOD's spending on contract services has more than doubled with the estimated number of contractor employees working for the Department increasing from an estimated 730,000 in Fiscal Year 2000 to an estimated 1,550,000 in Fiscal Year 2007. As a result, the Department now spends more for the purchase of services than it does for products (including major weapon systems).

Do you believe that the Department can or should continue to support this level of spending on contract services?

- **It is my understanding that service contractors provide a valuable function to DoD.**
- **If confirmed, I would support efforts by the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics) and other leaders to review the level of contracting services required in keeping with President-elect Obama's pledge to have the department improve its strategy for determining when contracting makes sense.**

Do you believe that the current balance between federal employees and contractor employees is in the best interests of the Department of Defense?

- **DoD requires some mix of federal employees and contractors to carry out its mission effectively.**
- **If confirmed, I would support efforts to help ensure the appropriate balance in that mix.**

- If confirmed, will you take a close look at the Department's expenditures for services and determine whether it would be appropriate to cap or limit growth in such expenditures for a period of time?
- Yes.

Acquisition Workforce

Over the last 15 years, the Department of Defense has dramatically reduced the size of its acquisition workforce, without undertaking any systematic planning or analysis to ensure that it would have the specific skills and competencies needed to meet current and future needs. Since September 11, 2001, moreover, the demands placed on that workforce have substantially increased.

Do you believe that the DOD acquisition workforce is large enough and has the skills needed to perform the tasks assigned to it?

- **If confirmed, I will support the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics) organization on this issue.**

Would you agree that the Department is losing more money through waste and inefficiency in its acquisition programs than it is likely to save through constraints on the size and qualifications of its acquisition workforce, and, if so, what recommendations do you have to address the problem?

- **I understand the committee's concerns with this issue. However, I do not have sufficient recent information to answer this question effectively. Eliminating waste and inefficiency in acquisition needs to be a top priority for DoD leaders, and if confirmed, I would make that part of my agenda.**

Section 852 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 established an Acquisition Workforce Development Fund to help the Department of Defense address shortcomings in its acquisition workforce. The fund would provide a minimum of \$3 billion over six years for this purpose.

Do you support the use of the DOD Acquisition Workforce Development Fund to ensure that DOD has the right number of employees with the right skills to run its acquisition programs in the most cost effective manner for the taxpayers?

- **If confirmed, I certainly would support efforts to have the right number of professionals with the right skills for our acquisition work.**
- **I believe it is too early to know how effectively the Fund is being used. But, if confirmed, I certainly will comply with the law regarding the Fund and do everything I can to advance the cost-effective management of acquisition programs.**

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the Acquisition Workforce Development Fund remains fully funded throughout the period of the Future Years Defense Program?

- **I do not have in mind any specific steps, but if confirmed, I will examine this issue and, after consulting with this committee and others, make an appropriate recommendation.**

Chief Management Officer

The positions of Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense and Deputy Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense were established by section 904 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. In accordance with section 904, the purpose of these new positions is to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the business operations of the Department of Defense and to achieve an integrated management system for business support areas within the Department of Defense.

Do you believe that a comprehensive, integrated, enterprise-wide architecture and transition plan is essential to the successful transformation of DOD's business systems?

- **Yes. I believe an effective architecture is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for successful overhaul of DoD business systems.**

Do you believe that the Department needs senior leadership from a Chief Management Officer and a Deputy Chief Management Officer to cut across stovepipes and ensure the implementation of a comprehensive, integrated, enterprise-wide architecture for its business systems?

- **Yes. Creation of an architecture and, more importantly the implementation of system changes, are major tasks that require substantial time and management expertise. I believe that a Chief Management Officer (CMO) and Deputy CMO can help provide the required time and expertise.**

If confirmed, what role do you expect to play in working with the Chief Management Officer and the Deputy Chief Management Officer to improve the business operations of the Department of Defense?

- **If confirmed, I will work with the Chief Management Officer and Deputy Chief Management Officer in ensuring unified, standardized and integrated business processes and systems.**

What responsibilities, if any, that may have formerly been performed by the Comptroller do you believe have been, will be, or should be reassigned to the Chief Management Officer or the Deputy Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense?

- **I believe that I need more knowledge of the specific options, and the resources and expertise available from the CMO and Deputy CMO, before deciding what if any changes in responsibilities are appropriate. If confirmed, I will consider appropriate changes.**

Government Performance and Results Act

If confirmed as Comptroller, what would your responsibilities be with respect to DOD implementation of the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) to set specific performance goals and measure progress toward meeting them?

- **I would collaborate with the other Principals to ensure that the budget justification material includes realistic annual performance goals and corresponding performance measures and indicators.**
- **These executive-level goals and metrics should represent the leading performance trends that the Secretary must monitor to manage risk across the Department, and to maintain progress toward accomplishing the long-term outcomes of the defense strategy.**

What additional steps can the Department take to fulfill the goal of the GPRA to link budget inputs to measurable performance outputs?

- **If confirmed, I will review the existing GPRA metrics and work with the other Principals to improve them where warranted.**

Collection of Contractor Taxes

The Comptroller General has reported that approximately 27,100 DOD contractors owe more than \$3.0 billion in back taxes, and that the Department of Defense has not fulfilled its duty under the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 to help recoup these back taxes.

What steps will you take, if confirmed, to improve the Department's performance in this area?

- **If confirmed, I would do what is necessary to help the Department of Defense fulfill its duty under the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 – to include the collection of all monies owed to the Federal Government from any contractor with whom we are doing business. I look forward to working with other government agencies to improve the tax collection process.**

Do you believe that the Department needs additional statutory authority to be effective in identifying and recovering back taxes from contractors?

- **If confirmed, I will explore this issue with other agencies, specifically the IRS and the Treasury, after which I can better address the need for additional legislation.**

Leasing Major Weapon Systems

The Air Force's proposal, which was ultimately not implemented, to lease rather than purchase new tanker aircraft, highlighted serious concerns about the cost-effectiveness of leasing major capital assets as opposed to purchasing them and led the Department to create a "Leasing Review Panel," co-chaired by the Comptroller, to review all major leasing agreements.

What are your views on the merits of leasing versus buying major capital equipment?

- **I do not have any predetermined views on leasing versus buying major capital equipment. I believe that each proposal would need to be evaluated on its own merit.**

Under what circumstances do you believe that the lease of major capital equipment should be considered an annual operating expense for budget purposes?

- **If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department adheres to OMB guidance and pursues leasing only when it clearly benefits the taxpayer.**

Incremental Funding vs. Full Funding

Do you believe the Department of Defense should continue to adhere to the long-standing practice of fully funding the purchases of major capital assets, including ships and aircraft, in the year the decision to purchase the asset is made, or do you believe incremental funding of such purchases is justified in some cases?

- **As I understand it, it is the Office of Management and Budget's policy that requires that programs be fully funded when they are procured.**
- **I fully support this requirement and, if confirmed, will work to ensure full funding because it ensures that all of the funding is there to support a usable end item.**
- **However, there may be limited instances where incremental funding is warranted and is in the best interest of the Department and the taxpayer. For example, I can understand why we may want to consider incremental funding of some major end items such as aircraft carriers and large building construction projects because they take so long to complete and are very expensive.**

If you believe a change in policy is warranted, please explain how you believe such changes would benefit the Department and the taxpayer.

- **If confirmed, I will assess whether such a policy change is warranted.**

Base Closure Savings

The costs of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round have exceeded the initial estimates put forward by the Department of Defense and the independent commission by about 50 percent, an increase of approximately \$10 billion. Those initial estimates were derived from the Cost of Base Realignment Actions (COBRA) model, which is not designed to produce “budget quality” data.

Do you believe the Department should continue to use the COBRA model, in its current form, for any future base closure rounds that may be authorized, or do you believe the accuracy of the estimated cost of such actions should be improved?

- **If confirmed, and before significant additional use is made of the COBRA model, I will discuss this issue further with the Committee and make a recommendation.**

Do you think the office of the Comptroller should play a greater role in developing these cost estimates?

- **If confirmed, I will assess how great a role is appropriate as part of a review of the COBRA model.**

Financial Management

What is your understanding of the efforts and progress that have been made in DoD since 1999 toward the goal of being able to produce a clean audit?

- **I believe DoD is making substantial progress toward a clean audit. There is, however, a substantial amount of work still to do, including efforts to address some of the most difficult problems. If confirmed, I will pursue appropriate actions to ensure continued progress toward meeting clean audit goals.**

Do you believe the Department’s Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness (FIAR) plan will lead to achieving a clean audit opinion for the Department of Defense, or are changes in that plan necessary in order to achieve that goal?

- **I do not have detailed knowledge of the FIAR plan, but if confirmed, I will study this issue further after consulting with the FIAR committee and others.**

Do you believe that the Department can achieve a clean audit opinion through better accounting and auditing, or is the systematic improvement of the Department's business systems and processes a prerequisite?

- **Both business systems and improved processes are required.**

When do you believe the Department can achieve a clean audit?

- **I have not had the opportunity to review all the information needed to provide a specific timeline. However, if confirmed I will examine this issue more fully, including consideration of this Committee's views as well as the resources needed for the audit, and provide an answer.**

If confirmed, what role do you expect to play, and how do you expect to work with the Chief Management Officer and Deputy Chief Management Officer, in the effort to achieve a clean audit opinion?

- **Better business practices and fully integrated business systems are a must to achieve and sustain a clean audit opinion.**
- **If confirmed, I will work with the Chief Management Officer and Deputy Chief Management Officer and make use of their skills to ensure better business practices and fully integrated business systems are in place to support the Department's audit opinion goals.**

Cost Overruns on Major Acquisition Programs

Last year, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that DOD's Major Defense Acquisition Programs had experienced an estimated total (lifecycle) acquisition cost growth of \$295 billion in constant fiscal year 2008 dollars.

Do you believe the Department can build and manage an affordable program with cost increases of this magnitude?

- **I believe DoD must do everything possible to minimize acquisition cost growth, which can help ensure that we are able to provide our fighting forces the technology and capabilities needed to ensure their combat dominance.**

If you believe these cost increases are a concern, what role, if any, do you see for the Comptroller in improving the accuracy of the cost estimates for major weapons programs?

- **If confirmed, I would work with Program Analysis and Evaluation leaders, my staff, and others to scrutinize cost estimates – because they are essential components of our budget and management responsibilities.**

The poor performance of major defense acquisition programs has been attributed in part to instability in funding and requirements.

What steps would you plan to take, if confirmed, to increase the funding and requirements stability of major defense acquisition programs?

- **If confirmed, I would make stability a pivotal priority during DoD deliberations on funding and requirements. We must look at all programs and especially those that are early in their program lives, and try to ensure that enough funds are available to avoid slowdowns due to lack of funding.**

Would you agree that early communication between the acquisition, requirements, and budget communities is critical to establishing acquisition programs on a sound footing?

- **Yes, early and detailed communication is critical.**

What steps would you plan to take, if confirmed, to improve such communication?

- **If confirmed, I would work to ensure such communications are an integral part of DoD processes on acquisition, requirements, and especially on budgets.**

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 Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)?

- **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.**

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 of any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

- **Yes.**