

**Senate Armed Services Committee**  
**Advance Policy Questions for Matthew Lohmeier**  
**Nominee to be Under Secretary of the Air Force**

**Duties and Responsibilities**

**1. What is your understanding of the current duties and functions of the Under Secretary of the Air Force?**

According to Title 10, the Under Secretary shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of the Air Force may prescribe. To my understanding, the Under Secretary of the Air Force is responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the Department of the Air Force (DAF), including the organizing, training, and equipping of the Department's approximately 700,000 active duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen and Guardians as well as Department civilians. The Under Secretary serves as the "Chief Management Officer", overseeing the Department's budget and directing strategy and policy development, risk management, acquisitions, investments and the management of human resources across the enterprise.

**2. In particular, what management and leadership experience do you possess that you would apply to your service as Under Secretary of the Air Force, if confirmed?**

I have served in both the United States Air Force and the United States Space Force. In the former, I served as an F-15C pilot; in the latter, I served as a squadron commander of a space-based missile warning system, including a multi-billion-dollar satellite architecture responsible for the security of the U.S. homeland. In both of these roles, I have accumulated a deep background in strategy, policy, operations, and issues relating to human resources of our Airmen and Guardians. This includes the welfare of the servicemembers and their families.

**3. If confirmed to be the Under Secretary of the Air Force, what role would you establish for yourself in the overall supervision of the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force and the Air Force General Counsel?**

To my knowledge, the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force and the Air Force General Counsel report directly to the Secretary of the Air Force. If confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with them in realizing the vision of the Secretary and synchronizing the Department's efforts across all of their respective portfolios. I would represent their equities in senior Department of Defense governance bodies focused on the budget, policy, strategy, personnel and other matters.

**4. If confirmed, what innovative ideas would you consider providing to the Secretary of the Air Force regarding the organization and operations of the Department of the Air Force?**

If confirmed, I would bring my extensive experience as a leader in both the Air and Space Forces to realize the Secretary of Defense's vision of reinvigorating the warrior ethos of the Department. Furthermore, I would leverage the relationships with my Under Secretary counterparts to ensure that all services are synchronized in realizing the Secretary's vision.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

**Federal ethics laws, like 18 U.S.C. §208, prohibit government employees from participating in matters where they, or certain family members or organizations with which they have certain relationships, have a financial interest.**

**5. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including investments, business ties, family relationships, or other connections that could be perceived as influencing your decision making?**

Yes.

**6. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, that if a conflict of interest arises, you will recuse yourself from participating in any decisions regarding that specific matter?**

I will comply with all recusal requirements under 18 U.S.C. § 208.

**7. Do you commit, without qualification, if confirmed, to decision-making on the merits and exclusively in the public interest, without regard to private gain or personal benefit?**

Yes.

### **Major Challenges and Priorities**

**8. What would you see as your highest priorities for the near-term and long-term future of the Department of the Air Force?**

To my knowledge, the Department of the Air Force faces several modernization requirements that need to be addressed simultaneously. This includes nuclear modernization, which I believe is long overdue. The Air Force maintains two legs of the nuclear triad and a substantial portion of its command and control. Ensuring our nuclear deterrence is unquestioned is a top priority. Additionally, we must ensure our conventional capabilities are modernized for the high-end fight. This includes the Next-Gen Air Dominance (NGAD) program and a resilient space architecture that denies any so-called "first-mover advantage."

As the Department moves forward on these modernization efforts for the long-term, I acknowledge that both the Air and Space Force must be ready to "fight tonight" with

what we already have in our arsenal. This means that—in the near-term—I will prioritize the readiness of our Airmen and Guardians and restore a warrior ethos throughout the Department.

**9. What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you would face if confirmed as Under Secretary of the Air Force?**

If confirmed, I suspect that the modernization of the nuclear portfolio and ensuring the resilience of our space-based architecture will be the most pressing challenges.

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

For nuclear modernization, I plan on executing the vision of the Secretary of the Air Force. If confirmed in this role, I believe that my greatest contribution will be on communicating that nuclear modernization is not an option; it is the very foundation of our national security strategy—and we must get it right. This will require more than just an all-of DAF effort, or even an all-of-DoD effort; this requires buy-in from Congress as well as the many communities across the country that host these capabilities. I look forward to working with this Committee and this Congress, as well as civil leaders across the country, to prioritize this.

On resilient space architectures, I believe that we must continue to build partnerships with the commercial sector, leveraging what is available and only building what we absolutely must.

**National Defense Strategy**

**The 2022 NDS outlines that the United States faces a rising China, an aggressive Russia, and the continued threat from rogue regimes and global terrorism. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the NDS Commission testified in July 2024 that China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea have formed an “axis of aggressors”, supporting each other’s military aggression and illegal wars.**

**11. What is your assessment of the military threat posed by the People’s Republic of China?**

I strongly believe that China poses the greatest military threat to our forces. While the United States was focused on countering violent extremists in the Middle East, China took advantage of the last two decades by modernizing its forces and learning from the successes and failures of the U.S. military. Ensuring that our modernization timelines are ahead of theirs is crucial. If confirmed, I commit to assisting the Secretary and the Department on shortening those timelines.

**12. What is your assessment of the military threat posed by Russia?**

Though I have not been fully briefed on the Russian military threat, evidence in open-source reporting suggests that Russia continues to be an acute threat to Europe and our

many partners and allies there. While the military threat is real, I am perhaps more troubled by the pursuit of asymmetric advantages in space, cyber and electromagnetic warfare.

**13. What is your assessment of the military threat posed by collusion among Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea?**

Based on what is publicly available, I have become concerned with the growing cooperation among these actors. This has been exhibited specifically in the conflict in Ukraine, to include soldiers from North Korea and drones coming from Iran and China. If faced alone, the U.S. maintains overmatch, but growing cooperation allows this group to cover down on shortfalls in each country's capabilities. If confirmed, I commit to assisting the Secretary in organizing, training, and equipping our Airmen and Guardians to ensure advantages based on this collusion are never realized.

**In 2024, the Air Force announced a refocus on "Great Power Competition," with a series of reorganizations intended to modernize force structure and force design, to align to the 2022 NDS.**

**14. In your view, has the GPC initiative been successful?**

To my understanding, the Secretary of Defense has directed a pause in the implementation of the Department's initiatives to "re-optimize" for Great Power Competition. I have not been fully briefed on the progress made in those efforts to this point. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the progress and making a threat-informed analysis of any future efforts in this vein. I commit to sharing the results of that assessment with this Committee and this Congress.

**15. What do you perceive to be the Air Force's role in competing with and countering China?**

In my opinion, the role of the Department is to achieve a level of readiness, capability, and capacity that will deter China from pursuing military aggression to achieve its national security objectives. This requires an unquestionable nuclear deterrent and a conventional force able to achieve effects for the joint force anytime, anywhere. No joint military operation can be conducted without some element of the Department of the Air Force—a claim no other department can make.

**16. Is the Air Force adequately sized, structured, and resourced to implement the current strategy and the associated operational plans? Please explain your answer.**

I have not been fully briefed on the size, structure, and resourcing of the Department. However, based on what is publicly available, I am concerned with the fact that our Air Force fleets are smaller than they have ever been and that their average age, in most cases, is older than desired. Lower mission capable rates are reported frequently and the

costs of maintaining aging fleets keeps resources from our modernization efforts.

**17. What are your primary lessons learned from observing operations in Ukraine and the Middle East that the Air Force must consider in its modernization efforts?**

There are three lessons I have taken away from what is reported in the conflict in Ukraine that are of importance to the Department. First, the increased proliferation and usage of unmanned systems—and their successes—mean we must analyze what the proper mix of our manned and unmanned Air Force fleet needs to be. Second, the resilience of our space-based architecture needs to be a focus area, as actors are becoming more adept at jamming position, navigation and timing services, like those provided by our GPS constellations. Third, the contests in the electromagnetic spectrum mean the Department will need to re-evaluate our investments there.

**18. Does the Air Force have the requisite analytic capabilities and tools to support you, if confirmed, in evaluating the Air Force's force structure and sizing strategies to ensure that it can and will generate forces that are manned, trained, and equipped to execute current plans and strategies? Please explain your answer.**

I do not have enough information to make a judgment on the soundness of our analytic capabilities and tools. However, if confirmed, I commit to reviewing those within the Department, conducting my own assessment, and will commit to sharing the results of that assessment with this Committee.

**19. If confirmed, how will you address any gaps or shortfalls in the Air Force's ability to meet the demands placed on it by the operational plans that implement the current strategy?**

I have not received briefings regarding operational plans or the Air Force's ability to meet the demands therein. However, as a private observer, the small fleet sizes, the ages of those fleets, and the mission capable rates of those fleets are concerning. If confirmed, I commit to assisting the Secretary in addressing those issues and will be a vocal champion for the resources needed to solve them.

**20. If confirmed, what changes or adjustments would you make in the Air Force's implementation of the current strategy?**

While I applaud the Department's efforts to focus their two Services and the Secretariat on high-end conflict and competition, I have not been fully briefed on the implementation. I understand there has been a pause directed by the Secretary of Defense on some of these efforts. If confirmed, I plan on working with the Secretary to evaluate the efficacy of current efforts, analyzing any proposed efforts that are currently on pause, and sharing the results of my assessment with this Committee.

**21. How would you characterize your familiarity with the civilian leaders of the militaries of other nations and multi-national and international air power-focused consultative forums? If confirmed, on which leaders and forums would you focus your engagement with a view to advancing the interests of the Air Force?**

While my familiarity with civilian leaders of the militaries of other nations is not substantial—given my years of being a private citizen since leaving the U.S. Space Force—I recognize the importance of leveraging these relationships to ensure shared security objectives are met throughout the world. The acute threat posed by Russia demands that we maintain a very tight military relationship with our NATO allies and other partners who face unchecked aggression. Additionally, Chinese rhetoric and actions require that we bolster the relationships with our treaty allies in the Indo-Pacific as well as other friends and partners who are observing malign behavior in that region. In light of this, I would prioritize forums like the Munich Security Conference, the Quad, and ASEAN, and I would ensure the many joint and combined exercises we conduct with these partners are not only maintained, but strengthened.

### **Air Force Readiness**

**22. How would you assess the current readiness of the Air Force—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—to execute its required missions?**

To my knowledge, the Department of the Air Force is ready to deter, defend, and fight today. However, our advantage is shrinking, and overmatch is a concern of mine. If confirmed, I see my role as assisting the Secretary in enhancing that overmatch for our Air and Space Forces.

**23. In your view, what are the priority missions for which current and future Air Force forces should be trained and ready in the context of day-to-day activities, as well as for contingencies?**

The Secretary of Defense has been very clear in focusing on re-establishing deterrence, a warrior ethos, and rebuilding our military. Due to this, Air and Space Force should be trained and ready to execute five core missions: air & space superiority, global precision attack, rapid global mobility, global intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), and command and control. Together, these functions provide a range of pre-emptive and reactive options to the National Command Authority and allow the Department to integrate with the joint force in peacetime, crisis, strategic deterrence, and project power for high-end conflict. As we maintain readiness, individual units may not train to all five core functions, but as a department we stand ready to provide Air Superiority, Global Precision Attack, Rapid Global Mobility, Global ISR, and Command and Control, homeland, anywhere in the world, in support of U.S. national interests.

**24. Does the Air Force have the requisite analytic capabilities and tools to support**

**you, if confirmed as the Under Secretary of the Air Force, in measuring its readiness to execute the broad range of potential Air Force missions envisioned by 2022 NDS and associated operational plans—from low-intensity, gray-zone conflicts to protracted high intensity fights? Please explain your answer.**

The Air Force analytic and wargaming tools are essential to understanding our readiness and modernization portfolios and to make the right decisions that save taxpayers money and ensure the U.S. unparalleled advantage. While good, additional capability and capacity is required to modernize our wargaming, link models, and improve our ability for rapid, timely analysis. We require sophisticated capability tradeoff tools that enable a deep understanding of risk-to-mission, risk-to-force, and the true costs associated with different force structure choices at the speed a scale required to for thorough, data-driven judgments that outpace our adversaries. To best support the joint force, our Air Force requires advanced wargaming tools and dedicated spaces, rapid modeling and simulation capabilities, improved and cost-efficient data architecture, and interconnected tradeoff tools.

**25. If confirmed, how would you prioritize maintaining readiness in the near term, with modernizing the Air Force to ensure future readiness?**

In the near term, the Air Force must focus on developing readiness for a peer threat while making smart risk decisions to prevent overconsuming current force readiness.

To ensure future readiness, I believe the Air Force should focus efforts towards finding balance between readiness and modernization. This is a tough challenge because modernization cannot happen only in time of need and should not be conducted across the force simultaneously.

If confirmed, I will work with Air Force leadership to phase in modernization that minimizes impact upon total force readiness and take only calculated and appropriate risk to either.

## **Budget**

**26. If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of funding for the Department of the Air Force?**

If confirmed as Under Secretary, I will collaborate with military leaders to ensure Air and Space Force budgets prioritize homeland defense and deterring China and other adversaries. The DAF must align with Defense strategy, maintain readiness, and modernize to meet evolving threats. DAF must maintain air and space superiority to project power and support the Joint Force. I look forward to ensuring the resources given by Congress are used efficiently to maximize the DAF's effectiveness.

## **Acquisition**

**Civilian oversight of the acquisition system has been a cornerstone of the post-World War Two acquisition system.**

**27. What are your personal views on the principle of civilian control of the defense acquisition system?**

Delivering the capabilities our warfighters need on time and within resources requires a collaborative effort between military, civilian, and industry stakeholders. Strong and decisive civilian leadership is necessary to ensure these efforts are executed with discipline and rigor. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of the Air Force's Senior Acquisition Executives to ensure cost, schedule, and performance is maintained within our acquisition system.

**28. As Under Secretary of the Air Force, what would be your role in the Air Force acquisition process—including in the processes of defining requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?**

If confirmed, I will fulfill my role in the acquisition process as assigned to me by the Secretary of the Air Force and as prescribed by 10 U.S.C. § 9015. This will include executing all aspects of acquisition and budgeting as requested by the Secretary and in accordance with department policy. Additionally, I will work the Secretary of the Air Force, the Service Chiefs for the Air Force and the Space Force, and their staffs, to ensure requirements, acquisition, and budgets align.

**29. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to improve each of the three aspects of the Air Force acquisition process—requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?**

If confirmed, I will team with the Assistant Secretaries for Financial Management; Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics; and Space Acquisition and Integration to review current processes and identify where there is room for improvement. Next, I will work with them to develop potential efforts for consideration by the Secretary and support the decision throughout implementation. We must ensure we maximize our budget resources to deliver effective programs that meet requirements.

**30. What specific measures would you recommend to ensure producibility and speed to field are considered for program requirements in the Air Force acquisition system?**

Efficient production is a key factor in delivering warfighter capabilities in an affordable manner within a relevant time frame. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary, Department of the Air Force leaders, and industry to ensure requirements prioritize producibility, agility, and speed in the Air Force acquisition system.

**31. What metrics are used to measure the success of rapid acquisition projects? How is accountability ensured to maintain quality and performance standards while accelerating the acquisition timeline?**

Success in rapid acquisition projects hinges on balancing speed with effectiveness.

Several key metrics are used to measure this success including cost, schedule, and performance. If confirmed, I will work with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment as well as Service Acquisition Executives to ensure rapid acquisition projects are executed with discipline and rigor.

**32. How will you seek to balance the need to rapidly acquire and field innovative systems while ensuring acquisition programs stay on budget and schedule?**

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary, Department of the Air Force Leaders, Congress, and other Department stakeholders to streamline the requirements and acquisition process. I will ensure our acquisition programs provide meaningful and effective capabilities for the Joint force while leveraging all acquisition authorities and flexibilities to deliver at speed and scale. If confirmed, I will also ensure we have the necessary policies in place to strengthen the health of the defense industrial base.

**33. What are your views on the appropriate roles of OSD developmental and operational testing organizations with respect to testing of Air Force systems?**

Collaboration with our teammates in OSD development and test organizations is crucial for ensuring effective use of defense funding for next-generation warfighting capabilities. As the Air Force prioritizes rapid capability development, OSD guidance may require streamlining to expedite testing and evaluation without compromising thorough oversight.

**34. What do you see as the role of the developmental and operational test and evaluation communities with respect to rapid acquisition, spiral acquisition, and other streamlined acquisition processes?**

I believe the developmental and operational test and evaluation communities are critical stakeholders within acquisition processes and play a key role in ensuring the timely deployment of systems that deliver operational advantages to our warfighters while meeting their requirements. For any program, regardless of its structure, the sequencing and content of testing should be customized to the specific program, considering factors such as technical and operational risks, the urgency of operational needs, and the efficiency of the testing process.

**35. In which areas, if any, do you feel the Air Force should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?**

In my opinion, faster capability delivery requires streamlined developmental and operational testing using real-time data analytics and AI-driven assessments for rapid feedback and assured mission effectiveness.

**36. To what extent should the Air Force exploit non-developmental or commercial off-the-shelf solutions to meet Air Force requirements? Would this put capabilities into the hands of Airmen and Guardians more quickly, in your view?**

I believe the Department of the Air Force should exploit non-developmental items (NDI)

and commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions where feasible, balancing the benefits of rapid acquisition and cost savings against potential drawbacks. Prioritizing readily available solutions can indeed put capabilities into the hands of Airmen and Guardians more quickly.

**37. If confirmed, how would you accelerate the development of these new capabilities?**

If confirmed, I would advocate for simplifying and accelerating the acquisition process for NDI/COTS solutions. This includes reducing bureaucratic hurdles, streamlining documentation requirements, and empowering program managers to make rapid decisions. Exploring and expanding the use of Other Transaction Authorities (OTAs) and similar flexible acquisition mechanisms would be a priority.

**Requirements**

**The Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act required the Joint Staff to take a clean-sheet approach to the requirements process, and the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act required the Secretary of Defense to establish an advisory panel on reforming the requirements process.**

**38. What recommendations would you make to the requirements process to make it more adaptive to changes in threats and technologies?**

In my opinion, top-level requirements could be written in broad mission areas to allow the acquisition community to decompose them in ways that allow for rapid technological insertion, increased adaptation of commercial capabilities, and the flexibility to trade performance for speed in certain circumstances. I believe a robust discussion of the reforms proposed in the FoRGED Act and the report directed under Section 811 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 will allow the Military Services to work with Congress on potential process reforms.

**39. What role do you see for the Joint Staff versus the military services in the requirements process?**

The Joint Staff (JS) acts as the integrator for service needs, ensuring the services are working together to provide effective mission solutions as a joint team. Furthermore, the JS must provide oversight, ensuring the voice of the joint warfighter is front and center in the requirements process. In addition, the JS ensures the voices of all Services and Combatant Commands are taken into consideration and manages the process of joint requirements development. The Space Force has unique authorities in the requirements process due to the designation of the Chief of Space Operations (CSO) as Force Design Architect for the Armed Forces, and as the Joint Space Integrator, which provide him broad latitude to capture and satisfy joint warfighting gaps that can be filled with space capabilities along with developing Service specific requirements.

**Audit**

**40. If confirmed, what specific actions will you take or direct to enable the Air Force to achieve a clean financial audit in the most expedited fashion?**

To my knowledge, the Air Force has made substantial audit progress, with roughly 70% or so of its general fund balance sheet audit-ready. If confirmed, I will prioritize completing an audit quickly, leveraging industry tools and software to accelerate the process.

**41. What are the benefits to Air Force missions and effectiveness of achieving and maintaining a clean audit?**

Annual audits drive positive change, bolstering mission readiness while streamlining operations. Pursuing a clean audit opinion enhances Air Force accountability for assets (aircraft, munitions, satellites, engines, property), directly impacting mission effectiveness.

**42. How will you hold Department of the Air Force leaders and organizations responsible and accountable for making the necessary investments and changes to correct findings and material weaknesses identified in the audit process?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary to establish Air Force accountability through new governance, strict remediation timelines for senior leaders, and targeted investments to achieve a clean audit by the 2028 Congressional mandate.

**43. Based on your experience, how do you see improved data from Air Force financial management IT systems that support audit help Air Force decision-making and readiness?**

In my opinion, auditable financial IT systems improve readiness reporting (asset status), budget accuracy (focusing on real needs), and vendor negotiations (cost-effective mission support).

**As the Air Force continues down the path to a clean audit, there are still lessons that can be gleaned beyond the end goal of a clean audit opinion.**

**44. Based on your experience, how do you anticipate operationalizing any intermediate lessons from audit into the Air Force' overall management reform objectives?**

My experience here is limited, but I believe a clean audit opinion demonstrates a level of organizational competence and control directly supporting readiness efforts through efficient business operations. This approach enables the DAF to quickly adapt to change while maintaining a consistent readiness posture.

## **Air Force Programs**

### **45. What is your understanding and assessment of the research, development, and acquisition programs supporting Air Force modernization?**

The Air Force needs a mission-driven research and development (R&D) approach (science and technology, prototyping, experimentation). If confirmed, I will collaborate with the Secretary and Acquisition Executives on a risk/mission-balanced portfolio addressing near/long-term needs aligned with interim National Defense Strategy guidance.

### **46. Where do you believe are the greatest gaps that remain between required and current capability in both the Air and Space Forces?**

Any USSF capability gap would be concerning. We must develop both offensive and defensive space control for any potential conflict and for day-to-day operational freedom. Enhanced resilience, via proliferated constellations, commercial capabilities, and protection against kinetic and non-kinetic threats, is absolutely crucial.

**The Air Force is on record as stating a need to purchase a minimum of 72 fighter aircraft per year to maintain requisite force structure.**

### **47. In your opinion, what is the optimum mix of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> generation aircraft required to meet the threat outlined in the NDS?**

In my opinion, the Air Force requires sufficient 4th and 5th generation aircraft located and operated in areas suited to their capabilities. Fourth generation aircraft have many roles to play, and where those roles exist, they should be performed by 4th generation--not 5th generation--aircraft in order to preserve 5th generation aircraft for missions only they can perform. From a capabilities perspective, our 4th Generation aircraft still have an active role to play in all but the densest and most advanced threat environments around the world. Where the threat increases, specifically as we move closer to Chinese mainland, the integration of 5th generation capabilities becomes more important. But the question of fighter fleet composition isn't just about capability, it's also about managing the overall health of an aging aircraft fleet. We need to continually replace 4th generation fighters with 5th generation fighters over time, not just to address a growing, proliferating adversary threat, but also to efficiently and effectively manage readiness and sustainment over the coming decades.

### **48. Given the importance of extending the range of U.S. aircraft, what do you believe to be the overall tanker requirement for the Air Force? At what rate and on what schedule must the Air Force procure the new KC-46 to meet that requirement?**

Global Air Force deployments rely on aerial refueling. Tankers extend the reach of fighters, bombers, reconnaissance, and cargo aircraft. A robust, adaptable tanker force is crucial for future conflicts. Tankers must refuel receivers when and wherever they need gas, ensuring Joint Force deterrence. Studies show benefits from tankers with enhanced

battlespace awareness, survivability systems. KC-46A procurement, KC-135 modernization continue. Given tanker criticality, the Air Force needs all current and modernized assets, ensuring no capability gaps.

**Large-scale exercises such as Red Flag have illustrated that 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighters such as the F-22 and F-35 need to fly against multiple adversary aircraft to conduct much of their required training. The Air Force has taken a number of steps to address shortages in adversary air, including using contract air and requiring units in training to supply their own adversary air.**

**49. What are your views as to the appropriate balance of contract and organic adversary air capability?**

The Air Force prioritizes adversary air for combat training. Ideally, organic generation (unit sorties/aggressor force) would suffice. From what I understand, aircraft availability and instructor pilot manning necessitate contracted adversary air.

**50. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force properly addresses the challenges associated with the availability of adversary air to ensure that its 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighters are properly trained and ready for combat?**

If confirmed, I would consider pursuing a professional 5<sup>th</sup>-generation aggressor force while also funding contract adversary air to support pilot production, absorption, and readiness, aligned with budget priorities.

**51. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force properly addresses the challenges associated with the availability of adversary air to ensure that its 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighters are properly trained and ready for combat?**

If confirmed, I would consider pursuing a professional 5<sup>th</sup> generation aggressor force while funding contract adversary air to support Air Force pilot production, absorption, and readiness commensurate with budget priorities.

**52. What is your assessment of the readiness of the Air Force heavy bomber fleet? As to each of the airframes listed below, what improvements would you direct, if confirmed, to increase the mission readiness of each airframe (B-1, B-2, B52)?**

Currently, I am not aware of the challenges facing the heavy bomber air frames and am unable to assess the appropriate improvements that would enhance the readiness of the fleet. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the readiness of our bomber fleet by working with the Secretary, Chief of Staff, and other the Air Force leadership.

## **Munitions**

**Air Force munitions inventories—particularly for precision guided munitions and air-to-air missiles—have declined significantly due to high operational usage, insufficient procurement, poor program execution, and a requirements system that does not**

**adequately account for the ongoing need to transfer munitions to our allies. Due to draw down of certain weapons systems to support Ukraine, the Department of Defense has begun to increase production and bolster the industrial base.**

**53. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure the Air Force has sufficient inventories of munitions to meet the needs of combatant commanders?**

If confirmed, I would review procurement plans, ensuring maximum production of critical weapons and looking to expand capacity as needed and where possible. I would also explore affordable mass weapons and expanded munitions production overall.

**54. What changes in budgeting and acquisition processes would you recommend to facilitate faster Air Force munitions replenishment rates?**

Long lead times hinder munitions replenishment. If confirmed, I will explore solutions, including advance/multi-year procurement and industrial base expansion.

**55. What is your view on the implications of DOD's self-imposed restrictions on area attack and denial munitions, which are intended to be consistent with the terms of the Ottawa Convention, to which the United States is not a party?**

To my knowledge, the US hasn't signed or ratified the Ottawa Treaty. If confirmed, I will ensure Air Force compliance with DoD directives, including munitions limitations.

**56. Based on your experience, how should the Air Force be factoring in the needs of foreign partners and allies into overall munitions forecasting in order to improve the long-term production stability of the industrial base?**

The Air Force will collaborate with Allies and partners to project and formally submit long-term munitions needs. This demand signal enables US industrial base expansion, engaging lower-tier suppliers. Multi-year procurements provide industry stability for infrastructure, workforce, and supply chain investments, supporting defense industrial base revitalization.

**The FY24 NDAA required the Department of Defense to establish a pilot program to incorporate CL-20 into existing munitions.**

**57. What is your understanding of the efforts by the Air Force to execute any activities under this pilot in order to improve the explosive yield or operational envelope of any of its munitions?**

If confirmed, I will review Air Force efforts to understand the utility of CL-20 to improve the performance of existing munitions and for weapons currently in development.

**58. Regardless of whether the Air Force is doing anything under this pilot program, how is the Air Force considering incorporation of new energetic materials, like CL-**

**20, or new manufacturing processes for energetics, like biomanufacturing, into existing munitions to increase explosive effects or operational envelope of its weapons?**

I am aware of research on improved warheads and propellants for increased effectiveness and range solely based on publicly available information. If confirmed, I will ensure Air Force collaboration with industry to identify, develop, and implement these advancements.

## Space

**The United States is increasingly dependent on space, both economically and militarily—from the Global Positioning System on which many industries and military capabilities rely, to the missile warning systems that underpin U.S. nuclear deterrence. Our strategic competitors—China and Russia—are engaged in a concerted effort to leap ahead of U.S. technology and limit U.S. freedom of action in the space warfighting domain.**

**59. In your view, does the 2022 NDS accurately assess the strategic environment as it pertains to the domain of space?**

The 2022 NDS recognized space as key to joint warfighting and highlights growing Chinese space capabilities. Secretary Hegseth emphasized space's importance, vowing investment in offensive and defensive capabilities. If confirmed, I will provide inputs in support of prioritizing a secure space environment for the US, our Allies, and partners, reflecting its growing importance.

**60. In your view, what will “great power competition” look like in space and to what extent do you view China's and Russia’s activities related to the space domain as a threat or challenge to U.S. national security interests?**

I believe China and Russia will continue to use coercion to undermine US partnerships. This is particularly true in the space domain, which is crucial to US security and prosperity. Achieving space superiority is vital for the Air Force and the Joint Force overall. If confirmed, I will work to ensure a robust US force structure with offensive and defensive space capabilities to achieve national security objectives.

**61. Are there other nation-states or other actors operating in space that you perceive as a risk to the United States or as cause for concern? If so, why?**

Space is becoming more accessible for a greater number of actors. North Korea and Iran, though not rivaling great powers, exploit space and possess counterspace technology (e.g., jamming). Any actor can leverage space tech (navigation, communications, imagery) via smartphones, potentially challenging US interests. China's space expansion, particularly in developing nations, threatens US space influence, in my opinion.

**62. What specific actions would you take, if confirmed, to enhance existing Air**

**Force acquisition policies and process to move space operations projects to orbit faster and cheaper?**

The USSF must leverage private and commercial space industry innovation and take advantage of agile acquisition approaches. Driving speed into our acquisitions allows the Space Force to deliver new capabilities faster to outpace U.S. adversaries and maintain the technological advantage received from space. If confirmed, I will work with the office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, the other Departments, and with Congressional stakeholders to implement policy and statutory reforms and integrate commercial space solutions needed to support moving space capabilities to orbit faster and cheaper.

**The Space force is now acquiring space systems for protect and defend missions no different than any other weapon system of the Air Force.**

**63. Do you believe the Space Force is adequately structured and capable to acquire, test and evaluate these weapons systems to deliver the required effects to the combatant commands such as Space Command?**

The Space Force is rapidly developing its acquisition processes for space-based weapon systems, but the unique features of the space domain require tailored testing and evaluation approaches. Increased resources and infrastructure for space-specific testing, including innovative methodologies and expanded capabilities, are crucial for robust assessments. Continuous adaptation and refinement of these processes will be essential for the Space Force to effectively deliver capabilities to Combatant Commands. This iterative approach will ensure the Space Force can meet the evolving demands of space-based defense.

**64. What recommendations would you make to this acquisition and testing process to improve its effectiveness in supporting the combatant commands?**

The rapid pace of emerging technologies from adversaries requires an increasingly agile acquisition and testing process to integrate and operate capabilities that support the requirements needed by combatant commanders to meet warfighting timelines. If confirmed, I would review the current processes for acquisition and test and evaluation, work to reduce bureaucratic obstacles, and promote collaboration and integration with commercial capabilities to improve the Department's support to combatant commands and ensure they have the capabilities needed in the Joint fight.

**65. What is your vision for the ideal relationship between the Space Force and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)? How will you minimize duplication of effort between the organizations?**

If confirmed, my vision is to ensure the Space Force works across the national security space community, including the NRO, to efficiently acquire and deploy the capabilities the Guardians need to maintain the U.S.'s advantage in space. To minimize duplicative efforts with the NRO, I would prioritize a comprehensive review of current integration

efforts to determine how the Department of the Air Force could better collaborate with its mission partners to successfully achieve this vision.

## **Cyber and Electronic Warfare**

**Section 1657 of the FY 2020 NDAA directed the appointment of an independent Principal Cyber Advisor (PCA) for each Military Department, to act as the principal advisor to the Secretary concerned on all cyber matters affecting that Department.**

### **66. What do you see as the role of this position in the Air Force?**

As mentioned, the role of the PCA is codified in law. If confirmed, I will advocate for the PCA to continue providing trusted advice on all cyber matters impacting the DAF.

### **67. If confirmed, how would you plan to utilize the Air Force PCA as part of your leadership structure?**

If confirmed, I will recommend to the Secretary that we maintain the PCA's role as an independent cyber advisor within the DAF's leadership structure.

### **68. What are Air Force's top three cyber challenges, and how will you use the PCA to address them?**

In the current resource constrained environment, the DAF must field emerging technologies and novel solutions that enable warfighting and the warfighter. There are numerous challenges resident in the cyberspace domain, however top challenges include keeping pace with malicious cyber actors to ensure warfighting systems have integrity and are available to support warfighting requirements; the ability of the AF and USSF to provide fully trained and equipped forces for presentation to the Joint Force; and, the DAF's ability to address the resources required to secure, protect and defend Air and Space capabilities. The PCA's statutory role as an independent advisor is crucial to providing unbiased advice and feedback on recommendations from the Services on proposed solutions to the challenges across the cyberspace domain.

**In September 2023, DOD released its 2023 Cyber Strategy. The strategy charges DOD to persistently engage malicious cyber actors and other malign threats to U.S. interests in cyberspace.**

### **69. In your view, how well postured is the Air Force to meet the goals outlined in the 2023 Cyber Strategy? What actions would you take, if confirmed, to mitigate any gap between Air Force capacity and capability and Cyber Strategy goals?**

The DAF is focused on implementing the current DoD Cyber Strategy. If confirmed, I will advocate for continuous reassessment of current and future investment strategies, resources, and policies necessary to mitigate any gaps that exist in our capability and capacity to maintain warfighting readiness and lethality across the cyberspace domain.

### **70. If confirmed, what actions would you take to improve military and civilian**

## **cybersecurity career paths?**

Protecting Americans requires prioritizing cybersecurity. Our military and civilian workforce is key. If confirmed, I will champion cyber workforce modernization: streamlining careers, deepening expertise (via industry/academia collaboration), aligning roles with classifications, improving talent management, enabling outside transitions to public service, and securing competitive incentives and development programs to attract and retain top talent.

### **71. If confirmed, what would you do to enhance Air Force information dominance capabilities?**

Air and Space Force missions require information dominance. JADC2 and GIISR development must consider system interconnectedness and actionable information for timely decisions. Future operations need near real-time, accurate tactical information globally, without disruptive classification or sharing barriers. If confirmed, I will leverage partnerships to field information systems optimizing air and space power, enabling joint and combined forces to achieve national security objectives.

### **72. If confirmed, specifically what measures would you take or direct to improve the cybersecurity culture across the Air Force workforce—military, civilian, and contractor? How would you empower and hold key leaders accountable for improvements in DOD cybersecurity?**

Cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility. If confirmed, I will empower the workforce to identify and mitigate risks, fostering shared responsibility for system and information security. We will embed cybersecurity in acquisitions, prioritize critical vulnerability investments, and enforce accountability for negligence. I will champion cybersecurity in exercises and inspections, informing investments. This fosters cybersecurity ownership, keeping the Air Force ahead of threats.

### **73. What is your vision for the future of Air Force electronic warfare (EW) capabilities?**

To my knowledge, the Department's new EMS superiority policy addresses contested spectrum, restructuring/modernizing EW, and promoting EMS/EW awareness (training/doctrine). This aligns with the interim National Defense Strategy guidance. EW is crucial; Air and Space Force investment in it is essential. Joint and combined operations require EMS-focused, software-defined, rapidly updatable capabilities. If confirmed, I will prioritize EW, supporting innovation and new doctrine in this area.

### **74. What is your assessment of the adequacy and efficacy of the EW training that Air Force personnel received in an Air Force environment in specific airframes? In a joint environment with other Military Services?**

Enhanced Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (EMSO) training (operational/tactical/personnel) is likely needed. A finite spectrum and increasing demand (military/civilian/commercial) creates congestion. Training is constrained by

physics, technology, and domestic/international law/policy. Collaboration with stakeholders is needed to find realistic joint training solutions minimizing impact on other spectrum users.

**The Air Force is now re-invigorating the role of EW in the combat arms. It has stood up the 350th electronic warfare wing to ensure EW and Spectrum operations can perform their mission against a near peer adversary at speed and relevance. It has begun to acquire the EA-37B electronic warfare platform, which has the capability to perform EW and spectrum operations across multiple domains. Lacking however is the development of a dedicated career field devoted to EW and spectrum operations.**

**75. If confirmed, will you commit to review and report back to this committee on the role of EW and spectrum operations in the Air Force to ensure it is holistically integrated across multiple domains, whether the 350<sup>th</sup> EW wing can adequately support the EW platforms that the Air Force maintains and whether there should be a dedicated career field to this mission set?**

If confirmed, I will review the Department's electronic warfare/spectrum operations posture, focusing on cross-domain integration, the 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing's support capacity, and the feasibility and benefits of a dedicated career field.

### **Unmanned Systems**

**76. What is your opinion on the manned and unmanned teaming envisioned by the Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) program?**

In my opinion, to dominate in contested and highly contested environments, the Air Force must innovate with regard to risk-tolerant and runway-flexible capabilities that strengthen combat power generation, credible mass, and forward posture. Collaborative Combat Aircraft, teaming with crewed platforms like the F-22, F-35, and F-47, represent an innovative capability that can be purchased at lower costs than a comparable crewed platform, will help reduce our dependence on traditional Main Operating Bases, and will increase the lethality and survivability of our more exquisite, crewed platforms during conflict.

**77. Do you see utility in encouraging the Military Services to conduct more joint development in the area of aircraft and unmanned systems?**

There is significant utility in ensuring compatibility and adaptability of unmanned systems across the Joint Force. Similar systems can be used for different service missions; and specific service systems can be used to address gaps in Joint Concepts. Joint development increases alignment, opens options for missions, and targets and helps to give direction and vector to spur growth in the industrial base. While there is benefit in compatibility and adaptability, we must ensure joint development does not increase unit cost or reduce capability.

### **Air Force Military End Strength**

**78. In your view, is the Air Force’s current end strength sufficient to meet national defense objectives? If not, what end strength do you believe is necessary to do so?**

Combatant commanders are calling for more air and space power, not less. Based on publicly available information, I am concerned as to whether the Air Force’s current end strength is sufficient to meet national defense objectives, especially when contemplating the prospect of waging conflict in multiple theaters or regions simultaneously. However, I do not, at present, know what that proper end strength is. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to investigate this matter and communicate my findings and recommendations with this committee.

**79. How will the continued stand up of the Space Force, and the related transfer of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard personnel, impact Air Force and Space Force end strength requirements over the next 5 years, in your view?**

The capabilities of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard personnel performing space missions is essential. I will ensure DAF submits end strength and resource requests to Congress commensurate with the transfer of space missions and personnel to the Space Force, including end strength adjustments required by Section 514 of the FY25 NDAA as covered space functions transfer from the Air National Guard to the Space Force.

**80. What additional force shaping authorities and tools does the Air Force need, in your view? Is the Air Force’s current end strength sufficient to meet national defense objectives? If not, what end strength do you believe is necessary?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Chief of Space Operations, the Director, Air National Guard, and the Chief of Air Force Reserve to review Air Force and Space Force end strength requirements to ensure an adequate balance between current operational requirements and any future force requirements. I will commit to ensuring the right end strength is achieved to properly sustain a force structure that meets all mission demands and continuing to work on modernizing our capabilities and our force.

**81. What additional force shaping authorities and tools does the Air Force need, in your view?**

I am not aware of any additional authorities needed at this time. If confirmed, I will review force shaping tools, ensuring proper DAF force strength management. I will work with Congress to maintain DAF agility regarding needed force size and skills.

**Air Force Recruiting and Retention**

**The 2024 National Defense Strategy Commission stated that “The DoD workforce and the all-volunteer force provide an unmatched advantage. However, recruiting failures have shrunk the force and raise serious questions about the all-volunteer force in peacetime, let alone in major combat.” In addition, DOD studies indicate that only about 23% of today’s youth population is eligible for military service, and only a fraction of those**

who meet military accession standards are interested in serving.

**82. If confirmed, how would you ensure the Department of the Air Force maintains sufficiently high recruitment and retention standards?**

The Department constantly evaluates recruitment and retention programs, optimizing for talent competition. Recruiting and retention rates are high. If confirmed, I will review these, ensuring we attract and retain high-quality talent needed for national defense.

**83. If required to choose between maintaining high recruitment and retention standards and achieving authorized end strength levels, which would be more important, in your view?**

Maintaining readiness while building the future force is crucial. Data-informed recruiting and retention is key. If confirmed, I will assess standards and policies, ensuring they support readiness and warfighting needs.

**84. What impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the Air Force have on the number of individuals eligible for military service? If confirmed, what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for service without degrading the quality of recruits?**

I do not have access to information that would give me a reason to doubt current standards. In my view, we must balance standards with medical science/modernization and force readiness. If confirmed, I will review qualifications and will prioritize this balance, working with DoD to maximize effectiveness and ensure readiness.

**85. Rather than relying solely on ever-higher compensation for a shrinking pool of volunteers, what creative steps would you take, if confirmed, to expand the pool of eligible recruits and improve Air Force recruiting?**

To my knowledge, Air and Space Force recruiting is on track for FY25, with record highs. If confirmed, I will evaluate recruiting personnel, marketing, policies, and programs to ensure we attract the talent needed for warfighter readiness.

**86. What do you consider to be key to the Department of the Air Force's future success in retaining the best qualified personnel for continued service in positions of greater responsibility and leadership in the Air Force and Space Force?**

Developing and retaining personnel requires continuous training, education, and experience, fostering DAF leadership. If confirmed, I will collaborate with development and management experts and career field managers to align officer/enlisted/civilian development with Air and Space Force needs, ensuring robust quality of life and quality

of service programs supporting our Airmen and Guardians and their families.

**87. What steps, if any, should be taken to ensure that current operational requirements and tempo do not adversely impact the overall recruiting, retention, readiness, and morale of airmen and guardians?**

If confirmed, I will evaluate operational requirements, recruiting, retention, and readiness to prioritize strategic force management, quality-of-life, quality-of-service, warrior ethos, and technology/innovation. I will tirelessly advocate for our Airmen and Guardians, ensuring they have the necessary resources, training, and support.

**88. In your view, do current recruiting standards—particularly DOD-wide criteria for tier-one recruits—accurately predict recruit attrition and/or future success in the Air Force?**

To my understanding, DoD's tier-one recruiting standards (education/aptitude/fitness) are valuable. Robust standards aid initial unit integration, but predicting attrition and success is difficult given evolving warfare and diverse career paths. If confirmed, I will ensure DAF prioritizes meritocracy and refines recruitment metrics.

**89. If confirmed, how would you ensure the Air Force and Space Force can continue to bring in new talent, while managing high retention?**

If confirmed, I will work with our services to continuously evaluate our recruiting force, our marketing strategies, and our recruiting policies and programs to recruit new talent. We will continuously evaluate our training, education, and experiential development to retain the right leaders, and continuously look at how we are providing quality of life and quality of service to keep retention high.

**90. How would an individual's job performance factor into your decisions to grant enlistment extensions or officer continuation?**

If confirmed, I would evaluate how job performance is currently considered in Air Force and Space Force retention decisions, recognizing that force structure requirements are also important considerations in granting enlistment extensions and officer continuation to ensure the services maintain necessary manning across career fields.

**91. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Department of the Air Force maintains sufficiently high recruitment and retention standards?**

I understand the Department continuously evaluates recruitment and retention programs to optimize policies and processes necessary to thrive in the fierce competition for talent. I understand the Department is seeing historically high recruiting and retention rates. If confirmed, I will review these standards to ensure we recruit and retain quality, highly skilled talent needed to fight and defend the Nation we serve.

**92. In your view, what impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the Department of the Air Force have on restricting the number of individuals eligible for military service?**

I currently have no reason or data to doubt the current standards and criteria. In my view, we must balance our standards to keep pace with medical science and modernization while meeting the need for a ready and capable force. To that end, if confirmed, I will keep the balance of those standards in the forefront and work with DoD to maximize our effectiveness and ensure force readiness.

**93. If confirmed, what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for service in the Air Force or Space Force without degrading the quality of recruits?**

Again, I currently have no reason or data to doubt the current standards and criteria. In my opinion, we must balance our standards to keep pace with medical science and modernization while meeting the need for a ready and capable force. If confirmed, I will keep the balance of those standards in the forefront and work with DoD to maximize our effectiveness and ensure force readiness.

**94. What factors do you consider to be key to the Department of the Air Force's future success in retaining the best qualified personnel for continued service in positions of greater responsibility and leadership?**

Developing and retaining personnel requires continuous training, education, and experience that fosters DAF leaders. If confirmed, I will collaborate with development and career field managers to align officer, enlisted, and civilian development with Air and Space Force needs, ensuring robust quality of life and quality of service programs.

**Pilot Retention**

**The Air Force has consistently reported a shortage of thousands of pilots including a shortage of at least 950 fighter pilots.**

**95. What are the Air Force's current efforts to address this critical problem? How would you assess the effectiveness of these efforts to date?**

I believe airline hiring growth challenges Air Force pilot retention. This represents a risk to critical experience in the force. Congress enabled historically high pilot retention bonuses. If confirmed, I will monitor bonus effectiveness and work with Air Force leaders and Congress to improve pilot production and retention.

**96. What monetary and non-monetary incentives and initiatives implemented by the Air Force have yielded the most positive impacts on pilot retention?**

The Department prioritizes pilot retention (compensation, talent management, quality of life/service), using targeted bonuses, assignment stability and transparency, and a holistic

approach. If confirmed, I will monitor these efforts, working with Air Force leaders to ensure effectiveness.

**97. What additional authorities does the Air Force need from Congress to address this shortfall definitively?**

If confirmed, I will review whether and/or what additional authorities are needed to address the pilot shortage.

**98. How has the Air Force increased pilot production capacity commensurate with the demands of the NDS?**

To my understanding, the Department recognizes the critical importance of addressing the pilot shortage to meet the demands of the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance with a highly trained and ready force. The Air Force has implemented numerous programs to increase pilot production capacity through a multi-pronged approach that encompasses recruitment, retention, modernization of training, and monetary incentives.

**99. As the Air Force prepares for competition with a peer-adversary, what steps is it taking to increase quality standards within and screening rates for flight school, and the pipeline beyond?**

The Air Force's mission requires addressing the pilot shortage. If confirmed, I will consult experts within the Department and externally to enhance pilot pipelines, optimize training, and prioritize retention.

**Air Force Reserve Components**

**100. In your view, what is the appropriate relationship between the Active Air Force and the Air Force Reserve and Air Force National Guard?**

Active/Guard/Reserve interoperability is crucial. Seamless integration enhances Total Force capability and readiness. If confirmed, I will evaluate component dynamics to leverage each component's unique strengths.

**101. What is your vision for the roles and missions of the Air Force Reserve Components? If confirmed, what new objectives would you seek to achieve with respect to the Air Force Reserve Components' organization, force structure, and end strength?**

The Total Force, including the uniquely capable Air Reserve Component, needs roles/missions aligned with interim National Defense Strategic Guidance. The Guard/Reserve provide strategic depth/operational capacity across all missions/domains. If confirmed, I will ensure an integrated Total Force approach to organizing, training, and equipping Airmen.

**102. Are you concerned that continued reliance on Air Force Reserve Components**

**to execute operational missions—both at home and around the globe—is adversely affecting the ability to meet their recruiting and retention missions? Why or why not?**

In my opinion, sustained operations tempo creates challenges. If confirmed, I will consult Guard/Reserve leadership, assessing impacts and identifying necessary support for long-term force health.

### **Nuclear Enterprise**

**The Air Force is responsible for maintaining and operating two legs of the nuclear triad, including its nuclear weapons and the majority of the 107 nuclear command, control and communications systems that link the President to the nuclear forces. There have been a number of troubling incidents since 2007, including the inadvertent transportation of six nuclear armed AGM-86 cruise missiles without authorization by a B-52 from Minot Air Force Base to Barksdale Air Forces Base, and the shipment of ICBM fuses to Taiwan. There have also been continued reports of low morale and incidents of cheating on exams at ICBM bases. These actions resulted in a loss of confidence and dismissal of the two senior leaders of the Air Force, both the Secretary and the Chief of Staff. They also resulted in number of reviews, including a DOD enterprise review in 2014 by Secretary Hagel. The reviews resulted in such actions as creation of Air Force Global Strike Command, and its elevation to a four-star command, and the establishment of a Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration (A10).**

**103. What are your overall views on responsibility of the Under Secretary of the Air Force as regards the nuclear enterprise?**

The Secretary (through the Under Secretary and Chief of Staff) ensures nuclear deterrence mission safety, security, reliability, effectiveness and credibility. If confirmed, this will be a top priority.

**104. If confirmed, what actions will you take to oversee the continued implementation of these reforms of the nuclear-focused organizational and personnel systems?**

If confirmed, I would assess implementation and effectiveness of these reforms to determine their positive impact and I commit to sharing the results of that assessment with this Committee.

**105. If confirmed, what would be your approach to ensure these nuclear-related systems are adequately resourced?**

If confirmed, I will prioritize monitoring Air Force nuclear enterprise resourcing to ensure sufficient support for mission safety, security, reliability, effectiveness, and credibility.

**106. Will you commit that, if confirmed, you will personally visit Air Force nuclear facilities and bases to gain an in-depth understanding of both the infrastructure,**

**hardware, and especially how our airmen operate, maintain and secure them?**

Yes. Strategic nuclear deterrence is a top DAF priority. If confirmed, I will personally visit Airmen executing this 24/7 mission, ensuring they have the necessary resources and facilities.

**107. If confirmed, will you commit to preserving the unique role of Air Force Global Strike Command within the Air Force nuclear enterprise and ensuring its structure reflects the command's responsibility for two legs of the nation's strategic nuclear triad and over 70 percent of the DOD's nuclear command, control, and communications capabilities?**

Consistent with the direction of the Secretary, the CSAF and I, if confirmed, will ensure any restructuring of AFGSC will improve the nuclear enterprise obligations to USSTRATCOM and not adversely impact it.

**The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reaffirmed long-held American doctrine to maintain the nation's nuclear triad of land-, sea-, and air-based capabilities.**

**108. Do you agree that modernizing each leg of the nuclear triad and the Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons complex is a critical national security priority?**

Yes, modernizing the nuclear triad and the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons complex is not just a priority, but a necessity for maintaining America's defense superiority. A robust and modern nuclear deterrent is the cornerstone of our national security, and it is essential that we invest in its modernization to stay ahead of emerging threats and maintain our strategic edge. If confirmed, I will assess the status and provide the needed advocacy to continue to have a capable, and ready nuclear deterrent.

**109. Do you believe the current program of record is sufficient to support the full modernization of the nuclear triad, including delivery systems, warheads, and infrastructure?**

As I understand it, the current plan modernizes the triad (delivery systems, warheads, infrastructure). If confirmed, I will review existing nuclear systems and modernization initiatives to best maintain a safe, secure, effective deterrent.

**The Minuteman III ICBM is decades beyond its planned lifecycle and must be replaced by the Sentinel ICBM if the U.S. is to retain a triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems. However, the Sentinel program has encountered significant issues over the past year, culminating with a Nunn-McCurdy breach.**

**110. Do you support the current program of record for the Sentinel ICBM, and if confirmed, will you advocate for fully funding the program?**

Sentinel, certified as essential, underwent restructuring. If confirmed, I will follow Nunn-McCurdy recommendations. ICBM modernization is absolutely foundational to

deterrence. I will continue to seek schedule and cost improvements for the program. Success requires coordinated government, industry and community effort for this massive, once-in-a-generation modernization.

**111. Do you support the current program of record for the Long-Range Stand Off weapon and if confirmed, will you advocate for fully funding the program?**

If confirmed, I will review the status of the Long-Range Stand-Off (LRSO) program, ensuring on-time delivery of this critical deterrence capability and adequate resourcing.

**112. What are your views on expanding production of the B-21 bomber?**

If confirmed, I will review the B-21 program and work with Air Force leaders and the Commander of USSTRATCOM to assess the total number required for the Joint Force.

**113. What are your views on reconverting the full B-52 fleet back to be nuclear-capable once the New START Treaty expires?**

To my knowledge, the Air Force has assessed what it would take to achieve full B-52 nuclear reconversion. If confirmed, I will review this assessment and ensure the Air Force is postured and responsive to Presidential direction.

**The Air Force owns and operates the majority of the 107 nuclear command, control and communications systems. Major reforms have been put in place at U.S. Strategic Command to set future requirements, while the Undersecretary for Acquisition and Sustainment oversees the acquisition of new capabilities to replace existing systems.**

**114. What are your views on the adequacy of the current Air Force nuclear, command, control and communications systems?**

Maintaining safe, secure, reliable, effective, and credible nuclear deterrence, including NC3, aligns with the Secretary of Defense's priorities for the Department. If confirmed, I will assess DAF NC3 systems, evaluating their contribution to this deterrence.

**115. Do you support the current organizational approach to the acquisition and management oversight of the modernization of nuclear command, control and communications?**

I have not yet been fully briefed on this approach. If confirmed, I will review Air Force NC3 modernization programs and their management structures.

**The E-4B National Airborne Operations Center utilizes an aging 747-200 platform that must be replaced in the 2030s to ensure the capability and continuity of a number of essential missions including nuclear, command, control and communications.**

**116. What are your views on the Survivable Airborne Operations Center program to replace this platform?**

If confirmed, I will review the SAOC program, ensuring it delivers the critical capability of a highly survivable command, control, and communications center.

**Patrols in the missile fields are accomplished using Humvees which are ill-equipped for the long duration patrols, extreme cold and road conditions resulting in accidents and tragic fatalities of missile field Security Forces. The use of Joint Light Tactical Vehicles as a replacement are also ill-suited to this mission, except in certain convoy operations.**

**117. Do you support efforts to replace this capability currently underway by the Air Force Global Strike Command with a more commercial solution?**

Yes, I support the efforts of Air Force Global Strike Command to review commercial replacement options. I support continued efforts to determine a suitable commercial replacement for daily site security in missile field operations.

**118. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force continues its efforts to improve the training, readiness, morale, welfare, and quality of life of the airmen charged to execute and support the Air Force's nuclear mission?**

If confirmed, my top priorities will be strengthening both mission readiness and family support. To enhance our mission effectiveness, I will focus on fostering a warrior ethos and modernizing training through the integration of cutting-edge technologies. Simultaneously, I am committed to rebuilding vital support systems for military families. This includes expanding access to quality childcare, enhancing spouse employment assistance programs, and streamlining relocation support.

### **Cruise Missile Defense of the Homeland**

**Former Deputy Secretary of Defense Hicks designated Air Force as the DOD lead for developing a cruise missile defense architecture for the homeland in July 2022.**

**119. Where is Air Force on finalizing an architecture?**

If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump's Iron Dome for America Executive Order, also known as the Golden Dome. The comprehensive Golden Dome architecture will include contributions from multiple Services and Agencies, to include the Air and Space Force. The Air Force and Space Force will also contribute to the Golden Dome with sensing, command and control, and interceptor systems to defend the homeland.

**120. Has the Unified Command Plan realignment of Space Command as the global integrator for missile defense caused a course correction in this process?**

If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump's Iron Dome for America Executive Order, also known as the Golden Dome. The comprehensive Golden Dome architecture will include contributions from multiple Services and Agencies, to include the Air and Space Force. The Air Force and Space Force will also contribute to the

Golden Dome with sensing, command and control, and interceptor systems to defend the homeland.

**121. If confirmed, what steps will you take to expedite the completion of a final architecture and develop an acquisition and fielding strategy for the defense system, as well as for the associated domain awareness and missile warning and tracking modernization capabilities?**

If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump’s Iron Dome for America Executive Order, also known as the Golden Dome. The comprehensive Golden Dome architecture will include contributions from multiple Services and Agencies, to include the Air and Space Force. The Air Force and Space Force will also contribute to the Golden Dome with sensing, command and control, and interceptor systems to defend the homeland.

**122. In your view, how does this effort align with the President’s recent “Iron Dome for America” executive order to develop a national integrated air and missile defense architecture?**

If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump’s Iron Dome for America Executive Order, also known as the Golden Dome. The comprehensive Golden Dome architecture will include contributions from multiple Services and Agencies, to include the Air and Space Force. The Air Force and Space Force will also contribute to the Golden Dome with sensing, command and control, and interceptor systems to defend the homeland.

## **Spectrum**

**Electromagnetic spectrum plays a critical role in many DOD missions.**

**123. In what ways do the Air Force and Space Force rely on spectrum to support warfighter requirements? In your view, which warfighter spectrum requirements will be essential to competing with Russia and China on a future battlefield?**

The Air and Space Forces rely heavily on the electromagnetic spectrum for all warfighting functions, from communication and navigation to intelligence gathering and weapons systems. The ability to maintain assured access to and control of the electromagnetic spectrum will be essential for competing with sophisticated adversaries like Russia and China. To compete effectively with these nations, future warfighters will require resilient communication systems, effective air- and land-based radars, spectrum-agile weapons systems, advanced electronic warfare capabilities, and dynamic spectrum access tools for contested environments. Effective coordination and collaboration across services and with international allies will be vital for achieving spectrum dominance and maintaining a competitive edge.

**In March 2023 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, former Secretary of Defense Austin stated that, with respect to losing “S-band” spectrum, “it**

**[would] be devastating, ... it would take us somewhere north of 20 years to try to recover from – from the loss of that – that spectrum. Parts of that spectrum are vital to our national defense and the protection of the homeland. And – and, you know, in order to describe exactly – well, you know what the – what the specific platforms are, but we would have to go to a classified session to speak in detail about this. But I would tell you that this is not something you can fix overnight once you break it. It'll take 20 years plus to recover from that.”**

**In addition, with respect to the Secretary’s statement, General Alvin stated when he was nominated to be Chief of Staff of the Air Force, “I agree with previous testimony that has been provided by Secretary Austin that this would take decades.”**

**124. Do you agree with the former Secretary of Defense and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force?**

To my knowledge, the S-band contains spectrum that is foundational to a wide range of critical Air and Space Force missions, including missile warning, satellite control, air defense radar operations, space tracking, counter-UAS, and testing against adversary threats. My understanding is that losing access to this band would severely degrade our ability to execute national security functions in both peacetime and conflict.

It is also my understanding that recovery from such a loss would not be quick or easy. The risks to mission assurance and national defense in the interim would be profound.

If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to preserve and modernize the Department’s access to the electromagnetic spectrum, especially in bands like S-band that are essential to our strategic advantage. I will also work to ensure the Department of the Air Force remains an active partner in national spectrum policy discussions, balancing national security requirements with broader spectrum demands.

**125. Were DOD required to “vacate” or leave the “Mid-Band” spectrum instead of sharing, what are the potential operational and dollar costs to the Air Force and Space Force, in your view? How long would a move to a different area of the spectrum take, in your view?**

If the DoD were required to vacate the mid-band spectrum instead of sharing it, estimating the potential operational and dollar costs to the Air Force and Space Force is impossible without first identifying available alternative spectrum and rigorously studying its suitability through scientific processes. Given that the physics of the mid-band cannot be replicated in other parts of the spectrum, finding a suitable alternative presents a significant technical challenge, with potentially significant implications for national security. This analysis is crucial to ensure the desired operational effects are maintained.

Similarly, the time required for a transition to a different spectrum is dependent on the specific band chosen, industry's ability to manufacture components that operate in this range, and the complexity of migrating existing systems, and therefore the cost cannot be estimated until a suitable alternative frequency is identified and studied.

**126. In your view, how would direction to DOD to vacate additional portions of spectrum affect the implementation of the President’s “Iron Dome for America” executive order whose missile defense radars operate primarily in the S-band?**

Vacating any part of the S-band spectrum, especially frequencies crucial for missile defense radars, could severely hamper President Trump’s "Golden Dome for America" initiative. Any decision regarding S-band reallocation must carefully weigh the benefits against the potential risks to missile defense capabilities. If confirmed, I will review the latest analysis and work with DoD CIO, Combatant Commanders, and the Congress to find the right balance to secure America's vital national security interests.

### **Science, Technology, and Innovation**

**127. In your view, how have the Air Force and Space Force prioritized limited research and development funding across its technology focus areas? Specifically, where are the Air Force and Space Force either increasing or decreasing focus and funding?**

The Air Force and Space Force R&D communities have incredible opportunities to provide both new technologies to improve legacy platforms while providing leap-ahead capabilities in the near- and mid-term. Today’s investment in R&D will ultimately determine who has the technological advantage in tomorrow’s conflicts. If confirmed, I look forward to gaining additional insight into the Department’s R&D portfolio to ensure investments in those areas are fully aligned with delivering the most lethal and impactful capabilities to the warfighter for both deterrence and armed conflict.

**128. If confirmed, how would you improve efforts the Air Force and Space Force are making to identify new technologies developed commercially by the private sector and apply them to military and national security purposes?**

It is critical that the Air Force leverage those commercially-developed technologies for military applications – where possible and with the proper safeguards in place – and utilize USAF investments for military unique technology development. There is untapped expertise throughout the commercial market – in the traditional Primes, the non-traditional companies, and the immense small business community. In a resource-constrained environment, the Department of the Air Force needs to pull every lever and turn every knob available to tap into the multi-billion-dollar market out there that is eager to contribute to protect America’s equities and way of life. If confirmed, I plan to prioritize this and ensure the Air Force is leveraging every innovation possible.

**129. How would you work to increase investments in research infrastructure through Air Force MILCON investments to match growing investments in China in research infrastructure in domains such as quantum science, hypersonics, and advanced materials?**

If confirmed, I will ensure the authorities granted by Congress under Title 10 will be

utilized to their maximum extent, to include innovative uses of minor MILCON authorities to combat the rising costs of maintaining aging facilities and targeted modernization projects while working to increase the prioritization of major laboratory and test center facility requirements for MILCON funding for strategic investments by the USAF.

**130. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the limited Air Force science and technology budget is used for genuine science and technology technical challenges, and not to support more mature prototyping and development activities more appropriately addressed with other Air Force RDTE resources?**

Science and Technology (S&T) investments are focused on Basic Research, Applied Research, and Advanced Technology Development areas that need to be informed by and aligned to operational requirements and capability needs. If confirmed I look forward to reviewing how the current Air Force structure supports S&T prioritization and will work to ensure Air Force optimizes S&T resourcing, infrastructure, and expertise.

**131. In your view, would the Air Force benefit from authorities that enable it to make use of expert foreign national talent in appropriate capacities and in appropriate settings to support modernization priorities and better compete with peer adversaries?**

I believe the Air Force, and indeed the broader national security enterprise, would benefit from carefully managed authorities that allow us to leverage the expertise of foreign nationals in appropriate capacities and settings. This talent pool can offer unique skills and perspectives crucial for advancing modernization priorities and maintaining a competitive edge against peer adversaries, particularly in critical technology areas. However, any such initiative must prioritize robust security protocols and rigorous vetting processes to safeguard sensitive information and protect national security interests. A balanced approach that leverages talent while mitigating risk is essential.

**132. What incentives should the Air Force provide to universities and researchers to develop domestic technical talent and counter opportunities for researchers in critical fields being offered by peer adversaries, including China?**

If confirmed, I will carefully consider the need for incentives to encourage universities and researchers to develop domestic technical talent, particularly in critical fields where competition with peer adversaries is intense. This includes reviewing existing programs and exploring potential new approaches to ensure we can attract and retain the best and brightest minds to support the Air Force's mission.

## **Operational Energy**

The Department defines *operational energy* as the energy required for training, moving, and sustaining military forces and weapons platforms for military operations, including the energy used by tactical power systems, generators, and weapons platforms. Longer operating distances, remote and austere geography, and anti-access/area denial

**threats are challenging DOD's ability to assure the delivery of fuel. As the ability to deliver energy is placed at risk, so too is the Department's ability to deploy and sustain expeditionary Air Force units around the globe.**

**133. What are your ideas for future capabilities that would enable an expeditionary Air Force through the assured delivery of energy to the warfighter?**

If confirmed, I will work with the DAF to pursue revolutionary future capabilities that deliver energy assurance and maximize combat capability in contested domains. To my knowledge, the DAF is using a public-private partnership to maximize return on investment for a Blended Wing Body (BWB) aircraft that will increase efficiency by 30% and offer solutions to multiple capability needs. I will also explore potential hybrid-electric aircraft and space solar power technologies that enable agile combat employment concepts for expeditionary forces. I will strengthen the linkages between DAF offices and industry to promote innovative future capabilities that assure the delivery of energy to the warfighter.

**134. What are your ideas for reducing the risk associated with the Air Force's dependence on vulnerable supply lines?**

If confirmed, I will ensure appropriate emphasis is placed upon energy supportability, specifically by ensuring holistic analysis of campaign-level energy consumption and addressing expected supply chain risks. I will optimize fuel use by exploring the viability of alternative propulsion systems for legacy aircraft, increased performance through better mission planning and execution software, improved aerodynamics through drag reduction technologies, and engine sustainment technologies that maximize lethality per gallon.

### **Infrastructure Challenges**

**Non-DOD funding mechanisms such as energy savings performance contracts, utility energy savings contracts, and power purchase agreements are excellent means by which the Air Force can improve infrastructure, increase resilience, reduced deferred maintenance, implement alternative energy resources, save taxpayer funds, and secure other benefits without upfront appropriated funds.**

**135. If confirmed, what steps would you take to streamline this process and how long would it take you to resume entering into contracts of this sort for the benefit of Air Force installations?**

If confirmed as Under Secretary, I will leverage all authorities, including third-party contracts, to bolster infrastructure and energy security. I will collaborate with OSD and DOE to streamline processes and expedite solutions.

### **Air Force-related Defense Industrial Base**

**136. What is your assessment of the systems and processes for identifying,**

**evaluating, and managing risk in the Air Force's organic and commercial defense industrial base, including the munitions industrial base?**

A strong Air Force requires understanding and managing defense industrial base risk. If confirmed, I will advance tools and processes to proactively identify supply chain risks and capacity bottlenecks, addressing them before crises arise.

**137. What do you see as the levers to motivate the defense industrial base to make additional capital investment (for facilities and tooling), as well as research and development investments to increase the capacity of the defense industrial base?**

Industry relies on clear and consistent demand signal to determine where return on investment can be found. If confirmed, I will work within the Air Force and with Congress to incentivize capital investment in the industrial base.

**138. How should Air Force acquisition leaders consider impacts on the industrial base when addressing requirements for recapitalization or modernization of major defense weapons systems and munitions?**

If confirmed, I will collaborate with Service Acquisition Executives to ensure acquisition strategies consider industrial base impacts, promoting competition, lowering barriers to entry, and incentivizing strategic investment and R&D.

**139. How would you seek to ensure the Air Force engages with the broadest industrial base possible, including traditional contractors, nontraditional contractors, and small businesses?**

If confirmed, I will work with Service Acquisition Executives to connect the Air Force with all supply chain tiers, including crucial small businesses. I will engage industry associations, state/local governments, and trade organizations to understand industrial base risks and constraints.

**140. If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you pursue in systems and processes to ensure that risk in the Air Force-relevant sectors of the defense industrial base is adequately managed to enable the development, production, and sustainment of technically superior, reliable, and affordable weapons systems and munitions?**

If confirmed, I will work with Service Acquisition Executives to proactively identify and address industrial base risks and bottlenecks. I will also ensure acquisition strategies promote competition, leverage Modular Open Systems Architectures, and prioritize producibility.

**Military Health System (MHS) Reform**

**141. Do you support the implementation of the MHS reforms mandated by the NDAs for FYs 2017, 2019, and 2020?**

If confirmed, I will support the DHA as directed by Congress. The DAF remains a steadfast partner, providing leadership and project management to transfer programs and resources lawfully. Despite service-specific challenges, I will ensure DAF dedication to the Defense Health Agency and Military Treatment Facilities supporting Air Force and Space Force missions and community healthcare.

**142. Will you ensure that the Air Force continues to provide the military medical personnel needed to provide care in military treatment facilities?**

I champion the MHS mission for a medically ready force and ready medical force—anytime, anywhere. Our service members and families deserve the best care, and our medical personnel are key. If confirmed, I will review personnel strategy to ensure we recruit, access, and retain the right talent for this complex mission.

**Military Compensation**

**143. What is your assessment of the adequacy of military compensation and benefits?**

If confirmed, I look forward to a detailed review of military compensation, including the junior enlisted pay increase Congress enacted last year, to better understand which, if any, areas may need revision to allow for a more targeted approach to the overall compensation package.

**144. If confirmed, what steps would you take to control the rising cost of military personnel?**

If confirmed, I will review DAF personnel costs, drivers of growth, and potential savings while maintaining our ability to attract and retain talent.

**Non-Deployable Service members**

**145. Do you agree that airmen and guardians who are non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months should be subject either to separation from the Army or referral into the Disability Evaluation System?**

Readiness is paramount. If confirmed, I will align non-deployment policies with Air Force priorities, prioritizing readiness and mission needs. Individual circumstances will be considered, but operational strength and deployability are key. I will ensure our forces remain ready.

**146. In your view, under what circumstances might the retention of a servicemember who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months be in the best interest of the Department of the Air Force?**

I lack sufficient information to speculate. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to understand the current approach and consider Air Force mission and readiness

requirements.

### **Suicide Prevention**

**147. If confirmed, what actions would you take to prevent suicides in the Active Air Force, the Air Force Reserve, and the Air National Guard, and in the families of airmen across all components?**

The Air Force must promote mental well-being, eliminate barriers to care, and destigmatize seeking help. This enhances lethality, readiness, and warrior ethos. If confirmed, I will support the Brandon Act and evidence-based programs improving mental health access.

### **Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention and Response Programs**

**148. Do you believe the policies, programs, resources, and training that DOD and the Military Services have put in place to prevent and respond to sexual assault, and to protect service members who report sexual assault from retaliation, are working? If not, what else must be done?**

As a private citizen who previously served in leadership roles in the Air and Space Forces, I see significant emphasis on ending sexual violence in our Services. Sexual assault harms our Airmen and Guardians and has a direct impact on readiness, demanding our attention. If confirmed, I will review related policies, programs, resources, and training for effectiveness, including retaliation protection for reporters.

**149. What is your view of the necessity of affording a victim both restricted and unrestricted options to report sexual harassment?**

Restricted and unrestricted reporting offer victims confidential help or official reporting. These options allow the DAF to tailor support to individual needs.

### **Space Force Personnel Management Act**

**The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 authorized the Space Force to combine all active and reserve component guardians into a single, full-time/part-time, component.**

**150. In your judgement, how will this novel military personnel arrangement benefit the Space Force?**

I have been informed that the Space Force Personnel Management Act (PMA) directs the Space Force to design and implement an alternative military personnel management system without components. This unified service will offer Guardians the ability to serve in both full-time and part-time work roles and transition between them based on individual preferences and the needs of the Space Force. This authority benefits the Space Force by providing unique talent management opportunities extending the continuum of service without service interruption, attracting and retaining talent, and

ultimately enhancing military readiness and lethality.

**151. How will you ensure former members of the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard are not disadvantaged by joining the Space Force under this new construct?**

My understanding is that the Space Force is working closely with the AFR and ANG on a phased implementation plan to transfer space aligned missions, billets, resources, and personnel. The PMA ensures that Guardians serving in full-time and part-time work roles are treated the same as similarly situated members of regular and reserve components, respectfully. If confirmed, I will review the implementation plan and work to ensure that members of the ARC and ANG are not disadvantaged in any way by volunteering to the Space Force.

**The committee understands that personnel information technology systems are the main obstacle preventing the Space Force from implementing the Space Force Personnel Management Act expeditiously.**

**152. If confirmed, how will you assist the Space Force acquire the necessary technology required to implement the Space Force Personnel Management Act?**

The Space Force Personnel Management Act provides the authority the Space Force needs to develop and implement a modern military personnel system. It is my understanding that integration with the legacy DAF and OSD personnel IT systems is one of the most challenging lines of effort for implementing the PMA. If confirmed, I will review the Space Force's resourcing and technology requirements unhindered throughout the multi-year implementation process to ensure that they meet Congressional intent and take care of our Guardians.

**Section 514 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 requires the Secretary of the Air Force to transfer to the Space Force the covered space functions and personnel of the Air National Guard.**

**153. What is your understanding of when the transfer of the covered units and equipment to the Space Force will occur, and what is the associated plan for transferring personnel?**

If confirmed, I will work with Space Force, Air Force, and National Guard leadership to develop a comprehensive plan for transferring covered space functions and personnel who choose to transfer from the Air National Guard to the Space Force within the transition timeline established by Congress.

**Air Force Integrated Pay and Personnel System (AFIPPS)**

**The committee is aware that the AFIPPS program continues to struggle with significant schedule delays and cost overruns. This program is essential for the Air Force to**

**implement modern personnel policy and for Air Force audit requirements.**

**154. What is your view of the importance of AFIPPS?**

I understand AFIPPS modernizes DAF personnel and pay. If confirmed, I will seek a detailed program briefing and, if needed, collaborate with DAF leadership on a finalization strategy.

**155. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure AFIPPS delivers the promised capability according to latest schedule and cost estimates?**

Caring for our people is paramount. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to understand this program's status and future needs.

**Department of the Air Force Civilian Workforce**

**156. How would you describe the current state of the Department of the Air Force (including the Space Force) civilian workforce, including its morale and the Department's ability to successfully recruit and retain top civilian talent?**

Civilians are vital to military readiness. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department prioritizes hiring top talent for warfighting-critical positions. I will also review the work environment and employee engagement, adjusting as needed.

**157. In your judgment, what is the biggest challenge facing the Air Force and Space Force in effectively and efficiently managing their civilian workforce?**

If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to understand workforce management challenges. I will maximize Congressional hiring and compensation flexibilities, fostering a meritocratic, innovative culture. I will commit to reviewing personnel processes for civilian workforce management efficiencies.

**158. In your view, do Air Force and Space Force supervisors have adequate authorities to address and remediate employee misconduct and poor duty performance, and ultimately to divest of a civilian employee who fails to meet requisite standards of conduct and performance?**

If confirmed, I am committed to hiring and retaining the have the best people. If I am confirmed, I will review the effectiveness of the numerous personnel management authorities and systems and explore greater efficiencies. The Department must make every effort to create a future-ready, agile and adaptive workforce able to meet the rapidly evolving challenges of the 21st century.

**159. If so, are both civilian and military supervisors adequately trained to exercise such authorities? If not, what additional authorities or training do Air Force and Space Force supervisors require?**

If confirmed, I am committed to making sure the Department continues to have the best

people and that supervisors are properly trained. If I am confirmed, I will review the effectiveness of the numerous personnel management authorities and systems and explore greater efficiencies. The Department must make every effort to create a future-ready, agile and adaptive workforce able to meet the rapidly evolving challenges of the 21st century.

### **Senior Executive Service**

**160. Given that competent and caring leadership is one of the most significant factors in shaping a high-performing DOD civilian workforce, if confirmed, what factors and characteristics would be most important to you in selecting candidates for appointment to the Senior Executive Service?**

The Senior Executive Service is vital and if confirmed, I will prioritize candidates with proven competence, strong character and a commitment to a more efficient and effective Department.

**161. If confirmed, how would you ensure that SES under your authority are held accountable for both organizational performance and the rigorous performance management of their subordinate employees?**

If confirmed, I will focus on ensuring the Senior Executive Service is held accountable for achieving results. This involves supporting SES leaders in fostering a culture of excellence within their organizations. My leadership will emphasize clear expectations, measurable outcomes, and consistent performance evaluations. High achievers will be recognized, and underperformance will be addressed.

**162. Are you satisfied with the subject matter and rigor of SES professional development programs currently available across DOD and in the Air Force and Space Force? If not, what changes would you make to these programs, if confirmed?**

Professional development for our Senior Executive Service (SES) cadre is critical to ensuring we have the strategic leadership required for the complex challenges facing the Air and Space Forces. If confirmed, I will review the DAF SES professional development programs to ensure alignment with the DoD and DAF priorities.

### **Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Military Families**

**163. What is your understanding of the extent of domestic violence and child abuse in the Air Force, and, if confirmed, what actions would you take to address these issues?**

I take the health and well-being of the force and our military families extremely seriously. I recognize that domestic violence and child abuse are serious issues that have

no place, but do exist. Domestic violence is a serious problem that impacts readiness in the Department of the Air Force. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring these issues are receiving the attention they deserve and the necessary resources to support effective prevention and response.

### **Military Quality of Life**

**164. If confirmed, what quality of life and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs would you consider to be a priority?**

MWR programs are a necessity and go a long way towards improving quality of life for military members and their families, especially when stationed far from home. Fostering resilient and ready families directly impacts readiness, recruitment, and retention of military members. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to understand which programs are high in demand, and where new programs may need to be introduced based on community needs.

**165. What metric would you apply in determining which MWR and quality of life programs should be sustained or enriched and which should be eliminated or reduced in scope as ineffective or outmoded?**

MWR and quality of life are critical factors in readiness and enable recruitment and retention. If confirmed, I will work with senior leaders to conduct a review of existing MWR and quality of life programs to assess the effectiveness of these programs in supporting readiness.

### **Military Family Readiness and Support**

**166. What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for service members and their families?**

We recruit Airmen and Guardians but retain families. Press reports suggest compensation, spousal employment, childcare, and food insecurity challenge families. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to identify key challenges, assess existing support, and develop enhanced strategies, advocating for necessary resources.

**167. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that military families are provided with accessible, high-quality childcare, at an appropriate cost?**

Military readiness requires affordable, quality childcare. If confirmed, I will collaborate with DAF leaders to evaluate current initiatives and explore opportunities to expand childcare options—traditional, non-traditional, and community-based—for our Airmen and Guardians.

### **Congressional Oversight**

**In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, reports, records (including documents and electronic communications) and other information from the Department.**

**168. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes.

**169. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records (including documents and electronic communications), and other information as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes.

**170. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes.

**171. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes.

**172. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes.

**173. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes.

**174. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes.