

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Richard O'Malley
Nominee for Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment

Duties

1. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment?

It is my understanding that the Deputy Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment (DUSW(A&S)) serves as the principal deputy and advisor to the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment (USW(A&S)) for all matters relating to acquisition and sustainment in the Department of War, with responsibility for delivering integrated capabilities to the Department's warfighters quickly and at scale. This requires that the DUSW(A&S) drive effective oversight of the full DoW acquisition and sustainment enterprise while enforcing appropriate policies and processes to drive innovation and production at scale; help foster a robust defense industrial base; sustain and modernize the Department's weapons systems over their full life cycles; build a resilient logistics and mission support enterprise; empower the acquisition and sustainment workforce to increase cost efficiency and reduce delivery timelines; and ensure Service members and their families have safe and functional places to live and work.

2. What background and experience do you possess that qualify you to perform these duties? What background or experience, if any, do you have in the acquisition of major weapon systems?

In my current capacity as Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, I am involved in the operations, policies, and strategic objectives of the office I am nominated to help lead. If confirmed, this firsthand knowledge will allow me to execute these critical duties on day one. Additionally, my previous roles as Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and Director of Strategic Initiatives have provided me with a comprehensive, department-wide perspective on resource allocation and joint operations. Furthermore, as a Navy Reserve Intelligence Officer with deployments to Iraq and Syria, I have operated at the tactical edge and understand the life-or-death impact the Department's acquisition decisions have on the warfighter. I also bring critical private sector expertise in defense contracting, major program finance, and systems integration from my time at Lockheed Martin, Journal Communications, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

3. If you are confirmed, what duties and functions do you expect that the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment will assign to you?

Consistent with 10 U.S.C. § 137a, if confirmed, my statutory role is to serve as the first assistant to the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment. In that capacity,

I expect the Under Secretary will assign me duties that assist in executing the statutory functions of that office as defined in 10 U.S.C. § 133b.

I do not know what duties the Under Secretary will delegate. However, I expect my focus will be to act as the Under Secretary's principal deputy in managing the day-to-day operations of the acquisition and sustainment enterprise, and to execute any specific responsibilities, authorities, or duties formally delegated to me by the Secretary of War or the Under Secretary.

Qualifications

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) is the Chief Acquisition and Sustainment Officer of the Department of Defense. If confirmed, in supporting the USD(A&S), you will be responsible for establishing policy and conducting oversight of an acquisition and sustainment system through which the Department spends more than \$500 billion each year. What background and experience do you have that qualify you for this position? In particular:

4. What background or experience, if any, do you have in executing programs to acquire products and/or services?

In my current capacity as Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment (USW(A&S)), a position I have held since March 2026, I am becoming involved in the operations, policies, and strategic objectives of the USW(A&S) office. If confirmed, this firsthand knowledge will allow me to execute these critical duties on day one. Additionally, my previous roles as Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and Director of Strategic Initiatives have provided me with a comprehensive, department-wide perspective on resource allocation and joint operations. Furthermore, as a Navy Reserve Intelligence Officer with deployments to Iraq and Syria, I have operated at the tactical edge and understand the life-or-death impact the Department's acquisition decisions have on the warfighter. I also bring critical private sector expertise in defense contracting, major program finance, and systems integration from my time at Lockheed Martin, Journal Communications, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

5. What background or experience, if any, do you have in overseeing the execution of programs to acquire products and/or services?

In my current capacity as Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, I am involved in the operations, policies, and strategic objectives of the office I am nominated to help lead. If confirmed, this firsthand knowledge will allow me to execute these critical duties on day one. Additionally, my previous roles as Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and Director of Strategic Initiatives have provided me with a comprehensive, department-wide perspective on resource allocation and joint operations. Furthermore, as a Navy Reserve Intelligence

Officer with deployments to Iraq and Syria, I have operated at the tactical edge and understand the life-or-death impact the Department's acquisition decisions have on the warfighter. I also bring critical private sector expertise in defense contracting, major program finance, and systems integration from my time at Lockheed Martin, Journal Communications, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

6. What background or experience, if any, do you have in managing portfolios of programs?

In my current capacity as Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, I am involved in the operations, policies, and strategic objectives of the office I am nominated to help lead. If confirmed, this firsthand knowledge will allow me to execute these critical duties on day one. Additionally, my previous roles as Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and Director of Strategic Initiatives have provided me with a comprehensive, department-wide perspective on resource allocation and joint operations. Furthermore, as a Navy Reserve Intelligence Officer with deployments to Iraq and Syria, I have operated at the tactical edge and understand the life-or-death impact the Department's acquisition decisions have on the warfighter. I also bring critical private sector expertise in defense contracting, major program finance, and systems integration from my time at Lockheed Martin, Journal Communications, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

7. What background or experience, if any, do you have in developing policy and processes for programs to acquire products and/or services, as well as policies and processes for oversight of such programs?

In my current capacity as Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, I am involved in the operations, policies, and strategic objectives of the office I am nominated to help lead. If confirmed, this firsthand knowledge will allow me to execute these critical duties on day one. Additionally, my previous roles as Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and Director of Strategic Initiatives have provided me with a comprehensive, department-wide perspective on resource allocation and joint operations. Furthermore, as a Navy Reserve Intelligence Officer with deployments to Iraq and Syria, I have operated at the tactical edge and understand the life-or-death impact the Department's acquisition decisions have on the warfighter. I also bring critical private sector expertise in defense contracting, major program finance, and systems integration from my time at Lockheed Martin, Journal Communications, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

8. What qualifications do you have using modern data approaches, tools, and methods that prepare you to maintain visibility of, analyze, and manage data on the volume, variety, and complexity of the inventory of acquisition and sustainment initiatives and programs in the Department?

In my current capacity as Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, I am involved in the operations, policies, and

strategic objectives of the office I am nominated to help lead. If confirmed, this firsthand knowledge will allow me to execute these critical duties on day one. Additionally, my previous roles as Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and Director of Strategic Initiatives have provided me with a comprehensive, department-wide perspective on resource allocation and joint operations. Furthermore, as a Navy Reserve Intelligence Officer with deployments to Iraq and Syria, I have operated at the tactical edge and understand the life-or-death impact the Department's acquisition decisions have on the warfighter. I also bring critical private sector expertise in defense contracting, major program finance, and systems integration from my time at Lockheed Martin, Journal Communications, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

9. What background or experience, if any, do you have in managing contracts for services?

In my current capacity as Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, I am involved in the operations, policies, and strategic objectives of the office I am nominated to help lead. If confirmed, this firsthand knowledge will allow me to execute these critical duties on day one. Additionally, my previous roles as Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and Director of Strategic Initiatives have provided me with a comprehensive, department-wide perspective on resource allocation and joint operations. Furthermore, as a Navy Reserve Intelligence Officer with deployments to Iraq and Syria, I have operated at the tactical edge and understand the life-or-death impact the Department's acquisition decisions have on the warfighter. I also bring critical private sector expertise in defense contracting, major program finance, and systems integration from my time at Lockheed Martin, Journal Communications, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Relations with Congress

10. What are your views on the state of the relationship between the Office of the USD(A&S) and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

I believe the relationship between the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment and Congress, particularly this committee, is founded on a vital, shared mission: to accelerate the acquisition and sustainment of the Department's weapon systems and deliver the most capable equipment to the warfighters on time and on budget. This common goal is the basis for a strong partnership that can, and should, always be strengthened.

If confirmed, I view this relationship as a complementary one, essential for success. Congress provides the authorities and resources, and OUSW(A&S) executes the mission. To make that partnership as effective as possible, my commitment would be to prioritize transparency, proactive communication, and a genuine dedication to working together.

11. If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the Office of the USD(A&S)?

I would prioritize maintaining consistent engagement and open dialogue with congressional stakeholders to ensure mutual alignment on key defense priorities. I am committed to keeping Congress informed of program developments and working collaboratively to address challenges as they arise. It is my firm belief that a strong, cooperative relationship is essential to supporting our national defense objectives and successfully delivering capability to the warfighter.

Implementation of Acquisition Reforms

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 centered on overhauling the defense acquisition system to prioritize speed, innovation, and warfighter outcomes. President Trump’s Executive Order 14265 (“Modernizing Defense Acquisitions and Spurring Innovation in the Defense Industrial Base,” April 2025), culminating in the November 2025 memo “Transforming the Defense Acquisition System into the Warfighting Acquisition System to Accelerate Fielding of Urgently Needed Capabilities to Our Warriors” mirrored many of the reforms initiated by the Congress.

12. If confirmed, what are the top priorities you would plan to focus on during your tenure as the DUSD(A&S)? What would be your plans for achieving these priorities?

If confirmed, my top priorities will directly support the Secretary’s vision of transforming our acquisition processes into a Warfighting Acquisition System. This includes: 1) Rebuilding the Defense Industrial Base to expand our capacity and bring in new, innovative companies; 2) Elevating and empowering our acquisition workforce to make faster, risk-informed decisions; and 3) Maximizing acquisition flexibility by cutting red tape and leveraging modern tools and authorities. To achieve this, I will work to implement the key pillars of the Acquisition Transformation Strategy, focusing on immediate actions like stabilizing demand signals, accelerating commercial preference, and empowering Portfolio Acquisition Executives to drive results.

13. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges to implementing acquisition reform that face DOD’s acquisition and sustainment communities?

The greatest challenges are cultural and structural. We face a culture that has often prioritized compliance over speed and execution, leading to risk aversion. Structurally, our processes for requirements, budgeting, and acquisition are not fully integrated, which hinders agility. Furthermore, the consolidation of the defense industrial base has limited competition and innovation, and we must overcome significant barriers to entry for new and non-traditional companies.

14. What would be your plans for addressing these challenges, if confirmed?

My plan is to champion a culture that rewards speed, calculated risk-taking, and performance. I will support the empowerment of program leaders and the acquisition workforce with the authority and flexibility they need to deliver. I will also work to break down silos between the requirements, budgeting, and acquisition communities by implementing portfolio-based management and data-driven oversight. A key effort will be to actively expand the industrial base by lowering barriers, accelerating contracting, and making the Department more attractive to commercial innovators.

15. By what metrics will you measure your progress towards achieving these priorities and addressing these challenges?

Progress will be measured by clear, outcome-focused metrics. These include time from requirement identification to capability delivery; reduction in program cost growth and schedule delays; an increase in the number of new and non-traditional companies winning contracts; growth in domestic production capacity for critical systems; and utilization rates of modern acquisition pathways like the Middle - Tier of Acquisition and the Software Acquisition Pathway. We will use portfolio scorecards to provide real-time, continuous access to program and portfolio performance data.

16. Are there any Congressionally-mandated or Department-driven reforms that you would recommend be modified or suspended? If so, why?

If confirmed, I will work with leadership within the office of the USW(A&S) and throughout the Department to identify reforms that need to be modified or suspended.

17. If confirmed, what additional acquisition reforms, if any, would you recommend?

The Department has the burden and responsibility to reform and Congress has been a good partner. If confirmed, I will work with Departmental leadership to identify any additional acquisition reforms that are needed.

Key Relationships

Recent National Defense Authorization Acts have directed significant changes to the assignment of responsibilities within the defense acquisition system. For example, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 split the former Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD(AT&L)) into the USD(A&S) and the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (USD(R&E)).

18. In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of having two separate organizations: one to manage acquisition and sustainment, and one to manage research and engineering?

With two Principal Staff Assistants in the Office of the Secretary of War, one primarily focused on Acquisition & Sustainment and the other focused on Research & Engineering,

I believe that the Department benefits from a sharper focus and increased expertise within each respective portfolio, allowing OUSW(A&S) to focus time, resources, and attention on the complex processes of acquiring and sustaining weapon systems and ensuring programs are delivered on time and within budget to meet our warfighter's most pressing needs. It also allows OUSW(R&E) to concentrate efforts on long-term technological superiority, fostering innovation, and working in partnership with OUSW(A&S) to transition cutting-edge technologies from the lab to the battlefield.

In recent years, considerable authority and responsibility for acquisition activities have been given to the Services through: (1) the Secretary's delegation of Milestone Decision Authority for most acquisition programs to the Service Acquisition Executives (SAEs) and (2) Congress' emphasis on the role of the Service Chiefs in requirements development, resourcing discussions, and tradeoff decisions for major defense acquisition programs.

19. In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of delegating more responsibility for managing acquisition programs to the Services and away from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)?

If the Defense Acquisition Executive (DAE) has options to pull back milestone decision authority, when needed, there are few disadvantages to delegating milestone decision authority. Delegation of milestone decision authority to the Services enables the Services to be accountable for outcomes and provides flexibility to make informed decisions for acquisition programs.

20. In this construct where more responsibility for managing acquisition programs has been delegated to the Services, what suggestions would you make for the OSD(A&S) to maintain oversight over and insight into programs while reducing bureaucratic drag on the process?

Instead of OSD using approval authority to gain insight, in a modern digital acquisition system, information transparency should allow insight. Another mitigation for reducing bureaucratic drag on the process is for Services to maintain leadership consistency in a program for those leaders to deliver on their commitments. Both of these principles allow OSD(A&S) to maintain oversight over and insight into programs while reducing bureaucracy.

21. If confirmed as the DUSD(A&S), how would you structure your relationship with the SAEs and the Service Chiefs? In your view, are there any programs for which Milestone Decision Authority should be moved to the OSD-level or, conversely, returned to the SAEs?

If confirmed, I would structure my relationship with the SAEs and Service Chiefs as a partnership focused on a shared mission. I would foster open, continuous dialogue to ensure alignment and rapidly resolve issues. Milestone Decision Authority (MDA) should reside at the level that can most effectively manage risk and deliver capability. While delegation to SAEs should be the default, programs with significant joint equities,

high risk, or strategic importance may warrant OSW-level MDA to ensure an enterprise-wide perspective. Decisions on moving MDA should be data-driven and made on a case-by-case basis.

22. What do you believe should be the respective roles and responsibilities of the Secretary of Defense, USD(A&S), and the SAEs in ensuring acquisition programs deliver promised capabilities to the end user on time and on budget? How should the role of the DUSD(A&S) support that?

The USW(A&S), acting as the Defense Acquisition Executive (DAE), establishes enterprise-wide acquisition policy and provides rigorous oversight for major joint programs. The SAEs hold direct execution authority, managing service-specific portfolios and ensuring Program Managers (PMs) are fully empowered and resourced. When a program falters, the PM and SAE must execute swift, calibrated, and data-driven course corrections—not volatile over-corrections. Supporting this framework, the DUSW(A&S) serves as the operational integrator, actively monitoring cross-portfolio metrics to identify systemic risks and coordinating directly with the SAEs to execute OSW-level interventions before programs derail.

23. What further steps do you believe are necessary to align authority and accountability in the acquisition system, if any?

Consistent with Secretary Hegseth's Acquisition Transformation Strategy, the Department and Services have been moving authority for the plans, budgets, and execution of assigned programs to Program Acquisition Executives. This is necessary to align authority and accountability for weapon systems and needs to continue.

24. In your view, who should provide independent oversight within the acquisition system, and specifically, who should ensure that acquisition strategies are based on prudent technical risk, subsystem technology maturation prototyping when necessary, and realistic cost estimating while allowing for sufficient time in the program schedule to accomplish these tasks?

The USW(A&S), as the chief acquisition and sustainment officer of the Department with the mission of delivering end-user capabilities with speed and innovation to counter threats and cost-effectively sustain the military advantage of the United States, is responsible for establishing policies on, and supervising, all elements of the Department relating to acquisition. Program managers (PMs), portfolio acquisition executives (PAEs), service acquisition executive (SAEs), Service secretaries, and the defense acquisition executives (DAEs) should be incentivized to take positive action to achieve results. This leadership is different than the oversight provided by the DoDIG through independent and objective audits, investigations, evaluations, and inspections related to acquisition programs.

The PM, PAE, SAE, and DAE should ensure acquisition strategies are appropriate, yet bold enough to meet the speed and innovative warfighter solutions needed.

Portfolio Acquisition Executives

Section 1802 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 required DOD to create portfolio acquisition executives (PAEs) to lead a portfolio of capabilities with authority for plans, budgets, and execution of programs assigned to the portfolio, including life-cycle management.

25. Traditionally, acquisition programs are managed on a program-by-program basis. Do you see advantages of moving toward a more portfolio-based management approach?

Moving to a portfolio-based management approach enables the Department to take a holistic view of systems and make informed decisions on funding, capabilities, elimination of redundant efforts and reutilization of common components, and risk diversification across multiple projects. Additionally, portfolio-based management enables the Department to build integrated "families of systems" that communicate natively and speed modernization.

26. If confirmed, how would you implement reforms to acquisition strategies to better incorporate portfolio-based management?

If confirmed, I will work with Service and OSW leadership to identify needed reforms to acquisition strategies. As the Department moves to a portfolio-based approach, this approach must flow down to development of individual program acquisition strategies.

27. What is your assessment of how each military department has implemented the requirement for PAEs, including how functional personnel and resources are assigned under the authority and control of the PAE?

Every service has made large changes to implement PAEs in both their organization and how functions are aligned. However, this is still a work in progress, and the services are going in the right direction.

28. What recommendations would you make to each of the military departments to improve their organization and lines of authority to implement the statutory requirements of the PAE?

If confirmed, I will meet with the leadership of each military department to understand how and why they have implemented the PAE statutory requirements. I will support the military services to make any changes that are needed to enhance the acquisition process and improve their organization.

29. Do you believe that USD(A&S), as the defense acquisition executive, should enforce the statutory requirement that PAEs are certified acquisition officials?

Yes. To be effective, PAEs must be seasoned acquisition professionals who understand the complexities of the system they are charged with leading. The USW(A&S) has a

responsibility to ensure that individuals in these critical leadership positions meet the statutory requirements for experience and certification.

30. Section 1803 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 increased the standing of the product support manager to be “coequal with the program manager.” What is your view on the proper role for the product support manager in coordinating product support providers to support readiness and sustainment of operational capabilities?

The Department usually sees the best acquisition outcomes when a leader has “cradle-to-grave” accountability and authority. If confirmed, I will work with Departmental leadership to determine how product support managers can best be leveraged to improve acquisition outcomes while fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. A key role for the product support manager is in the Operations and Sustainment phase of acquisition where there is no program manager, and the product support manager has all the accountability and authority to support the warfighter.

Acquisition Data

The military departments are implementing acquisition data visibility tools, such as the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology) Live efforts to pull together real time dashboards of resourcing, schedule, and programmatic details.

31. Please provide a summary of the various efforts across DOD to manage acquisition data.

My understanding is that the Department is pursuing multiple efforts to become a data-driven enterprise, including the establishment of portfolio scorecards, digitizing the acquisition process with AI tools, and developing digital infrastructure for test and evaluation. However, these efforts are not yet fully integrated. We must move toward a unified approach that leverages authoritative data sources to provide real-time, continuous access to program and portfolio performance data for leaders at all levels.

32. Do you believe that USD(A&S) is providing adequate guidance for standard data and formats to provide Department-wide visibility into acquisition programs?

The USW(A&S) has provided the groundwork for standard data and formats to provide Department-wide visibility into acquisition programs, to include high-level standards for the Acquisition Visibility Data Framework (AVDF). If confirmed, I will work with Departmental leadership to implement lessons learned and build upon this groundwork to improve data collection.

33. What specific steps would you take, if confirmed, to ensure the acquisition enterprise is collecting authoritative data, including data from industry partners and other DOD organizations, to effectively model risk, and use appropriate indicators of program and portfolio health?

- If confirmed, I would review Department procedures to (1) ensure they require standardized, machine-readable data delivery clauses in request for proposals and contracts; (2) require automated, system-to-system data exchanges between industry, service repositories, and OSW, and (3) implement a flexible, parent-child data structure capable of tracking programs across multiple acquisition pathways. I would also restrict the transition of programs to production pathways if the program office fails to feed automated, authoritative data into the portfolio repository.

34. If confirmed, what steps would you take to provide Congress with digital access to acquisition data to improve collaboration and oversight?

- I am committed to transparency with our congressional partners. If confirmed, I would work with Departmental and congressional leadership to ensure Congress has the digital access to acquisition data that it needs for collaboration and oversight.

Software and IT Acquisition

In March 2025, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth issued a memorandum titled “Directing Modern Software Acquisition to Maximize Lethality” establishing the Software Acquisition Pathways (SWP) as the preferred pathway for software development in both weapon and business systems. It also required the commercial solutions opening solicitation and other transaction award instrument as the preferred contracting mechanisms.

35. Do you believe adequate guidance has been released by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition & Sustainment to fully implement this memorandum?

Secretary Hegseth’s memorandum, “Directing Modern Software Acquisition to Maximize Lethality,” provides a clear and powerful directive. While the initial guidance is a critical first step, fully implementing this vision will require ongoing effort to update policies, provide training, and establish the supporting infrastructure. If confirmed, I will ensure the office of the USW(A&S) continues to develop and disseminate the detailed guidance necessary for the workforce to execute this transformation.

36. If confirmed, what metrics and reporting mechanisms would you establish to track SWP utilization rates across the military departments?

In accordance with the current mandatory biannual reporting requirements for Software Acquisition Pathway programs, the office of the USW(A&S) already collects comprehensive data on program status, funding, contracting, cybersecurity, performance, risks, and delivery outcomes. If confirmed, I would use this reporting to track software pathway utilization across the Military Departments, including the number and types of programs using the pathway, adoption trends over time, software delivery performance, and implementation challenges. This information will help reviews of the directive execution with the acquisition executives of Military Departments and components and

would help the Department assess the overall effectiveness of the pathway, identify barriers to adoption, share best practices, and inform updates to policy, guidance, and reporting requirements, as appropriate.

Iterative Development Approaches

37. What is your opinion on ways DOD could incorporate iterative development approaches centered on fielding minimum viable capabilities?

I am a strong advocate for iterative development. The "big bang" approach of waiting years for a perfect solution is no longer viable. By fielding minimum viable capabilities quickly, we get critical tools into the hands of the warfighter sooner and create a tight feedback loop between the user and the developer. This allows us to learn, adapt, and deliver superior capabilities faster than our adversaries.

The DoW has taken important steps, including the Secretary issuing the "Directing Modern Software Acquisition to Maximize Lethality" memo which established the Software Acquisition Pathways as the preferred pathway for software development in both weapon and business system. The Software Acquisition Pathway is purpose built for rapid innovation cycles and implements commercial industry and agile best practices for iteratively building software products for applications and embedded systems. If confirmed, I will ensure wider adoption of these agile and commercial best practices across all acquisitions and our workforce.

38. To what extent do you believe DOD has broadly implemented commercial best practice agile development approaches adequately for software and hardware systems?

If confirmed, I will work to break down these barriers, empower teams to use agile methods, and ensure that our processes for funding, contracting, and testing are adapted to support iterative development for both software and hardware.

Advanced Technology Adoption

The rapid pace at which our adversaries are fielding technological advancements demands the Department establish an acquisition system that can deliver capabilities that are responsive to new threats and emerging technological opportunities.

39. In your view, do the current policies and practices of the defense acquisition system sufficiently encourage and support the adoption of disruptive technologies in the Department's acquisition programs? If not, what changes would you recommend in support of these initiatives?

In my opinion, the Department's current system is still too risk-averse and slow to consistently encourage the adoption of disruptive technologies. While the Department has created pathways like Middle-Tier Acquisition, the underlying culture of compliance often works against them. I believe that the Department needs to actively

incentivize its acquisition workforce to take calculated risks. If confirmed, I will champion a culture that celebrates speed and innovation and rewards program managers for rapidly transitioning new technologies into programs of record.

40. What do you believe are the specific technologies that will be critical to defeating a near-peer competitor?

In my view, the technologies critical to future victory will be those that allow the Department to generate and close kill chains faster and more resiliently than our adversaries. I believe that this includes artificial intelligence and machine learning for decision support, autonomous systems for mass and attritable platforms, resilient networking for command and control in contested environments, and advanced manufacturing to scale production at the speed of relevance.

41. In your opinion, how should the Department define and manage concepts like risk and failure so that program managers can try new technologies and acquisition practices, derive lessons learned and establish a common understanding of best practices, and more quickly drive technological advancement in ongoing acquisition programs and into current fielded capabilities?

My opinion is that the Department must redefine failure. I believe that a test that reveals a flaw before a system is mass-produced is not a failure; it is a success that saves money and lives. I also believe that the Department needs to create an environment where program managers are empowered to experiment, learn, and iterate. This means accepting that not all experiments will succeed, but the knowledge gained from rapid, low-cost "failures" is invaluable. The Department should reward smart risk-taking that leads to faster learning and better outcomes.

42. What do you view as the major barriers to entry for new companies that want to do business with DOD? How would you address these barriers, if confirmed?

My opinion is that the major barriers are bureaucracy, slow contracting and payment cycles, and overly prescriptive requirements that shut out innovative commercial solutions. To address this, if confirmed, I will advocate for maximizing the use of flexible contracting tools like Other Transaction Authority and Commercial Solutions Openings. If confirmed, I will push to replace bespoke requirements with problem statements that allow industry to propose its own solutions. I believe that the Department must make itself a more attractive and accessible customer for the nation's most innovative companies.

DOD continues to struggle with the transition of new technologies into existing programs of record. The Research & Engineering enterprise has primary responsibility for development of new advanced technologies, but the Acquisition and Sustainment enterprise must do its part to address transition of technology development programs into procurement and fielding.

43. What impediments to technology transition do you see within the Department?

In my view, the "Valley of Death" remains the primary impediment to transitioning technology into Programs of Record. I believe that the rigid two-year budget cycle of the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process and strict "colors of money" prevent the rapid reallocation of funds needed to integrate successful prototypes. Additionally, I believe that a risk-averse acquisition culture struggles to adopt the iterative commercial solutions the Department's acquisition reform strategy champions.

44. If confirmed, what steps would you take to increase the rate and frequency at which proven technologies developed by DOD, the defense industry, or the commercial sector are transitioned into programs of record?

To ensure the Warfighter never enters a fair fight and always possesses the latest and greatest technologies, I believe that the Department must aggressively use the Defense Production Act (DPA) Title III and the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) funds to bridge the Valley of Death for bright startups and non-traditional defense companies. In my view, by utilizing DPA Title III, the Department can make targeted, direct investments to scale up commercial manufacturing capabilities, mitigating the high financial risks that often bankrupt innovative startups before they can secure a formal Program of Record (PoR) budget line. Simultaneously, I believe that the Department must deploy IBAS program funding to establish rapid, subsidized pathways to certify and qualify advanced materials and novel manufacturing methods, ensuring these commercial innovations meet rigorous military specifications. In my view, this dual approach systematically expands the defense industrial base by removing the bureaucratic and financial hurdles that keep non-traditional innovators out of the defense market.

Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE)

The Department's acquisition process is closely linked with its PPBE process, and acquisition programs can move only as nimbly as the budget processes that fund them. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 established a Commission to examine and make recommendations for PPBE reform.

45. In your view, what changes are needed to the PPBE process to ensure it can effectively support ongoing acquisition reforms, including by improving timeliness, reducing bureaucracy, and increasing flexibility?

The PPBE process is the long pole in the tent; it is too slow and rigid to support a modern acquisition system. We need to empower program leaders to move money more freely to buy new technology and fix problems without years of bureaucratic delay. This means moving toward more flexible, portfolio-level budgeting and providing reprogramming authorities that allow us to adapt at the speed of relevance, not the speed of bureaucracy.

46. What steps can the Department take under the current PPBE construct to ensure acquisition programs are appropriately resourced in a timely manner?

Under the current construct, we must be more disciplined in our planning and more aggressive in our execution. This means ensuring our budget submissions are tightly aligned with our acquisition strategies and ruthlessly prioritizing funding for our most critical programs. We should also make greater use of available flexibilities, but this is a temporary fix. Fundamental reform is necessary.

One of the major obstacles to successfully bringing emerging technologies into the Department's acquisition system is the so-called "valley of death," partially caused by the gap in funding between the development of a new technology and its transition into a program of record.

47. What changes are needed to the PPBE and other processes to help bridge the "valley of death"?

Bridging the 'valley of death' requires a deliberate, formal process to evaluate successful developmental efforts and mandate their assignment to a specific Service. Without a directed transition pathway into a Program of Record, the Department risks stranding mature technologies and losing valuable warfighting capabilities to funding misalignments.

The November 2025 memo "Transforming the Defense Acquisition System into the Warfighting Acquisition System to Accelerate Fielding of Urgently Needed Capabilities to Our Warriors" required prioritization of budget line item and reprogramming reform within portfolio acquisition executive portfolios.

48. In your view, what changes if any to budget line items and reprogramming are necessary to improve acquisition program outcomes and what impact do you believe they would have?

To improve acquisition outcomes, the Department must consolidate budget line items to group similar systems into broader capability portfolios. This consolidation strikes a critical balance: it maintains sufficient transparency for Congressional oversight while providing the agility necessary to avoid being boxed in by overly restrictive funding lines, ultimately reducing the volume of reprogramming actions. Furthermore, the Department could consider establishing a Portfolio Acquisition Executive (PAE) at the Office of the Secretary of War (OSW) level would significantly enhance the strategic value of reprogramming actions. An OSW-level PAE would provide enterprise-wide oversight, ensuring that cross-Service portfolio adjustments are tightly synchronized with the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and the Department's highest priorities.

Requirements

Section 1811 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 made significant changes to the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, aligned with the November 2025 memorandum titled "Reforming the Joint Requirements Process to Accelerate Fielding of Warfighting Capabilities."

49. With the Joint Capabilities and Integration Development System (JCIDS) process being rescinded by DOD, what is your understanding of the process that will replace it?

It is my understanding that as of 15 January 2026, the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) has been rescinded and replaced by the Joint Force Requirements Process (JFRP). It is also my understanding that the JFRP, as outlined in CJCSM 5123.01, is a more agile, integrated, and resource-aware system centered on addressing the most pressing Joint Operational Problems (JOPs). The JFRP supports the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) which has been reoriented to focus on Joint Force Design, Joint Capability Integration, and Combatant Command Requirements. My understanding is that the new process shifts validation authority for Service- and Component-specific requirements to the respective Services and Components, allowing them greater autonomy and speed. I believe that the JFRP aims to create a direct path from joint warfighter needs to fielded solutions by focusing on annual prioritization of JOPs, which then drives analysis, experimentation, and budgeting decisions across the Department of War.

50. How will acquisition officials interact with the new requirements process, particularly when risk-informed tradeoffs are required to meet cost or schedule goals?

It is my understanding that an important goal for the Department's overall acquisitions and requirements reform effort has been to deliver needed capability to the warfighter faster than the legacy process. I understand that by delegating requirements validation to the Services and Components, the new system creates earlier interactions between the acquisitions officials and the requirements owner. To ensure that the Joint Force remains integrated and interoperable while greater authority is delegated to the Services, the JFRP created a process called Joint Capability Integration (JCI). I understand that one of the purposes of JCI is to review, assess, and manage the second and third-order impacts and interdependencies to the Joint Force that arise from Service-level decisions and risk informed trade-offs.

51. If confirmed, how will you ensure that the requirements process is adequately informed by market research, including from commercial technology sources?

It is my understanding that the Department has instituted a number of changes to the requirements and acquisition process to ensure that they are informed by market research, including data from commercial technology sources. One such example is the Mission Engineering and Integration Activity (MEIA), which is designed to be explicitly informed by market research and engagement with the commercial technology sector. I understand that MEIA is chartered to conduct robust industry engagement to identify and accelerate the integration of technologies, including commercially available solutions, to address Joint Operational Problems (JOPs). This is achieved through structured, repeatable engagements that communicate mission needs to industry and evaluate solutions from a wide range of sources, including non-traditional defense contractors. I

believe that this framework ensures that market research is not an afterthought but a foundational element of the requirements process, enabling the Department to leverage the full spectrum of American innovation to deliver capabilities to the warfighter at speed. This approach is complemented by the Defense Innovation Unit, who will execute product-driven engagement in support of its mission and Chief Technology Officer adoption priorities, helping PAEs and program offices better adopt what industry has built.

52. What is your understanding of the role of USD(A&S) within the Requirements and Resourcing Alignment Board

It is my understanding that the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment (USW(A&S)) is a member of the Requirements and Resourcing Alignment Board (RRAB). The RRAB, co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary of War and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is the primary forum for aligning fiscal resources with the Joint Force's most pressing Joint Operational Problems (JOPs). I understand that within this structure, the USW(A&S) provides essential input on acquisition and sustainment matters. I also understand that the USW(A&S) supports USW(R&E) in the execution of Mission Engineering and Integration Activity (MEIA), which provides the analytical and experimental evidence to inform RRAB decisions. In essence, my understanding is that the USW(A&S) plays a critical role in ensuring that the solutions proposed to address JOPs are not only technologically sound but also acquirable, sustainable, and can be fielded at the speed and scale necessary to meet warfighter needs.

Modularity and Interoperability

Section 805 of the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act established requirements for implementing Modular Open Systems Approaches (MOSA) for all major systems acquisitions in DOD and for rights in interface data for the critically important objectives of improving interoperability and increasing potential competition throughout the life cycle of the system.

53. What is your judgment of the progress that DOD and the Defense Industrial Base has made in implementing the MOSA mandate?

The Department has made progress in establishing policy and guidance for use of Modular Open Systems Approaches (MOSA), but implementation has been inconsistent. The Department has not yet achieved the culture shift required to fully embrace MOSA as a default for all major systems. Too often, we are still procuring closed, proprietary systems that lead to vendor lock and high sustainment costs. We must move from talking about MOSA to embracing its implementation.

Section 1832 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 removed requirements for consensus-based standards to ensure that either consensus-based standards or other standards that are adequately documented to enable third-party

integration are treated with equivalence in terms of fulfilling the modular open system approach.

54. If confirmed, how will you ensure that consensus-based standards are not required in solicitations for future programs where incremental standards as described in section 804 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 may be applicable?

If confirmed, I will ensure our acquisition policy and workforce training make a clear distinction between consensus-based standards and the more flexible, incremental standards appropriate for a MOSA approach. I will ensure solicitation templates do not default to requiring consensus-based standards if not appropriate. The Department must empower program managers to choose the right standards that enable competition and interoperability without imposing unnecessary rigidity.

Test and Evaluation

Test and evaluation activities work to ensure that system performance meets specifications and requirements, and that deployed capabilities are operationally effective against threats.

55. In your opinion, what is the appropriate role of developmental, operational, and live-fire testing in the acquisition process?

In my opinion, testing is not a phase that happens at the end; it is a continuous process of learning and risk reduction that must be integrated throughout the acquisition lifecycle. It is my understanding that developmental testing verifies that the system is being built correctly and that operational testing validates that the Department is building the right system to meet the warfighter's needs. Live-fire testing is essential to ensure the Department's systems can survive in combat. I believe that all are critical to delivering capabilities that work.

56. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure acquisition programs efficiently address issues and deficiencies identified through test and evaluation?

If confirmed, I will work with my DoW colleagues to break down the walls between development, testing, and acquisition. By using digital engineering and integrated test teams, I believe that the Department can identify deficiencies and correct them in near-real-time, rather than at the end of a multi-year development cycle. If confirmed, I would work with the Service Acquisition Executives to hold program managers accountable for having and executing plans to address test findings in a timely manner. I would also work with my DoW colleagues to explore incorporating promising industry methods, such as Highly Accelerated Life Testing in the research and development phase and Highly Accelerated Stress Screening in the production phase of acquisition.

57. Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe DOD should procure weapon systems that have not demonstrated, through test and evaluation, to be operationally effective, suitable, and survivable?

In very limited and urgent circumstances, I believe that the Department may need to accept risk and field a capability to meet a compelling operational need, with a full understanding of its limitations. However, I think that this should be a rare exception, not the rule. My view is that such decisions must be made at a high level, with a clear plan to complete testing and address any deficiencies post-fielding. As a general principle, I think that the Department should not buy systems until it is confident they will work for the Warfighter.

58. If confirmed, would you support programs accepting more risk upfront to accelerate fielding schedules?

Yes. If confirmed, I would support accepting smart risks to go faster. In my opinion, this could mean proceeding with a less-than-perfect test result if the issue is understood and has a clear path to resolution, or it could mean using modeling and simulation to supplement physical testing. The goal is to make risk-informed decisions to accelerate fielding, not to be reckless. My view is that the Department must balance the risk of fielding an imperfect system with the risk of fielding a "perfect" system too late.

In recent years, the Department's test and evaluation community has sought to integrate aspects of developmental and operational testing and conduct such testing early in the acquisition process.

59. In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of increasing the integration among the developmental, acquisition, and testing communities?

In my view, the primary advantage is speed. I believe that tightly integrating these communities allows for continuous feedback, which reduces rework and shortens timelines. It replaces a linear, waterfall process with a collaborative, agile one. I believe that the potential disadvantage is a loss of objectivity if the testing community becomes too invested in a program's success. This can be mitigated by maintaining a strong, independent operational test authority (DOT&E) to provide the final, unbiased assessment.

60. What other reforms would you recommend to improve the timeliness, efficiency, and effectiveness of the test and evaluation process to more quickly correct technical deficiencies in weapon systems?

If confirmed, I would recommend embracing modern digital test infrastructure. By building and testing systems in a virtual environment first, I believe that the Department can identify and correct many deficiencies before a single piece of metal is cut. I also believe that the Department should also increase the use of automated testing tools, particularly for software, and expand the Department's test ranges and workforce to handle the capacity needed for modern, complex systems.

61. If confirmed, how would you work with USD(R&E), the developmental test and modeling and simulation community, the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, and the Military Services to ensure the Department has the testing infrastructure, workforce, and other resources it needs to support the test and evaluation needs of current and future acquisition programs?

If confirmed, I would work with these key partners to develop a unified investment strategy for the Department's test infrastructure. My view is that the Department cannot have a 21st-century acquisition system with a 20th-century test infrastructure. I believe that the Department needs to prioritize funding for digital engineering environments and advanced modeling and simulation capabilities; modernize the Department's physical test ranges; and invest in the Department's test workforce to ensure they have the skills to test AI-enabled and software-intensive systems.

Defense Industrial Base (DIB)

Over the past several years, there have been increasing concerns in Congress, industry, and the Department over the health of the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) and its ability to reliably meet current and future defense needs.

62. What do you assess to be the most significant challenges facing the DIB?

It is my understanding that the most significant challenges facing the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) are its broad atrophy and consolidation. Having shrunk from over 50 prime vendors down to just five since the Cold War, I understand that the DIB has become stagnant, often relying on obsolete parts, outdated manufacturing processes, and stale innovation. This consolidation has weakened its ability to produce military equipment at the scale and speed required for a peer conflict.

It is my understanding that the DIB suffers from critical supply chain vulnerabilities, including a dangerous dependence on foreign adversaries for essential materials, critical minerals, and key components. This reliance, coupled with inconsistent and unpredictable demand signals from the Department, has discouraged long-term private investment, leading to excessive costs, fragile market segments, and an inability to surge production in a crisis.

63. How would you propose to address these challenges, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I would work with my Department colleagues and the Administration to revive American industry. It is my belief that the Department needs to expand the industrial base by lowering barriers to entry for new and non-traditional companies to foster competition and innovation. The Department needs to provide stable, long-term, and predictable demand signals to give companies the confidence to make capital investments in production capacity and workforce development.

If confirmed, I will engage with my Department colleagues to continue to develop approaches for attracting private capital investments. The ultimate goal is to rebuild the

DIB into a new "Arsenal of Freedom," capable of rapidly scaling production to support both U.S. forces and its allies.

64. What do you see as the incentives DOD can leverage to maximize industry investment of it's own resources in capacity expansion, facilitization, and research and development?

It is my understanding that the Department's primary incentive is providing stable, focused, long-term, and predictable demand signals. I also understand that by awarding companies larger, longer deals and using multi-year procurements, the Department can give industry the confidence and security needed to make significant capital investments in new facilities, tooling, and R&D. This approach moves away from unpredictable annual budgets that create boom-and-bust cycles and hinder long-term planning.

I believe that the Department can incentivize investment by accelerating pathways for private capital. This includes using a playbook of financial tools like purchase guarantees, offtake agreements, and low-interest loans to reduce the financial risks for companies, particularly those developing innovative technologies. By collaborating with private equity and venture capital firms and clearly communicating operational needs, I believe that the Department can "crowd-in" private investment to expand production rates and drive innovation.

It is my understanding that an area of success for the Department has been the Arsenal of Freedom program. Between January 1, 2025 – April 20, 2026, this initiative has spurred significant industry investment across the nation. This has resulted in over \$20.4 billion in private investment, leading to the creation of more than 37,000 new jobs. These investments have been made by over 130 companies across more than 120 cities, facilitating the expansion or establishment of over 90 new facilities and adding more than 9.5 million square feet of new production and research space to the defense industrial base.

65. What steps will you take to ensure the DIB has the appropriate scientific, technical, and manufacturing workforces to support current and future needs of DOD?

To address workforce shortfalls, if confirmed, I will work with my DoW colleagues to ensure the Department continues to invest in building a robust talent pipeline to cultivate the next generation of skilled trade workers, promoting the prestige of industrial manufacturing as an attractive career path and a unique opportunity for Americans to serve their country from the shop floor. It is my understanding that the Department is currently addressing these critical labor challenges by actively investing in recruiting and awareness campaigns, expanding training capacity, and strengthening hiring and retention initiatives. If confirmed, I will also cooperate with my colleagues across the DoW to ensure we address all skill sets, from K-12 through scientific and technical education.

66. What steps will you take to ensure that the DIB has the appropriate manufacturing and production infrastructure to support current and future needs of DOD?

It is my understanding that the Department's strategy is to "supercharge" the DIB through a national mobilization that reinvests in U.S. defense production and builds out capacity. This will be achieved by adopting new technologies, clearing away outdated regulations, and making generational investments in the nation's defense industry. This mobilization relies heavily on integrating new manufacturing processes, such as additive manufacturing and advanced robotics, to drive efficiency and reduce production timelines.

To fully leverage these technological advancements, if confirmed, I will lead the DoW's efforts to streamline the certification and qualification of new materials, ensuring that cutting-edge composites and advanced alloys can be rapidly tested, validated, and safely integrated into military systems. Crucially, I will work with my DoW colleagues to proactively identify and secure surge capacity to meet emerging operational needs. I believe that by mapping supply chain bottlenecks and establishing scalable production capabilities with both traditional defense and industry, the DoW ensures it can rapidly expand output during a crisis.

67. What steps should the Department take—on its own or as part of a “whole of government” approach—to increase domestic industrial capacity and reduce reliance on suppliers in China and on other adversaries?

It is my understanding that the Department will lead a "once-in-a-century revival of American industry" by re-shoring strategic industries and revitalizing those that had been shipped overseas. I understand that a key part of this effort is a multi-billion-dollar investment to address critical mineral shortfalls and secure domestic supply chains through authorities like the Defense Production Act (DPA) and the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) program.

I understand that this effort also involves a comprehensive "whole of government" approach to ensure robust interagency coordination and alignment of federal investments, export controls, and diplomatic initiatives.

Domestic sourcing has become a major focus for legislative and administration requirements on the defense acquisition system. If confirmed, you would oversee the beginning of a significant push to increase DOD's procurement of American-made goods, products, and materials.

68. In your opinion, what role should domestic sourcing requirements play in efforts to manage the DIB, support domestic companies, and ensure trusted and reliable supplies of goods and services?

I believe that domestic sourcing requirements act as a powerful catalyst for onshoring by legally linking lucrative defense contracts to domestic production, encouraging industry to rebuild America's industrial base and secure vital supply chains. Existing statutory

requirements, such as the Berry Amendment, eliminate critical dependencies on foreign adversaries and transition manufacturing from vulnerable, low-cost global networks to trusted, resilient domestic ecosystems. I believe that prioritizing domestic production is the only viable path to ensure the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) possesses the secure capacity and reliability to serve as the nation's arsenal.

69. What steps should the Department take to ensure a secure supply of strategic materials such as rare earth elements given the scarcity of domestic or allied sources?

To successfully decouple the Department's critical mineral supply chains from China, it is my understanding that the Department is requesting \$48.8 billion in the FY 2027 budget to directly fund the onshoring of production from mining to manufacturing. I believe that this massive financial investment, when firmly coupled with domestic sourcing requirements, clear demand signals, and long-term agreements, will revive the entire domestic rare earth industrial base. If confirmed, I would continue the whole of government effort on critical minerals to ensure the Department eliminates its dependency on adversarial controlled supply chains

It is my understanding that since the beginning of January 2026, the Department has utilized the Defense Production Act and the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) Program to invest over \$300M in critical mineral supply chains. I understand that the Department is continuing to expand domestic extraction and processing capabilities for essential materials, significantly reducing reliance on adversarial foreign supply chains. In my opinion, this funding secures critical inputs required for advanced munitions, electronics, and aerospace platforms.

70. In your view, what steps should the Department take to ensure that companies are able to find needed financing and resources from trusted sources?

It is my understanding that the Department is taking an active role in connecting companies with trusted capital by accelerating private investment in the DIB. I understand that this will be accomplished through a curated playbook of financial tools, including purchase commitments, low-interest direct lending, and loan guarantees, which de-risk private investment and encourage capital flow into the defense sector.

I understand that a key entity in this effort is the Office of Strategic Capital (OSC), which uses federal credit tools to attract private investors to invest alongside the Department in national security projects. I believe that the Department is also increasing its engagement with leading private equity and venture capital firms to communicate operational needs and strategic opportunities, thereby incentivizing private investment focused on warfighting priorities.

71. What actions should the Department take to address the threat of "adversarial capital" from China and other sources that seek to gain undue influence over the DIB?

To counter the threat of "adversarial capital" targeting the Defense Industrial Base (DIB), I believe that the Department of War (DoW) must actively deny adversaries backdoor access to critical technologies by providing vetted domestic funding alternatives, while simultaneously enforcing rigorous Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI) vetting protocols across all supply chain tiers. By coupling these defensive vetting measures with proactive interagency coordination through CFIUS, I think that the DoW can effectively shield vulnerable dual-use startups from predatory foreign investments and protect the integrity of national security supply chains.

72. In your view, what is the appropriate role for the Department with respect to proposed and ongoing private sector merger and acquisition activities of DOD contractors?

It is my understanding that the Department's primary role in contractor mergers and acquisitions (M&A) is to evaluate anti-competitive impacts on the Defense Industrial Base (DIB), specifically assessing the consequences for innovation, cost, and national security. Because excessive consolidation threatens competition and drives up costs, maintaining a diverse DIB is vital. In my opinion, the DoW is uniquely positioned to intervene and voice formal concerns when proposed transactions threaten program schedules, performance, or critical research and development.

73. How can the Department better leverage suppliers in the national technology and industrial base (NTIB) and among allies and partners?

It is my understanding that the NTIB was established to identify and reduce barriers, ensuring seamless integration among its partner nations: the U.S., Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. In my opinion, to mitigate supply chain risks and enhance the overall health and resiliency of the defense industrial base (DIB), the Department should encourage each NTIB partner to provide greater insight into their respective DIBs. In my view, this will help align NTIB capabilities with U.S. supply chain gaps and leverage qualified partner suppliers to address critical bottlenecks.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy was recently created by Congress and is responsible for overseeing the Department's efforts to manage and support the DIB.

74. If confirmed, how would you ensure the office of the Assistant Secretary is adequately resourced (in terms of personnel, budget, and authority) and provided with the high-level support necessary to perform its duties and responsibilities?

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and across the Department to secure adequate authorities and ensure a team with expertise is well positioned to tackle the complexities of the defense industrial base (DIB). Adequate and appropriate resources and support are crucial to effectively carrying out Industrial Base Policy's mission.

In addition to authorities, I believe that consistent and predictable funding is crucial for long-term success. Stable funding allows the Department to send strong signals to industry partners, enabling them to confidently invest in and expand the DIB.

I am proud to support the President's FY2027 Budget Request, which requests a generational increase in funding for Defense Production Act Purchases and Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS). The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) also provided welcome funding for IBP to hire additional staff to support its critical missions. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all these resources are used expeditiously and responsibly to support the DIB.

Organic Industrial Base

75. How do you assess the role of the organic industrial base (OIB) in supporting rapid modernization and sustained high-end conflict, particularly given current demands on munitions production and depot throughput?

The organic industrial base plays a vital role in the modernization and sustainment of our warfighting capabilities. It is the nation's insurance policy to safeguard readiness, provide a ready source of technical competency and manufacturing capacity for surging, and to sustain, modernize, and reconstitute defense capabilities. If confirmed, I will partner with the Military Departments to ensure organic industrial base capacity is aligned with the demands of the National Defense Strategy and modernized to meet the throughput required for contested environments

76. What is your current assessment of the condition, capacity, and workforce readiness of Army depots, arsenals, and logistics centers, and where do you see the most critical shortfalls impacting operational readiness?

I understand that while our Army Depots, arsenals, and logistics centers possess an incredibly dedicated workforce and though there are challenges in meeting hiring needs, they remain vital for sustaining immediate readiness. Many facilities are constrained by aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance stemming from workforce shortages. These shortfalls present a risk to operational readiness and our ability to rapidly scale production. If confirmed, I will closely review the Services' modernization plans to ensure critical gaps in condition, capacity, and workforce readiness are addressed.

77. As weapons systems become increasingly software-defined, what role should the OIB play in software sustainment, cyber resilience, and continuous updates to fielded systems?

As the Organic Industrial Base evolves from a traditional, hardware-focused enterprise into a digitized software sustainment enterprise, the OIB must be resourced, structured, and empowered to sustain both physical and digital components to ensure cyber resilience. If confirmed, I will ensure that organic industrial base

modernization efforts take into consideration the ever-changing landscape of software needs and continuous updates.

78. How should the OIB adapt to sustain and repair dual-use and commercially derived technologies that are increasingly integrated into military formations?

The rapid integration of commercially derived and dual-use technologies requires the organic industrial base to develop more agile and hybrid sustainment models. I believe depots must adapt their tooling, training, and processes to sustain and repair at the speed of relevance. If confirmed, I will work across the Department to greater understand the existing sustainment frameworks and ways to improve the Department's ability to leverage the best of both commercial and organic capabilities.

79. What specific actions should the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) take to modernize depot infrastructure, address deferred maintenance, and ensure facilities can meet surge requirements?

I understand that addressing deferred maintenance and modernizing depot infrastructure is critical to ensuring our facilities can meet both steady-state and surge requirements. Consistent, multi-year funding and the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies are essential to this effort. If confirmed, I will use existing authorities to oversee and support the Services in aggressively executing their Infrastructure Optimization Plans to build a more resilient OIB.

80. In light of supply chain disruptions and reliance on foreign sources for key materials, how should the Department strengthen the OIB to improve resilience, redundancy, and domestic production capacity?

Reliance on foreign sources for key materials poses a significant risk to military readiness and national security. I believe the Department must strengthen the organic industrial base by integrating advanced manufacturing and expanding domestic production and repair capacity to build redundancy. If confirmed, I will leverage existing programs and collaborate to protect critical supply chains and enhance OIB resilience.

81. How effectively is the Army integrating the OIB with the defense industrial base (DIB) and commercial partners to meet current and future demands, and where are the gaps?

I believe that a cooperative ecosystem between the organic industrial base and commercial partners is essential to meeting future sustainment demands. While progress is being made, I understand there are still gaps in technical data sharing and digital interoperability. If confirmed, I will work with the Army to prioritize the integration of the OIB and commercial partners to ensure current and future demands

foster stronger public-private partnerships and accomplish acquisition strategies across the defense industrial base.

82. What workforce challenges, such as skilled labor shortages, recruitment, and retention, are most acute within the OIB, and what steps are needed to address them?

The personnel working at our depots, arsenals, shipyards, and other facilities provide the critical readiness capabilities that make up the organic industrial base. I understand there are workforce challenges, and if confirmed, I will partner with the Services and P&R to advocate for meeting hiring needs and ensuring the functioning of core organic workload requirements.

83. How should the Department prioritize investments between modernizing legacy facilities and building new capabilities within the OIB?

I believe the Department faces a delicate balance between sustaining legacy systems and investing in the infrastructure needed for future capabilities. I believe a pragmatic approach that modernizes foundational infrastructure may benefit both current and future workloads. If confirmed, I will evaluate current investment strategies to ensure resources are prioritized to support the needs of the OIB.

84. If confirmed, what near-term actions would you take to ensure the OIB can meet both steady-state requirements and surge demands in a contested logistics environment?

Ensuring the organic industrial base can meet both steady-state requirements and surge demands in a contested logistics environment is a strategic imperative. I believe this requires proactive measures, such as stress-testing the OIB facilities and production capabilities. If confirmed, I will assess the OIB's surge capacity and work to integrate contested logistics scenarios into Department-wide planning and resourcing processes.

Defense Industrial Base Cybersecurity

Section 1648 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 requires the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive framework to enhance cybersecurity for the DIB.

85. What is your understanding of the challenges of enhancing cybersecurity of the DIB?

The DIB consists of over 150,000 companies. Over 90% of those companies are small and have revenues of under \$50 million dollars, with the largest concentration of companies having revenues of under \$10 million dollars. Small companies face structural challenges in implementing cybersecurity. The Department is focused on ensuring that

the confidentiality of DoW Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) data in the DIB is protected, and that companies in the DIB can operate in a contested cyberspace environment.

86. If confirmed, how would you balance the needs of improving cybersecurity with the burden of compliance on small and medium sized businesses?

I understand that the Office of Industrial Base Growth, which sits within the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, leads defense marketplace readiness programs and policy for the Department. If confirmed, I would work with this office and engage with my counterpart in the Department's lead on DIB Cybersecurity, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO), to ensure that the appropriate balance is struck between the costs of compliance with DoW cybersecurity requirements, the benefits of preventing DoW data from being exfiltrated from the DIB, and easing the burden of compliance on small and medium-size suppliers.

In the last few years, the focus of the Acquisition & Sustainment model has been on one element of the framework: the Cybersecurity Maturity Model certification (CMMC).

87. What is your understanding of the current status of CMMC?

My understanding is that the CMMC Program is currently under the purview of the DoW CIO. It is currently in Phase 1 of its implementation, which focuses primarily on the completion of contractor self-assessments of their compliance with the cybersecurity requirements that apply to safeguarding of Federal Contract Information and Controlled Unclassified Information. To date, there have been over 23,000 assessment scores reported at CMMC level 1 or 2. Of those, more than 60% were submitted by very small companies with fewer than 50 employees.

88. If confirmed, are there any changes you would make or recommend to the CMMC efforts beyond those already mandated by the Deputy Secretary?

I am aware of related cybersecurity requirements in Section 1513 of the FY2026 NDAA to develop mechanisms to develop a procurement framework for artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) technologies, and to integrate requirements into existing frameworks such as CMMC. If confirmed, I would work with the DoW CIO to assess the feasibility of including such requirements in the CMMC framework or at least follow a complementary approach that would minimize the burden on industry of such requirements.

Given the software-defined nature of much of our current acquisition efforts, there is a growing emphasis on security of our platforms. Congress has directed multiple pilots and initiatives to expand the security of these weapons systems platforms, but it is not clear that these efforts have made substantial headway in defending against the threats.

89. How do you view cybersecurity of our platforms and what role should A&S play in these efforts?

Priority DoW platforms must be capable of operating in a contested cyberspace environment. The Office of the Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment (A&S), in collaboration with DoW CIO, is responsible for developing cybersecurity policy for weapon systems. A&S is leading the implementation of the Congressionally directed Strategic Cybersecurity Program and is conducting Integrated Sensing and Monitoring Experiments (ISMxs) to evaluate the performance of multiple weapon system cybersecurity solutions for sensing and monitoring on weapons platforms.

90. If confirmed, what steps will you take to expand the efforts to secure these platforms from development to sustainment?

Answer: If confirmed I will work to ensure that existing weapon system cybersecurity policy is being implemented, that the requirements community has developed clear and unambiguous requirements for cybersecurity for legacy systems, and that Service and Agency resourcing organizations fully funds cyber risk mitigation activities for priority DoW platforms.

International Armaments Cooperation

Section 903 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 established the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Armaments Cooperation (IAC). The ASD(IAC) will have responsibility for coordinating industrial cooperation with allies and partners on issues related to co-production and co-development, negotiating international agreements, and exploring joint and multilateral defense industrial base initiatives. The ASD(IAC) will serve as the lead for coordinating with the National Armaments Director's at NATO and for the Partnership for Indo-Pacific Industrial Resilience.

91. What is your understanding of how international armaments cooperation activities are used to shape and support broader DOD warfighting needs and priorities? Are there new approaches or activities we should consider to be more effective and strategic?

Armaments and security cooperation directly support Department of War (DoW) priorities by ensuring allied forces are equipped with interoperable, operationally relevant systems that advance U.S. strategic objectives while fortifying the domestic industrial base. Under the framework of Executive Order 14383, "Establishing an America First Arms Transfer Strategy," our arms transfers should be deliberately calibrated to ensure that defense exports and cooperative programs prioritize U.S. national security interests, protect our technological overmatch, and stimulate American manufacturing. By strategically aligning arms transfers with broader warfighting needs, the DoW can leverage allied capability to share the burden of global security, ensuring that coalition operations remain anchored by U.S.-led innovation and industrial supremacy.

92. Based on current experiences with Ukraine, what recommendations would you have to help streamline or improve our security cooperation, foreign military

sales and cooperative logistics processes in order to be more responsive to rapidly changing security situations?

Based on operational realities observed in Ukraine, the Department of War (DoW) should seek to transition security assistance and cooperative logistics from reactive processes to anticipatory models that accelerate capability delivery while leveraging foreign capital to strengthen the U.S. industrial base. To streamline FMS in alignment with Executive Order 14268, the Department should overhaul technology release and foreign disclosure (TRFD) processes and mandate exportability early in program development. Doing so would drastically reduce the time from a validated requirement to final delivery. Concurrently, the DoW should continue expansion of regional sustainment hubs abroad, further operationalizing allied burden-sharing and enabling the repair of U.S. equipment closer to the point of need.

The conflict in Ukraine has also demonstrated the critical need to rapidly scale novel technologies produced by new commercial entrants. To address this, the Department should work to streamline TRFD, requirements, and sustainment for Non-Program of Record systems. By reforming these acquisition processes, the DoW can accelerate the sale of innovative capabilities to coalition partners, which not only enhances battlefield interoperability but also further diversifies and enriches the domestic defense industrial base.

93. How are newer initiatives like the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) with India, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or Quad), or the AUKUS initiative being used to support our defense posture, and are there recommendations for improvements of those activities that should be considered to make them more effective?

Initiatives like AUKUS, the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) with India, and the Quad are foundational to the Department of War's (DoW) Indo-Pacific strategy, shifting alliances from transactional sales to deep industrial integration. AUKUS accelerates advanced technologies, enabling, for example, undersea dominance. DTTI aims to deepen defense industrial collaboration with India. The Quad secures critical regional supply chains. To continue maximizing their effectiveness, the Department should eliminate bureaucratic delays and fast-track fielding capabilities for DTTI and Quad projects as with AUKUS.

Microelectronics

Over the last few decades, Taiwan, South Korea, and the People's Republic of China have implemented large-scale national industrial policies to build microelectronics manufacturing facilities. In contrast, the availability of large-scale state-of-the-art microelectronics manufacturing foundries in the United States has been steadily declining. DOD has a diverse set of requirements and needs for the domestic production of measurably secure state-of-the-art, state of the practice, and legacy integrated circuits in low volumes to meet its needs.

94. What is your assessment of the Department's microelectronics needs, to include both legacy, state-of-the-practice, and state-of-the-art?

I understand that the Department has a critical requirement for microelectronics to sustain legacy systems while fielding next-generation technologies. While state-of-the-art chips are vital for emerging capabilities, legacy and state-of-the-practice chips remain the literal backbone of our existing weapon system inventory and munitions. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our acquisition and sustainment strategies adequately balance and secure the distinct supply chains required for legacy, state-of-the-practice, and state-of-the-art needs.

95. In your view, what role should the Department play in working with the interagency and industry to increase domestic production of dual use microelectronics?

It is my understanding that the Department serves in an active leadership role alongside interagency partners and industry leaders to increase domestic production of dual use microelectronics. Because defense-specific demand alone is too low to sustain massive foundry operations, my opinion is that leveraging commercial, dual-use production capacity is vital to long-term supply chain security. If confirmed, I will work closely with interagency partners to align DoW requirements and capabilities with broader national industrial base initiatives.

96. If confirmed, what steps would you plan to take to support increased domestic production of dual use microelectronics?

If confirmed, I will prioritize utilizing existing programs to target capital investments directly into domestic manufacturing, packaging, and testing facilities. Additionally, I will work with my DoW colleagues to review the Department's acquisition policies for any necessary revisions and establish predictable demand signals that encourage private-sector investment to make it easier for commercial, dual-use chip manufacturers to do business with the Department.

97. What actions would you take to partner with the USD(R&E) on this issue?

It is my understanding that bridging the gap between research and development (R&D) and full-scale sustainment is a critical handoff that requires seamless collaboration between USW(A&S) and USW(R&E). If confirmed, I will ensure there is regular coordination to incorporate the designs developed under R&E to be transition-ready and securely manufactured within the domestic industrial base to provide mission assurance.

In my opinion, it is critical to partner with R&E as a co-developer to transition and integrate advanced technologies across the "Valley of Death" into warfighting capabilities.

Defense Production Act/Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment

In 2020, the Defense Production Act (DPA) was successfully leveraged during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide vital response materials, including through Operation Warp Speed, accelerating vaccine development and the delivery of other COVID-related medical supplies.

98. What is your understanding of how DOD has leveraged DPA authorities, including as an interagency funding mechanism, during the pandemic and post-pandemic?

The Defense Production Act (DPA) Title III authorities were successfully used during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide materials and accelerate vaccine development. Post-pandemic, DPA Title III, along with the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) program, is being leveraged as a key tool to address industrial base challenges and accelerate our ability to respond to the demands of the Warfighter.

The Department's FY 2027 budget requests \$72.3 billion for DPA and IBAS combined. This funding is aimed at mitigating cross-cutting supply chain risks throughout the DIB in areas such as strategic materials and materials, kinetic capabilities, microelectronics, batteries, and manufacturing.

99. What are your views on DOD's use of DPA Title III authorities to support the defense industrial base?

The use of DPA Title III authorities is viewed as a strategic imperative and a cornerstone of the effort to "supercharge" the U.S. defense industrial base. The FY 2027 budget includes \$30.4 billion for DPA Title III funds to mitigate supply chain risks across numerous critical sectors. DPA Title III funding is further bolstered with use of DPA Title I and VII authorities to prioritize/allocate and protect our investments.

These authorities are seen as essential for making direct, transformative investments in areas like critical minerals, where they are used to support the onshoring of production from mining to manufacturing. DPA Title III is a key mechanism for reducing reliance on foreign adversaries and rebuilding sovereign industrial capacity.

100. What are your views on the DPA loan and loan guarantee programs? If confirmed, would you advocate for expanding these programs? How would you monitor the effectiveness of the loan program?

The DPA loan and loan guarantee programs are considered part of a broader playbook of financial tools that should be used to accelerate private capital investment into the DIB. These tools, alongside others like advance market commitments and low-interest direct lending, are essential for de-risking industry investment and enabling companies to expand production and improve innovation. The effectiveness of such tools would be measured by the level of private capital investment they attract and the successful transition of those investments into fielded capabilities for the warfighter. I would also

advocate for updating DPA loan statute to match Office of Strategic Capital loan language to allow easier use of DPA loan authority.

101. Do you have any recommendations to improve the effectiveness of how DOD employs DPA Title III authorities?

To strengthen how the Department of Defense employs DPA Title III authorities, I would offer three key recommendations.

First, we must enhance internal execution. We are implementing a rigorous due-diligence process for all DPA and IBAS investments—grounded in comprehensive supply-chain mapping led by the Assistant Secretary of War for Industrial Base Policy. This ensures every dollar directly addresses validated industrial-base gaps. It also includes systematic financial assessments, clear performance metrics, and defined exit strategies to ensure accountability and long-term resilience.

Second, we need a modernized DPA reauthorization. Current statutory constraints limit our agility. Aligning Title III loan standards with those used by the Office of Strategic Capital would allow us to accelerate the availability of critical technologies rather than being bound to “most cost-effective” criteria that can unintentionally slow innovation.

Third, Congress should expand and clarify capital authorities essential to today’s industrial-base challenges. This includes explicit authority for minority equity investments when critical firms cannot secure reasonable commercial credit, expanded authority to build strategic stockpiles of essential materials, permanent delegation of Presidential Determination authority to the Secretary of War, and removal of aggregate action limits that delay urgent, large-scale projects.

Taken together, these steps would make DPA Title III a more agile, data-driven, and strategically potent tool for securing our nation’s defense industrial base.

102. In your view, does the Department and the defense industrial base benefit from taking equity in companies, and if so, how?

The primary goal of our equity stakes is to mitigate national security risks in broken or non-existent domestic markets. The aim is to catalyze private investment and create a resilient, competitive industrial base that can operate independently in the long term. Unlike one-time capital assistance, equity establishes a long-term partnership which allows the Department to ensure U.S. national security interests are met by the venture now and in the future. With an equity stake, the Department can continue to influence strategic direction under changing conditions that were not present at the time of a project’s inception. Additionally, equity provides an even stronger signal of confidence and long-term stability to private capital in order to catalyze additional investment in a project. We do not want to pick individual winners but invest in several capable performers to secure our supply chains.

The Industrial Base Fund, utilized by the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment Program, has historically been used to stabilize and expand defense specific supply chains and bolster the defense industrial base workforce.

103. In your view, how should the Department utilize the Industrial Base Fund moving forward?

The Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) program, which executes the Industrial Base Fund, serves as a key investment authority for addressing DIB challenges. The FY 2027 budget request includes \$41.8 billion specifically for IBAS to mitigate cross-cutting supply chain risks. By proactively utilizing flexible statutory authorities paired with Other Transaction Authorities (OTAs), the Department can bypass traditional, often cumbersome acquisition processes. This flexibility enables the remarkably quick execution of projects, allowing the Department to get funds on contract rapidly, scale commercial capabilities, and address emerging supply chain vulnerabilities at the speed of relevance.

The fund should be used to pursue actions to modernize infrastructure and expand capacity for manufacturing, develop secure supply chains for strategic and critical materials, invest in the defense workforce, and address shortfalls in kinetic capabilities and microelectronics. Combined with rapid execution mechanisms like OTAs, this funding is a highly agile, strategic tool to build resilience, reduce dependence on foreign adversaries, and ensure the DIB can continually meet the rapidly evolving demands of modern warfare.

Sustainment

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) continues to report that operations and sustainment (O&S) costs account for roughly 70 percent of a system's total lifecycle cost. In today's environment, marked by high operational tempo, aging platforms, software-defined capabilities, and supply chain constraints, these costs are increasingly difficult to control. Decisions made in the acquisition process, including requirements, system design, digital architecture, and access to technical data, remain the primary drivers of long-term sustainment outcomes. As the Department prepares for potential large-scale combat operations, integrating sustainment planning early in acquisition is essential to ensuring readiness, affordability, and resilience.

104. In your assessment, how effectively are current acquisition programs integrating sustainment considerations, including software sustainment, data rights, and contested logistics, early in the lifecycle?

I understand that while the Department has policy frameworks in place to encourage early life-cycle planning, execution across acquisition programs remains inconsistent. Too often, critical sustainment enablers like software support, technical data rights, and the realities of contested logistics are treated as secondary concerns rather than foundational requirements. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that these sustainment

variables are integrated and evaluated at the very inception of every major defense acquisition program.

105. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure sustainment planning is treated as a core requirement equal to cost, schedule, and performance throughout the acquisition process?

If confirmed, I will work to enforce existing statutory requirements and review the acquisition planning process to ensure life-cycle sustainment planning is treated as a core requirement equal to cost, schedule, and performance. I will also collaborate with the Services to ensure long-term operating and support costs are given equal weight alongside near-term procurement costs during source selection.

Programs continue to face pressure to meet aggressive cost and schedule targets, often resulting in deferred investments in reliability, maintainability, and sustainment enablers. These tradeoffs can create long-term readiness and affordability challenges, particularly as systems become more complex and software-intensive.

106. How will you ensure acquisition programs prioritize upfront investments, such as reliability testing, modular open systems design, maintainability, and technical data access, that reduce long-term sustainment costs and improve readiness?

I believe that investing early in robust reliability testing, modular open systems architectures (MOSA), and technical data packages is the most effective way to lower life-cycle costs and improve readiness. If confirmed, I will work across the Department to ensure acquisition programs prioritize upfront investments within their initial requests for proposals and contracting strategies.

107. What accountability mechanisms should be in place to prevent programs from deferring sustainment-critical activities to meet near-term milestones?

I believe there should be clear, non-negotiable exit criteria for major milestones that include verified product support and sustainment planning. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen existing accountability mechanisms, such as portfolio reviews and product support manager assessments, to hold program managers accountable for the long-term sustainment impacts of their near-term milestone decisions.

108. How will you ensure lifecycle O&S costs are clearly visible and weighted in acquisition decisions, budget justification materials, and briefings to Congress?

I believe that transparent life-cycle cost reporting is essential for both responsible departmental decision-making and effective congressional oversight. If confirmed, I will work to standardize and improve the fidelity of operating and support cost estimates in our budget justification materials and acquisition briefs. I will ensure these long-term cost projections are clearly presented alongside procurement requests so that the full financial impact of our systems is apparent to all stakeholders.

The Department continues to prioritize rebuilding readiness for large-scale combat operations against near-peer competitors. Sustainment performance, particularly for aviation and naval platforms, remains a key driver of mission capability rates. Persistent challenges include parts availability, maintenance capacity, workforce shortages, and supply chain vulnerabilities.

109. What is your current assessment of sustainment challenges across the Department's aviation fleets, and what near-term actions are required to improve mission capable rates?

I understand that our aviation fleets have sustainment challenges driven by aging airframes, high operational tempo, and persistent spare parts shortages. These challenges are further compounded by an over-reliance on sole-source commercial repair pipelines, gaining infrastructure, deferred maintenance, and workforce shortages causing delays in our public depots. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to identify critical supply chain bottlenecks, accelerate parts procurement, and maximize depot throughput to immediately improve mission capable rates.

110. What structural or policy changes are needed to better align sustainment funding, spare parts availability, and depot capacity with operational demands?

Focusing structural or policy changes on more predictive, demand-driven funding models will better align sustainment funding, spare parts availability, and depot capacity to meet operational demands. Leveraging multi-year contracting authority for spare parts will give the defense industrial base the stability it needs to maintain warm production lines. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues throughout the Department to develop policies that will facilitate more agile funding execution and synchronization of spare parts inventories with depot repair schedules.

The F-35 program remains critical to Joint Force operations but continues to face sustainment challenges, including high O&S costs, parts shortages, and delays in maintenance and software updates. As the fleet grows, these challenges risk compounding without significant reforms.

111. What is your assessment of the most significant sustainment challenges facing the F-35 program today?

I am aware that the F-35 continues to be challenged with very low readiness rates. My understanding is that there are a number of factors that are likely contributing to these challenges as highlighted by the Government Accountability Office. If confirmed, I intend to work across the Department to address the root causes such as spares availability and auditability to ensure this Department has the number of combat aircraft it needs.

112. What actions should the Department take to improve aircraft availability and mission capable rates in the near term?

In the near term, the Department should work closely with the Joint Program Office and industry partners to resolve the software integration delays, component reliability issues, and supply chain issues of spare parts that keep aircraft grounded. If confirmed, I will work with the F-35 leadership team and the Services to promote transparency and prioritize opportunities to address these challenges.

113. What are the most viable and realistic options to reduce F-35 sustainment costs over the long term, including changes to contracting, data rights, or maintenance concepts?

I am aware that F-35 sustainment costs continue to increase. Achieving auditability, transitioning sustainment functions to the Air Force and the Navy, and transitioning to use of the Department's working capital funds activities to manage F-35 spare parts are critical to arresting rising costs of sustainment. In addition, if confirmed, I will engage with stakeholders to pursue contracting reforms and seek the data rights needed to reduce F-35 life-cycle sustainment costs over the long-term.

Ship maintenance and modernization demand continues to outpace public and private shipyard capacity, creating backlogs that affect fleet readiness and availability. Workforce constraints, aging infrastructure, and supply chain issues further exacerbate these challenges.

114. What steps should the Department take to expand ship maintenance capacity and reduce maintenance delays across the fleet?

The Department should continue investing in the Navy's Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP) to modernize our public shipyards through expanding capacity and eliminating backlogs. Expanding training pipelines and improving retention of skilled shipyard workers will help address critical workforce shortages that cause maintenance delays. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that modernization and workforce initiatives are consistently funded and prioritized to reduce ship maintenance delays.

115. How should the Navy balance investments between public shipyards, private shipyards, and alternative maintenance approaches to meet current and future demand?

I believe the Navy must leverage a balanced, multi-faceted strategy that fully utilizes our public shipyards while strengthening partnerships with private yards. By also exploring alternative, forward-deployed maintenance concepts such as through the Regional Sustainment Framework (RSF), the Navy will be better positioned to meet current and future demands. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that investments are optimized across both public and private sectors to maximize overall fleet readiness.

Commercial and dual-use technologies are being fielded at an increasing pace to maintain a competitive edge. However, sustainment models for these systems, often not designed for military use, remain underdeveloped.

116. What are the primary sustainment challenges associated with commercial and dual-use technologies fielded to warfighters?

I understand that commercial and dual-use technologies are fielded at a pace beyond the Department's legacy, years-long sustainment and contracting processes. It is also my understanding that the primary challenges include short commercial life-cycles, rapid hardware obsolescence, lack of government data rights, and the absence of military-grade ruggedization or cybersecurity support. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues throughout the Department to modernize and develop the commercial and dual-use technologies fielded to warfighters.

117. How should the Department adapt its policies, contracting approaches, and partnerships to ensure these technologies remain supportable and effective over time?

I believe that the Department must adapt its policies, contracting approaches, and partnerships to incorporate agile, rapid-reaction contracting methods and hybrid sustainment models that rely on both commercial support pipelines and traditional depot-level maintenance. In my opinion, by designing the systems with open architectures, obsolete commercial components can be more easily swapped out for newer variants. If confirmed, I will support innovative sustainment planning such as those outlined in the Acquisition Transformation Strategy to ensure these critical technologies remain continuously supportable.

Facilities Sustainment

In fiscal year 2020, DOD reported a deferred maintenance backlog of \$137 billion, which equates to about 12 years of facility sustainment funding at fiscal year 2020 levels.

118. What approach will you take to address this backlog and to ensure that facility sustainment funding is sufficiently prioritized and funded? Please specify aspects of the approach such as increased funding, elimination of excess infrastructure and infrastructure in failing condition.

If confirmed, I will work with the Military Departments and Comptroller to advocate for the appropriate level of resourcing to ensure critical missions are not jeopardized due to inadequate Facility Sustainment Restoration and Modernization (FSRM) funding. Additionally, I will urge the Military Departments to identify opportunities to dispose of excess facilities or those in the worst condition.

DOD's facility sustainment funding primarily focuses on mission-critical facilities. Given the chronic underfunding of facility sustainment, lower-priority facilities, such as unaccompanied housing (barracks) and childcare centers, have experienced increased deterioration to the point where they need more costly repairs to prevent their failure.

119. What actions, if any, will you take to fund facilities that have been treated as lower priority, such as unaccompanied housing and childcare centers—but are

facilities that contribute directly to service members' and their families' quality of life—to assure their continued availability?

Quality of life is not a benefit—it is a core component of combat readiness. I understand the Department is making historic investments in QoL facilities via initiatives like the Barracks Task Force. If confirmed, I will work appropriate stakeholders to continue supporting these initiatives and prioritize these investments within the Military Departments' budgets.

Logistics

Recent conflicts, particularly in Ukraine and Iran, along with ongoing disruptions to global supply chains and maritime security, have underscored the centrality of contested logistics in modern warfare. Adversaries are increasingly capable of targeting lines of communication across all domains, including cyber and space. The Joint Force's ability to project, sustain, and regenerate combat power under contested conditions is now a core strategic imperative. At the same time, operating with allies and partners requires greater interoperability, prepositioning, and shared sustainment frameworks.

120. What actions would you prioritize, as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, to strengthen the Department's ability to operate and sustain forces in a contested, degraded, and denied environment?

I believe we must prioritize diversifying our supply chains, hardening our physical and digital logistics networks against threats, and expanding forward-deployed, organic manufacturing capabilities like additive manufacturing. It is vital for our forces to be equipped with the ability to conduct repairs and sustain operations closer to the tactical edge. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts in the Services and Joint Staff to accelerate the development of agile, distributed sustainment nodes that reduce our reliance on vulnerable, long-distance supply lines.

121. How should the Department adapt its logistics concepts, force posture, and investments to account for threats to strategic lift, forward basing, and distribution networks, particularly in the Indo-Pacific?

The vast distances and contested environments of the Indo-Pacific require a decisive shift away from centralized, large-scale logistics hubs toward a highly distributed, resilient force posture. By prioritizing upfront investments in the pre-positioning of critical stocks, fuel, and spare parts, while leveraging international partnerships through the Regional Sustainment Framework (RSF), the Department will be able to adapt and evolve to meet emerging threats. If confirmed, I will work to ensure budget and acquisition decisions prioritize resilient distribution networks, auxiliary lift capabilities, and interoperable sustainment frameworks with our regional allies and partners.

Acquiring Commercial Technology

Since the end of the Cold War, Congress and successive leaders in DOD have recognized that the technological superiority and modernization that is critical to national security increasingly takes place in the commercial sector, and that in many technical areas, the pace of commercial technological advance is much quicker than that of the government.

122. In your view, does DOD adequately consider commercially available solutions to meet its requirements?

Yes, the Department has fully embraced The President's Executive Order (EO) 14271, Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts. The Department recently completed reviews, as required by Section 1828 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), of the Department's policies, guidance, and instructions relating to acquiring commercial products and services. The Department's implementation of the Acquisition Transformation Strategy will continue to emphasize best practices and lessons learned to increase consideration and implementation of commercially available solutions to meet the Department's requirements.

123. If confirmed, based on your experience, how do you believe DOD could improve its adoption of commercial solutions?

The Department should continue to implement the Acquisition Transformation Strategy initiatives that promote increased use of commercial solutions openings and the use of Other Transaction Authority to leverage the authorities Congress has provided to increase participation from nontraditional contractors and to leverage more innovative commercial solutions.

124. Do you believe the Department is making the best use of both Part 12 and Part 15 of the Federal Acquisition Regulations in developing acquisition strategies for programs?

The Department is changing its approach to acquisitions under FAR part 15 to include more commercially available solutions and is updating guidance to better utilize the revised FAR part 12 approaches to acquiring commercial solutions to meet the Department's needs.

125. Title XVIII, Subtitle C of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 implemented several important reforms to commercial procurement. Section 1821 would require the Department to define a list of clauses applicable to commercial contracts. If confirmed, how would you determine which defense-unique clauses can be added to commercial contracts and which should be excluded?

Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) Part 212, Acquisition of Commercial Products and Commercial Services currently provides a list of solicitation provisions and contract clauses applicable to commercial contracts,

including the statutory basis for each. Defense Pricing, Contracting, and Acquisition Policy (DPCAP), as part of the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul, is assessing the application of each DFARS provision and clause to validate its commercial application in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 3452. If confirmed, I will work with DPCAP to ensure the Department appropriately implements this important enacted reform.

126. Section 1822 requires a non-commercial determination process prior to acquisition officials selecting to pursue contracting procedures within the Federal Acquisition Regulation other than Part 12. Do you believe there is adequate guidance and oversight over this process to ensure proper market research and requirements analysis is performed prior to pursuit of non-commercial procurements?

Yes, through implementation of EO 14271, “Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts” and Office of the more recent Management and Budget (OMB) guidance Memorandum on its implementation (OMB M-26-12). If confirmed, I will review the effectiveness of the Department’s oversight to ensure there is appropriate rigor in the reviews by the Senior Procurement Executives of all non-commercial determinations.

127. If confirmed, how would you provide greater scrutiny over non-commercial determinations? Do you believe DOD requires a higher burden of proof for such non-commercial determinations on certain classes of technologies led by the commercial sector such as information systems?

The Department has implemented EO 14271, “Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts” by requiring reviews by the Senior Procurement Executives. If confirmed, I will assess and ensure those reviews are effective.

128. Section 1826 exempts nontraditional defense contractors from having several business system requirements applied to their contracts. If confirmed, how would you ensure contracting officers perform adequate responsibility determinations without requiring outdated government business system requirements?

To maintain our technological edge, the Department must do everything we can to attract nontraditional defense contractors to participate in our procurements. While Section 1826 rightly removes outdated business system requirements that deter these innovators, the Department must still protect the taxpayer’s interests. If confirmed, I will ensure contracting officers leverage standard commercial practices to verify responsibility, ensuring that all remaining contractual requirements are met.

Intellectual Property/Technical Data Rights

129. Do you believe that DOD has sufficiently implemented intellectual property (IP) best practices to ensure that the government has appropriate access to IP and technical data to give proper return on investments in federal research and development (R&D), retain the ability to re-compete programs to control costs, and exercise better control over program sustainment costs?

I believe the Department has provided regulation, policy, and guidance to empower the acquisition workforce with the tools necessary to acquire the appropriate IP and technical data to ensure return on investment, enduring competition, and the ability to sustain weapon systems. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Service Acquisition Executives and the OSW IP Cadre to address any remaining gaps in the workforce implementation of best practices.

130. If confirmed, what adjustments would you make to DOD's practices in negotiating IP and technical data rights for programs to improve DOD's ability to develop, procure, and sustain new systems and technologies affordably?

If confirmed, I will continue to encourage interest-based negotiations for IP and technical data rights as early as possible in a program's lifecycle and will review any barriers that may unnecessarily hinder the ability for program managers and contracting officers to tailor and make risk-based decisions for their program.

131. Do you think that the Department of Defense has appropriate access to technical data packages for weapons systems and software for existing programs in operations?

It is my understanding that there are many inherited and systematic/legal challenges for programs to negotiate a procurement of technical data packages and software when they are beyond the competitive phase of the program. I believe the Department must work with industry to obtain access to technical data packages for weapons systems and software for software in existing programs so that it can maintain and repair the systems and software.

132. In your view, does DOD have enough technical data and rights to the data to enable maintenance and repair at the forward edge of battle during wartime or contingency operations?

In my opinion, this is a critical vulnerability. In a contested environment, the Department may not be able to rely on contractors to perform repairs. I believe that the Department's uniformed maintainers must have the technical data, tools, and training to keep DoW systems in the fight. In my view, securing this data is not just a matter of cost savings; it is a warfighting necessity.

133. Does the Department need a different approach to access to technical data when dealing with primarily commercial companies?

In my opinion, the Department must be flexible. I believe that the Department needs a tailored approach that respects a company's commercial business model while still securing the specific data DoW needs to support the system throughout its life.

Reform of the Bid Protest Process

134. To what extent do you think that the bid protest process protects the interests of both industry and the government?

For industry, particularly non-traditional defense contractors and small businesses, a fair protest system provides a vital, transparent check on the Government's procurement decisions. It ensures that the Department adheres to its own solicitation criteria. For the Government, a robust process promotes public trust and maintains competition.

However, the balance is currently skewed. When protests are leveraged strategically by incumbent contractors to delay contract performance, force settlements, or extend their existing revenue streams, it impacts the Department's ability to field critical capabilities to the warfighter on time. The bid protest process must protect legitimate grievances, but it cannot serve as a business strategy for incumbents to block transition. To address this concern, the Department thanks Congress for providing the authority in Section 875 of the Fiscal Year 2026 NDAA and will be implementing this in regulation to reduce the number of frivolous protests submitted by incumbents.

135. Do you have any recommendations to improve the bid protest process?

I strongly support the Secretary of War's Acquisition Transformation Strategy, which includes an initiative to reform the Department's management of bid protests, in order to accelerate protest adjudication and financially penalize contractors who file frivolous protests.

If confirmed, I will support this bid protest initiative, which is aligned with Section 875 of the Fiscal Year 2026 NDAA, and focuses on completing bid protests faster and deterring system abuse.

Small Business

136. In your view, what are the biggest barriers that prevent small businesses from doing business with the Department?

My understanding is that one of the biggest barriers to entry for new companies are the number of entry points into the Department, the complexity of the DoD procurement process, the challenges that new companies face when seeking to understand and comply with necessary industrial security requirements, and the ability of these firms to access classified infrastructure. I understand that the Office of Industrial Base Growth, which manages DoW Small Business Programs, sits within OUSW(A&S) and is the principal advisor to the USW(A&S) and the Secretary of War on all issues affecting small and new entrant businesses that want to work with the Department. If confirmed, I would work

with this office to leverage its tools, programs, and authorities to address these issues and mitigate barriers to entry.

137. Do you believe the Department is using all available authorities to provide small businesses the opportunity to subcontract with existing prime contractors to ensure programs of record have access to the most advanced and effective technologies?

My understanding is that OUSW(A&S) has numerous authorities and programs that work to ensure small and new-entrant businesses have the maximum practicable opportunity to compete for subcontracts, including the DoW Mentor-Protégé Program, the DoW APEX Accelerators program, the Indian Incentive Program, and the Comprehensive Subcontracting Test Program. If confirmed, I would work with the Office of Industrial Base Growth to better understand these programs and ensure that the Department is leveraging these tools most effectively.

138. What do you see as the benefits of diversifying the defense industrial base through more engagement with small and disadvantaged businesses?

One of the Secretary's top priorities is growing and revitalizing the DIB, and ensuring that all types of companies, including small and disadvantaged firms, are capable of entering the defense marketplace is critical to this effort. Diversifying the DIB through new marketplace entrants adds additional resilience to supply chains, mitigates single sources of failure, and adds new capabilities and innovations to defense supply chains.

A diverse and resilient industrial base, powered by a robust ecosystem of small, new entrant, and non-traditional businesses, sends a strong signal to our adversaries about our ability to mobilize the full weight of the U.S. economy in support of our national security. It demonstrates our capacity to tap into the ingenuity and determination that have always defined America, and to harness that power in service of our defense.

139. In your view, how can the Department best support small businesses seeking to enter the defense industrial base? Are there existing DOD programs you believe warrant additional attention and resources?

In my view, the Department should build upon and appropriately resource, in alignment with the President and Secretary's priorities, its existing tools, authorities, and programs to support small and new entrant businesses seeking to enter the defense marketplace. These include the DoW Mentor-Protégé Program, the DoW APEX Accelerator Program, and DoW's defense market readiness tools like Project Spectrum, LYNX, and Valion Cloud. The LYNX digital supplier tool is our enterprise-wide front door for companies seeking to enter the DIB. It helps build DIB readiness from FOCI mitigation to intelligently matching companies with contracts and solicitations based upon their capabilities. Expanding and adopting this program across the Department – in connection with our other DIB growth programs – as we execute the Acquisition Transformation Strategy is critical to bringing in new suppliers by making them ready, secure, and informed. If confirmed, will work within OUSW(A&S) and across the Department to

amplify the impact of these tools, authorities, and programs, and advocate for their appropriate resourcing consistent with the priorities of the President and Secretary Hegseth.

Acquisition Workforce Education and Training

- 140. A well-trained and empowered acquisition workforce is a critical enabler in the implementation of acquisition reform and in the management of acquisition programs. What is your assessment of the Department's acquisition workforce, both in terms of its capacity and capability? Does the Department have enough acquisition professionals with the right skills?**

Our acquisition workforce is dedicated and patriotic, but they are overworked. We do not have enough professionals with deep expertise in areas like software development, intellectual property, and data analytics. We have trained them for a culture of compliance, and we must now retrain them for a culture of speed, innovation, and execution.

- 141. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure the acquisition workforce is fully trained on new acquisition authorities and best practices, so that it can make informed decisions about when and how to use the different acquisition pathways and tools?**

If confirmed, I will champion the transformation of the Defense Acquisition University into the Warfighting Acquisition University (WAU). The WAU will move beyond traditional classroom training to provide immersive, scenario-based learning focused on the tough, real-world challenges our acquisition professionals face. We will use field training teams to bring this expertise directly to program offices, helping them apply innovative tools in the context of their actual programs.

- 142. If confirmed, how would you engage with the Congressionally-mandated Acquisition Innovation Research Center (AIRC) to perform research on acquisition issues of interest, and to engage a future workforce for defense acquisition?**

As I understand it, AIRC contributes to acquisition innovation through engagement with academia through applied research and other activities. It engages faculty from Business, Law, and Policy to innovate acquisition policies, processes, tradecraft, education, and outcomes. If confirmed, I will support the USW(A&S) in reviewing AIRC's accomplishments and ongoing activities to ensure they are focused on increasing speed, efficiency, and capability fielding to help the Military Services rebuild the military and reestablish deterrence.

143. What is your view on the benefits of the Defense Civilian Training Corps, and if confirmed, how would you ensure that participating students are hired into the DOD workforce?

I'm aware that this program began under President Trump's first Administration and that the vision was to rigorously prepare selected college juniors and seniors to join DoW as civilians, ready with the mindset and skills needed in defense acquisition. If confirmed, and if a follow-on effort receives funding, I will ensure the USW(A&S) is informed about the benefits and lessons learned from the Defense Civilian Training Corps pilot program and that all available hiring authorities are utilized for participating students to join the DoW workforce.

Section 826 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 required key performance metrics for the acquisition workforce.

144. In your view, how should DOD reward and incentivize the acquisition workforce across all functional disciplines to choose commercial solutions, if available?

We must celebrate and reward those who successfully and rapidly field commercial solutions. I will work to establish performance incentives that are tied to the successful adoption of commercial items and the use of rapid acquisition pathways. A program manager who delivers a needed capability to the warfighter in half the time by using a commercial solution should be recognized.

145. If confirmed, how would you ensure the acquisition workforce takes advantage of innovative acquisition processes and drive organizational culture changes?

Change must be driven from the top. If confirmed, I will be a relentless champion for innovation and speed. I will empower our workforce to take calculated risks and will have their back when they do. I will also hold leaders accountable for the culture within their organizations, ensuring they are fostering an environment of empowerment and execution, not risk aversion and bureaucracy.

146. Do you believe that the acquisition workforce adequately engages with end users to incorporate feedback into acquisition decisions and program adjustments?

No, not nearly enough. For too long, we have operated on a linear model where the user's involvement ends after the requirement is written. We must move to a model of continuous user engagement throughout the lifecycle. This is a core principle of modern software development, and we must apply it to all our acquisition programs. The warfighter must be a partner in the development of their tools.

Section 832 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Act and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 required the creation of field training for acquisition and sustainment.

147. How would you ensure that Field Training Teams deliver lessons while simultaneously facilitating program execution using innovative acquisition and fielding procedures, flexible contracting frameworks, and business negotiation skills?

The Field Training Teams must be "player-coaches." They should not be lecturers who show up with a PowerPoint deck. They should be experienced practitioners who embed with a program office and help them solve a real problem in real time. The training they provide should be the act of helping the program award a contract faster or negotiate a better deal. This is learning by doing.

148. If confirmed, how would you bring private-sector personnel into Field Training Teams, including how their expertise in innovative acquisition and commercial procedures will be leveraged?

Bringing private sector expertise into our Field Training Teams is essential. We should use authorities like the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) to bring in experts from innovative commercial companies, venture capital firms, and law firms who are on the cutting edge of commercial practices. Their expertise would be invaluable in teaching our workforce how the commercial world actually operates.

Nunn-McCurdy Process

The Nunn-McCurdy process, as established by sections 4371-4377 of title 10, United States Code, has not been revisited since Congress and the Department began implementing significant acquisition reforms five years ago.

149. Given recent acquisition reforms, is the Nunn-McCurdy process still an appropriate and effective mechanism for reporting to Congress on troubled acquisition programs?

Yes, the Nunn-McCurdy process is still an appropriate and effective mechanism for reporting troubled programs. The process provides adequate warning to programs with a significant breach, and programs that undergo a critical breach are examined fully with a root cause analysis and assessment of five certification criteria to restructure the program as appropriate to control costs.

150. Do you perceive a need for changes to the Nunn-McCurdy process, such as expanding its scope beyond major defense acquisition programs or adjusting the thresholds for significant and critical breaches?

No, the Nunn-McCurdy process should be limited to our major defense acquisition programs. This process is most effective when measuring cost growth on large weapon systems with full research, development, and production phases. Applying the Nunn-McCurdy process to smaller, time-sensitive urgent needs would negate the benefit of other acquisition pathways in the Adaptive Acquisition Framework.

151. If confirmed, what principles would guide your thinking on whether to recommend terminating a program that has experienced significant or critical cost growth under Nunn-McCurdy?

The principles outlined in statute would guide the decision to terminate. The continuation of the program is essential to the national security; there are no alternatives to the program which will provide acceptable capability at less cost; the new estimates of the program acquisition unit cost or procurement unit cost have been determined by the Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation to be reasonable; the program is a higher priority than programs whose funding must be reduced to accommodate the growth in cost of the program; and the management structure for the program is adequate to manage and control program acquisition unit cost or procurement unit cost.

Nuclear Deterrence

If you are confirmed, you will support the USD(A&S) in overseeing recapitalization of the nuclear triad, which is rapidly aging out. The B-2 and B-1 bombers are being replaced by the B-21 bomber. The Air Launched Cruise Missile is being replaced by the Long Range Stand-Off Weapon (LRSO). The Minuteman III is being replaced by the Sentinel Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Weapon System. The *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarine is being replaced by the *Columbia*-class ballistic missile submarine. The B-21, Sentinel, LRSO and *Columbia*-class submarines are Major Defense Acquisition Programs that will have to operate well into the 2070s. These are in addition to efforts to sustain, recapitalize in the near term, and design a Next Generation Nuclear Command, Control and Communications (NC3) system.

152. Do you support the B-21, LRSO, Sentinel and *Columbia*-class programs?

Yes. Nuclear deterrence is the cornerstone of our national security, and it is critical to maintain our fielded systems while simultaneously modernizing all three legs of the triad. If confirmed, I will maintain focus on our nuclear deterrence modernization programs and seek acceleration wherever possible.

153. Please describe what you see as the major acquisition issues with each of the above.

Nuclear deterrence is DoW's top priority mission. If confirmed, I will review each of our modernization programs to understand any associated acquisition challenges and prioritize acceleration opportunities to ensure our modernization programs deliver timely capability to the warfighter.

154. Do you support sustaining, recapitalizing, and designing the Next Generation NC3 systems?

Yes, the Department is focused on sustaining and modernizing NC3 so that the President can continue to credibly and effectively command and control U.S. nuclear

forces under all conditions. If confirmed, I will review each of our NC3 programs to understand any associated acquisition challenges and prioritize acceleration opportunities to ensure our NC3 programs deliver timely capability to the warfighter.

155. Please describe what you see as the major acquisition issues with each element.

The NC3 enterprise is a complex network of systems. If confirmed, I look forward to fully reviewing the status of each of the programs to ensure that our current and future capabilities and programs provide a reliable and credible nuclear deterrent.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

156. 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.

157. 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.

158. 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.

159. 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.

160. 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.

161. 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.

162. 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.