

**Advance Policy Questions for Veronica Daigle**  
**Nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) for Readiness**

**Department of Defense Reforms**

**The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 included the most sweeping reforms since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.**

**Do you support these reforms?**

Yes.

**What other areas for defense reform do you believe might be appropriate for this Committee to address? Please provide specific examples.**

Congress included several key reforms in the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that will directly contribute to readiness, including provisions related to the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS) and the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress (QRRC). I know the Reform Management Group (RMG), which is co-chaired by the Department's Chief Management Officer (CMO) and the Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE), is exploring further reforms and the Department will work with Congress as those reforms mature.

**Duties**

**Section 138 of Title 10, United States Code, provides that Assistant Secretaries of Defense shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of Defense may prescribe.**

**What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the ASD for Readiness?**

Secretary Mattis has been clear that increasing the readiness of our military is one of his top priorities. My mission, if confirmed as the ASD for Readiness, will be to ensure the Department meets this priority. The ASD for Readiness will be responsible for advancing the first line of effort of the new National Defense Strategy (NDS), since rebuilding military readiness directly contributes to a more lethal force. Among the specific functions of the ASD for Readiness are establishing the readiness requirements needed to achieve the NDS; developing measures and mechanisms to assess the Joint Force's sufficiency to meet these requirements; and determining the resources needed to sustain readiness and address any readiness shortages.

## **Qualifications**

### **What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you to perform the duties of this position?**

I am passionate about increasing the readiness of the Joint Force and have dedicated the last ten years of my professional career to this goal as a federal government career civilian in a variety of senior White House and Department of Defense positions. I also have the analytic background and experience in program assessment and resource analysis that the ASD for Readiness will need to establish readiness requirements for the NDS, develop the necessary metrics and leading indicators to assess readiness sufficiency, and identify where resources should be allocated to meet the Department's most pressing readiness needs. For example, I served as a program examiner at the Office of Management and Budget, where I evaluated the level of resources needed to support the Army's unit training and equipment maintenance programs. Later, as a Defense Health Program examiner, I ensured sufficient funding in the Department's budget for the Military Treatment Facilities that generate military medical force readiness. More recently, I managed the readiness division within CAPE, where I initiated and led deep dive analyses into a diverse range of readiness issues, including ship maintenance, stress on forces due to continuing deployments, aviation maintainer shortfalls, and Army brigade combat team readiness for core missions. In my current role as the Principal Deputy ASD for Readiness, I have delivered key readiness assessments to senior Department of Defense leaders, including a recent reassessment of Service readiness recovery goals to better align with the NDS objectives.

## **Cross-Functional Teams**

**Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 required that the Secretary of Defense establish cross-functional teams to address critical objectives of the Department.**

### **What are your views on the potential focus areas and uses for future cross-functional teams?**

Cross-functional teams (CFTs) can be powerful means of developing and implementing valuable recommendations on priority issues facing the Department. In 2017, Secretary Mattis established several CFTs to look at issues impacting the entirety of the Department. I understand these CFTs were very effective in bringing together different functional experts and are contributing to the work of the RMG, established to advance the Department's Reform agenda.

Over the last year, the Office of the ASD for Readiness also established a series of working groups focused on readiness-related areas, such as common military training and professional military education, which resulted in valuable recommendations the Department is now implementing. If confirmed, I would pursue opportunities to use CFTs to address other enterprise-wide readiness issues.

## **Major Challenges**

### **In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next ASD for Readiness?**

The priority for the ASD for Readiness will be increasing the Department's readiness to execute the NDS. The NDS answered the critical question, "ready for what?" and the ASD for Readiness will need to determine how "ready" is defined in policy, assess where the Department has the most acute readiness challenges, determine the systemic issues preventing the Department from accelerating readiness, and identify what needs to be done to move the needle on readiness. In addition, the ASD for Readiness will need to work closely with the Department's financial community to ensure the additional funding entrusted to the Department in FY18 and proposed for FY19 is allocated to critical NDS readiness requirements, and that the Department's FY20 budget request continues to build on the readiness improvements. As such, the ASD for Readiness will need to focus on developing detailed and quantifiable metrics to track readiness progress, improve the Department's ability to link resources with readiness outcomes, and reform readiness reporting that is better aligned with NDS objectives.

### **If confirmed, what actions and timelines would you have for addressing these challenges?**

If confirmed, I would leverage the Executive Readiness Management Group (ERMG) to identify the policies needed to increase the military's readiness to execute the NDS, and work closely with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) to determine how the ASD for Readiness might leverage the ongoing audit process to improve the Department's ability to link resources with readiness outcomes. I would also advance a collaborative effort with the Reform Management Group, which is co-chaired by the CMO and CAPE, to include readiness reporting reform within its larger reform effort.

## **National Defense Strategy**

**The 2018 National Defense Strategy states the importance of strengthening alliances and attracting new partners to deter aggression or act decisively.**

### **Do you support strengthening the NATO alliance, and what readiness advantages does it provide?**

Yes. A primary line of effort in the NDS is to strengthen our traditional alliances while building new partnerships, and a strong NATO Alliance is crucial to our nation's security. Engagements with our NATO partners provide readiness advantages to military forces, such as through annual joint military exercises. In 2017 alone, we conducted multiple exercises in European Command that helped build mission competencies and furthered our military's ability to operate and coordinate closely with NATO.

**Do you believe that the military Services' current force structure and authorized end strengths for fiscal year 2019 are sufficient to support the National Defense Strategy?**

With the FY 2019 authorized force structure and end strengths, I believe the Department will be able to achieve current missions. Sustaining the increased end strength, however, will require predictable and robust funding to: build and maintain readiness growth; support an infrastructure and training base that facilitates increased throughput; and continue to modernize the force. The NDS calls for a more lethal, resilient and rapidly innovating force that will take time to develop. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to continually assess the readiness of the force in the context of the NDS and ensure that resources are balanced appropriately to build readiness and combat lethality.

**How do you define and plan to operationalize the "Global Operating Model" and "dynamic force employment" outlined in the 2018 strategy? What are their potential impacts on readiness planning, particularly given the strategy's statement that dynamic force employment "must introduce unpredictability"?**

The new Global Operating Model describes how the Department will posture and employ the Joint Force to achieve its peacetime competition (deterrence) and wartime missions (military victory), and comprises four layers: contact, blunt, surge, and homeland. Dynamic Force Employment (DFE) describes how the Global Operating Model will work in practice.

The Model is designed to support the NDS by providing a flexible global posture and agile employment model that enables the Department to build the capabilities and readiness needed for great-power competition. DFE is the Global Operating Model's execution mechanism and prioritizes how the Department builds and sustains capacity and capabilities for major combat, while providing options for proactive and scalable employment of the Joint Force.

This new construct will direct not only where readiness resides, but also how readiness is created, consumed, and maintained. Therefore, the ASD for Readiness has an important role to play in ensuring forces assigned to the four layers are ready, when needed. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Joint Staff and the Military Services to define the appropriate levels of readiness for forces in each layer. I will also help ensure sufficient resources are correctly aligned to support the required levels of readiness in each layer to support the strategy.

**The strategy states that the Global Operating Model is comprised of four layers: contact, blunt, surge, and homeland. Please define these layers and how they will influence readiness planning.**

The contact layer shapes favorable military conditions, bolsters alliances, and helps our partners resist comprehensive coercion. The blunt layer, with its more robust military forces, denies an aggressor's military objectives until the United States can bring decisive

combat power to bear. The surge layer's "war winning" forces deploy to the battlespace where they will contest military domination of an adversary, in all domains. The homeland defense layer has the necessary capabilities to protect the United States from strategic attack.

For the Global Operating Model to work, the Department will need to ensure sufficient readiness is resident in each layer to support combat credible deterrence in peacetime and effective prosecution of the military strategy in wartime. If confirmed, I will work with the Joint Staff and Military Services to define appropriate levels of readiness for forces in each layer, while ensuring the Department postures and resources those forces accordingly. I will also reform the DRRS to report how well the Department is executing the new model and the DFE.

**Secretary Mattis has put great emphasis on the outcomes of the Close Combat Lethality study and subsequent working group.**

**If confirmed please explain how you will tap into the efforts of the working group in order to improve readiness across the entire force?**

The Close Combat Lethality Task Force (CCLTF)'s mission is to develop, evaluate, recommend, and monitor the implementation of improvements to U.S. squad-level infantry combat formations to ensure overmatch against pacing threats and strengthen the combat lethality, resiliency, and readiness of infantry squads. Given Secretary Mattis' clear direction to build overwhelming lethality, the task force is one of the Department's highest priorities. If confirmed, I will support resourcing and fielding task force initiatives with the full weight of the Office of the ASD for Readiness.

**Readiness Responsibilities**

**Section 136 of title 10, United States Code, gives the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness certain responsibilities for military readiness. Some important issues that affect military readiness, however, such as logistics, sustainment, and materiel readiness, are under the jurisdiction of the Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment.**

**Do you believe that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness should reside under a different undersecretary to better align the need for strategic readiness policy? Why or why not?**

No, I believe the Office of the ASD for Readiness is most effective under the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)). This alignment gives Departmental leadership high visibility into readiness issues and ensures the dedicated attention of an USD to the crucial missions that the ASD for Readiness performs, such as force readiness for core missions, operational safety, professional military education, financial readiness, and readiness programming and resourcing. Moreover, the NDS directly cites cultivating workforce talent as a contributor to a lethal,

agile force, which further strengthens the need to assess readiness in concert with the personnel issues that the USD(P&R) oversees, such as Service member deployability, recruiting and retention, and force resiliency.

**In your view, how does readiness relate to the personnel programs overseen by the OUSD(P&R)?**

Readiness capabilities and lethality are directly tied to many of the personnel issues that are overseen by the USD(P&R), such as end strength, recruiting and retention, deployability, resiliency, and medical readiness. Indeed, some of the most pressing readiness issues affecting the Military Services have been in the personnel area. The ASD for Readiness can benefit from the resident expertise within the Office of the USD(P&R). For example, the Air Force has repeatedly cited a lack of experienced maintainers and pilot shortfalls as key inhibitors to generating more ready aircraft and additional sorties. Similarly, the Army has historically cited non-deployability of soldiers as a constraint on unit readiness and a justification for increasing end strength.

**What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness in exercising policy and program oversight of military readiness, including materiel readiness?**

Secretary Mattis has been clear that rebuilding readiness is among his top priorities—which means, if confirmed, increasing the readiness of the Joint Force would be my top priority. Commanders assess the status of their unit’s readiness based upon personnel, training, and equipment (condition and supply). The USD(P&R) has policy oversight for most aspects of personnel and training, while the USD(Acquisition & Sustainment) has policy oversight for materiel readiness. If confirmed, I would work closely with the ASD for Sustainment to ensure that equipment condition and supply levels are sufficient to meet the NDS readiness requirements and that the Department’s authoritative system for tracking Joint Force readiness (the Defense Readiness Reporting System) has the most updated and robust data available to assess and monitor equipment readiness.

**If confirmed, what would you propose as the most critical objectives to improve policy and program oversight over military readiness?**

If confirmed, I would propose three objectives to improve policy and program oversight of military readiness: (1) establish the readiness requirements to meet the NDS objectives and associated recovery goals; (2) improve readiness reporting to identify leading indicators and systemic issues preventing accelerated readiness recovery; and (3) improve the linkage between resources and readiness outcomes to ensure effective allocation of Department funding.

**Currently, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness supervises a number of disparate offices with no clear relationship to producing combat readiness.**

**Why, in your judgement, does the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Education and Training report to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness?**

The training and education of our Service members, for which the DASD for Force Education and Training (FE&T) provides policy oversight, is crucial for Joint Force readiness. Training is experiential learning that teaches Service members how to do their jobs. Education teaches our leaders how to think, and gives them the mental agility required to maneuver the force. Both are needed to effectively implement the tenets of the NDS, which calls for an agile force prepared for great-power competition. I believe this is why the NDS identifies “talent management” (which includes many of the programs managed by FE&T, including professional military education) as a critical contributor to force readiness and lethality. The ASD for Readiness will need direct oversight and daily interaction with the DASD for FE&T to ensure our force has the training and education needed to effectively execute the NDS.

**Why, in your judgement, does the Defense Language and National Security Education Office report to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness?**

Linguistic and cultural expertise are direct contributors to combat capability, and directly support the NDS second line of effort to “strengthen alliances as we attract new partners.” The Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) manages language and culture education and training as part of FE&T’s overall training and education portfolio, which includes education for the Intelligence Community and cyber personnel; joint force training and capabilities; and graduate education. Having oversight of and responsibility for DLNSEO’s mission within the Office of the ASD for Readiness helps ensure that force linguistic and cultural expertise is properly aligned to readiness outcomes.

**Why, in your judgement, does the Transition to Veterans Program Office report to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness?**

Policy and oversight of the Transition to Veterans Program Office is now within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

**Why, in your judgement, does the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity report to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness?**

The Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO) has been realigned under the Executive Director for Force Resiliency, who reports directly to the USD(P&R).

**In your view, how do the programs overseen by these offices contribute to the readiness of the Armed Forces?**

I believe the programs that report to the ASD for Readiness provide a comprehensive view of Total Force readiness that will enable the next ASD for Readiness to better assess the readiness requirements for the NDS. If confirmed, however, I will continually assess the programs for which the ASD for Readiness is responsible to ensure their structure is optimized to meet the Secretary's priority to increase readiness.

### **Voluntary Education Programs**

**Do you believe that requiring certain servicemembers and spouses to pay a percentage out-of-pocket for courses and degrees above a bachelor's degree would improve educational outcomes for members and spouses utilizing the Tuition Assistance and MyCAA programs, and increase the efficiency of those programs?**

Yes, and I understand that the Department's current policies support this belief. Service members already pay out-of-pocket for a portion of the expense of a graduate level degree, given that the Tuition Assistance program only funds tuition up to \$250 per semester hour and 100% of associated fees are paid by the member.

Responsibility for MyCAA scholarship program rests within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, thus associated policies are not within the purview of the ASD for Readiness.

**What would be the budgetary and behavioral effects of making such a change?**

It is difficult to estimate the budgetary and behavior effects of this state of affairs, given that Service members already pay out-of-pocket for certain expenses associated with acquiring a degree, even with assistance from the Tuition Assistance program. However, if confirmed, I will review the program to determine what such effects might be.

### **Financial Readiness**

**Your office oversees financial readiness programs for the armed forces, including the financial readiness and education components required by the transition to the Blended Retirement System (BRS). Yet, according to reprogramming requests recently forwarded to the Committee, it appears far fewer servicemembers are opting into the new system than anticipated, and of those who are under the new system, fewer are maximizing their Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) benefit than we would expect.**

**Why are fewer servicemembers opting into BRS, and why are fewer maximizing their TSP benefit?**

Whether a Service member opts into BRS is a personal choice based on individual circumstances and I understand that the budget numbers and associated reprogramming requests were not meant to reflect any BRS opt-in goals or Department objectives. Rather, in planning for the transition to BRS, the Department took a conservative budget approach to ensure funding would be available to cover costs of continuation pay and

government TSP payments, based on models involving rational economic behavior. The Department has invested in robust efforts to provide unbiased, accurate and factual financial education to make an informed decision, but the choices of which retirement system to choose and when to make that decision are up to the member.

Members have until December 31, 2018, to opt into BRS, and the Department's education and information efforts will continue through the remainder of the year. Over 80% of those who have already opted into BRS are contributing 5% or more of their pay to TSP to get the maximum government match. This may be a sign that the Department's education efforts are working.

**Do you believe the education and counseling attending the transition to BRS have been adequate to allow servicemembers and their families to make informed and sound decisions concerning their financial future?**

Yes. The Department launched a robust education and counseling effort through standardized training courses; a network of more than 700 accredited financial counselors; information and educational products; and outreach and communications efforts. In total, more than 1.7 million eligible members have been educated on BRS since the beginning of 2017. These efforts will continue through the remainder of this year and beyond. While we do not measure the adequacy of education based on opt-in numbers, since this is a personal decision, I believe the tools we currently have in place are enabling Service members to make informed decisions about their financial future.

**How do you rate the financial readiness of members of the armed forces today?**

According to recent survey results, the financial well-being of members has generally improved over time. Members are more comfortable with their financial situation, are less likely to experience a financial problem, and are using fewer high-cost credit products. That said, the military population is constantly changing, so the Department must remain vigilant to ensure Service members have the most effective and up-to-date tools available to support their financial readiness.

**What is your view of the prevalence today of predatory lending practices targeting service members?**

The Department's survey data suggests a decline in the use of high-cost credit products by Service members, however, the financial readiness risk to Service members from lenders using predatory practices remains. Some lenders will still target Service members, for example, to take on excessive debt because Service members are perceived as reliable borrowers with stable income and an obligation to repay debt or face punishment (to include potentially losing their security clearances). I believe the Department must do all it can to protect the financial readiness of its military.

The Military Lending Act (MLA) limited the total cost of credit, mandated required disclosures, and prohibited certain terms and conditions to protect members from

unfavorable terms that could negatively affect their readiness. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor the Department's implementation of the MLA and its resulting effects to ensure it is affording Service members and their families the protection they need from predatory lending practices.

**What is your view of the adequacy and effectiveness of the Office of Servicemember Affairs of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in protecting service members and their families under the Military Lending Act and the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act?**

The CFPB's Office of Service member Affairs has a history of being a valuable partner of the Department in a number of ways. It provides educational resources, including training for future members in the Delayed Entry Program. It also provides technical assistance to the Department to support our efforts to educate and protect members from unfair practices. Lastly, the CFPB monitors complaints and enforces consumer protection measures under the Military Lending Act, the Service members' Civil Relief Act, and others. If confirmed, I would work closely with the CFPB to continue protecting Service members to support their financial readiness.

**Relationship with the Military Services**

**The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness has implemented a Readiness Recovery Framework that includes working with the military services to establish a defined readiness-rebuilding plan, to include developing comprehensive goals and metrics to evaluate the extent to which identified goals are achieving intended outcomes.**

**Please describe how the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness would work with the military services as well as other Office of the Secretary of Defense offices to rebuild full spectrum readiness across the department.**

If confirmed, I would work with the Military Services to rebuild full spectrum readiness by continuing to expand and enhance the Readiness Recovery Framework (R2F). The Office of ASD for Readiness established the R2F last year after finalizing the 60-Day readiness review directed in the "National Security Presidential Memorandum on Rebuilding the U.S. Armed Forces," January 27, 2017. The R2F is a transparent, measurable, and repeatable process that identifies readiness shortfalls, establishes near- and long-term milestones, and measures incremental progress. Earlier this year, the Department increased the scope of the R2F through its 45-Day readiness review and identified specific actions that the Services will take to meet operational demands associated with the NDS and applicable metrics.

**In your view, what are the appropriate metrics that should be used to track readiness-rebuilding progress?**

With the establishment of the R2F, the Department has improved readiness data collection and increased its ability to accurately measure and build readiness. However, more needs to be done to bring together disparate data systems throughout the Department and leverage data science and other analytic techniques to identify trends, systemic issues, and leading indicators of readiness. If confirmed, I will continue to build and advance the Department's newly implemented process to measure readiness and ensure an unbiased, data-driven approach that provides the Department and Congress with valuable, actionable readiness information.

**What steps would you take to institutionalize the readiness recovery framework and establish a defined readiness recovery plan?**

The R2F is the Department's institutionalized framework for readiness recovery and forms the basis of the Department's readiness recovery plan. If confirmed, I will work with the Military Services to refine and expand the R2F metrics to align with the NDS, incorporate the relevant data systems into the Defense Readiness Reporting System, and summarize findings regularly within the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress.

**What additional investments or Departmental reforms are needed to ensure the military services are addressing readiness recovery?**

The recently completed 45-day readiness review identified specific actions that the Military Services will make to ensure readiness recovery is aligned with the NDS. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to ensure the Department's funds are targeted to support these actions and address systemic issues to accelerate readiness recovery.

**Do you believe the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness has the necessary authority to provide meaningful readiness improvements or only make recommendations to the military services on trends?**

I am not aware of any additional authorities that the ASD for Readiness currently needs to accomplish its mission. However, if confirmed, I will assess whether new authorities are needed and will work with Congress to establish any required legislation.

**Readiness Monitoring**

**Section 117 of title 10, United States Code, directed the DOD to “establish a comprehensive readiness reporting system for the Department of Defense” which led to the creation of the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS). As the services established their service-specific DRRS, not in the spirit of the law, the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act prohibits any funds to be spent on development of service-specific systems, and requires a transition to DRRS-Strategic by 2020.**

**In your view, does the current readiness reporting system accurately and reliably collect and display the information necessary to establish that our forces are not only “ready” but “ready for what”?**

The Defense Readiness Reporting System - Strategic (DRRS-S) presents valuable insight into the readiness of Military Services and Combatant Commanders to meet specified missions. This adds insight and context beyond the service-focused Status of Resources and Training (SORTS) reporting, which is also contained within DRRS-S. However, DRRS-S needs to be reformed and, if confirmed, this will be one of my top priorities. For example, the underlying architecture for DRRS-S needs to be upgraded and the policy that governs DRRS-S must evolve so that readiness assessments more properly reflect how military forces are structured and employed.

**What is your understanding of the responsibility you will have, if confirmed, for the operation of DRRS?**

If confirmed, responsibility for the operation, oversight and reform of DRRS-S will be a significant part of my portfolio.

**Once all services have transitioned to DRRS-S, what benefits do you believe will be realized in both the short and long-term?**

Transitioning the service-specific DRRS systems into a single, enterprise-wide reporting system will improve the consistency of reporting, improve the timeliness of data, and increase transparency. In addition, moving to a single, authoritative reporting system will ensure that any future DRRS reform initiatives account for the unique interests and capabilities of each participant to support data requirements.

**How satisfied are you of the current ability of the DRRS to inform and contribute to the development of the National Security Strategy?**

While DRRS presents assessments of current force readiness to execute certain missions, I believe it needs to be reformed. For example, DRRS could incorporate more granular data to help identify the drivers that build and sustain readiness gains. If confirmed, I would work with policymakers to determine how DRRS may be improved to support National Security Strategy development and include this within the larger DRRS reform effort that would be one of my top priorities.

**How satisfied are you of the current ability of the DRRS to inform and help shape the development of the defense planning guidance provided by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to section 113(g) of Title 10?**

I believe DRRS needs to be reformed, and, if confirmed, I will seek to improve the depth and breadth of available data to better support the defense planning guidance process.

**How satisfied are you of the current ability of the DRRS to inform and assist the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in prescribing the National Military Strategy?**

I believe DRRS needs to be reformed and, if confirmed, I will seek to improve the support it provides to the Chairman and Joint Chiefs of Staff.

**How has the DRRS contributed to managing risk within the DOD? Have service-specific DRRS platforms contributed to delays in assessing real-time readiness levels?**

DRRS is the Department's source of organizational readiness information and the means by which the Military Services and Combatant Commanders report their ability to accomplish specific missions. It is also the primary tool by which they may identify risk for these missions, and thereby inform senior leaders of potential resource requirements. The Department uses DRRS to identify readiness requirements, though reform is needed to improve how this information is compiled and presented. DRRS-S must access all necessary data to support deep-dive analytics and create data linkages to uncover potential causes of readiness concerns. Separate service systems, as designed, make this more difficult. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the reform effort resolves this issue.

**If confirmed, would you consider conducting a review of the effectiveness of DRRS?**

Yes. If confirmed, this would be a top priority.

**Why are commanders allowed to subjectively upgrade their unit's readiness, if the intent of the DRRS is to accurately portray unit readiness up the chain of command? Do you believe these upgrades should be eliminated?**

Unit commanders are uniquely qualified to assess their unit and are entrusted with the ability to upgrade or degrade readiness levels when doing so would more accurately portray their unit's readiness. This capability is intended to improve the quality of readiness information and should be retained, but closely monitored, ensuring it is used as intended.

### **Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress**

**Do you have any concerns about whether the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress is providing the best mix of information to clearly inform the Congress of the readiness of the joint force, including near-term risks and areas where congressional action may be needed?**

Yes. The QRRC is a unique means for the Department to convey the Military Services' current state of readiness and the Combatant Commanders' most pressing concerns. As such, it should support Congress in identifying the actions needed to support the Department's readiness, and where to allocate resources. The QRRC has evolved over time, and the way it displays readiness has changed. For example, the Department recently amended the QRRC to include the findings of the 45-Day readiness review. However, the QRRC is a classified document, which limits its distribution. If confirmed, I would work with Congress to determine how to best structure the QRRC, as well as

whether additional data or information is needed, to meet the needs of Members and the professional staff.

**Are you aware of any readiness information in use within DOD that is not currently shared with Congress that would be useful for the exercise of congressional oversight?**

As DRRS-S is reformed, more readiness data will become available that maybe useful to Congress. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to determine what additional information should be included in the QRRC to support congressional oversight of readiness.

### **Overall Readiness of the Armed Forces**

**How do you currently assess the readiness of the Armed Forces?**

The Department is ready to meet its current missions and the Military Services are improving their preparedness to meet the requirements laid out in the NDS, in part thanks to the investments made possible by the FY17 Request for Additional Appropriations and through the FY18 Bipartisan Budget Act. However, readiness challenges remain that will take time and consistent resources to fully address. The funding increases already provided by Congress are critical to building warfighter readiness. The Department is working to identify where to make targeted investments going forward to sustain this progress, how to accelerate readiness growth, and what other changes may enhance the readiness of the Joint force. While doing so we are mindful of Secretary Mattis' clear direction that the Department needs to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. If confirmed, I will work to ensure resources are wisely used to increase our military's readiness.

**What is your understanding of the state of readiness of our deployed versus non-deployed forces?**

Our deployed forces are highly trained and equipped to conduct their assigned missions, and the Military Services' force generation models are designed to build readiness and prioritize resources accordingly. For example, the Navy is implementing the Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP), which allows a certain amount of time for post-deployment reset, ship maintenance and pre-deployment training. As a result, certain parts of the naval fleet will be "not ready" by design. I believe that persistent deployments systemic issues and unpredictable funding have limited the ability of the Military Services to execute their force generation models, as designed, and this contributes to readiness gaps within the non-deployed force. If confirmed, I would seek to more fully understand the effect these factors have had on force readiness, and identify mitigation strategies and actions that with the support of Congress, will address them.

**What will be your roles and responsibilities in monitoring the Services' goals for reset and reconstitution of combat forces and equipment to improve readiness?**

The Office of the ASD for Readiness is the Secretary's primary office for coordinating readiness assessments and monitoring the Department's progress in meeting recovery milestones. In so doing, the ASD for Readiness should use an enterprise-wide vision to determine readiness goals and work with the appropriate stakeholders to identify the actions needed to improve the associated personnel, training, and equipment readiness levels. If confirmed, I would support the USD(P&R) in this effort and assist the Military Services in continuing to implement, and modify when required, their readiness recovery plans.

**What is your understanding of the timeline for the Department to fully restore readiness and specific shortfalls that will require the longest amount of time and largest amount of money? How would you plan to restore full spectrum readiness and under what timelines?**

The Office of the ASD for Readiness recently led a comprehensive review of readiness recovery goals to ensure the Military Services' plans are aligned with the NDS and the FY2020-2024 Defense Planning Guidance. The review resulted in both interim milestones and projected timelines for readiness recovery, by major force element, and identified specific actions to achieve these recovery goals as well as relevant metrics necessary to measure progress. Broadly speaking, the review's objective was to achieve readiness recovery within the Future Years Defense Program. However, a critical assumption for this projection was that the Department would receive its requested funding on time. Indeed, any timeline for readiness recovery is subject to the Department's ability to get steady, predictable and adequate funding to execute its plans and programs as designed.

**In recent years, the term "readiness" has come to mean many things to different stakeholders in a variety of contexts. It can be taken to describe a modernization process, encompass training and education, as well as the more traditional view of the material condition of a unit's equipment. If confirmed, would you consider establishing a Department-wide standardized definition of the term "readiness" in order to create a uniform discussion of the topic? If so, how and under what timeline?**

I agree that the Department needs a standard definition of "readiness" and this should be a primary responsibility for the ASD for Readiness. If confirmed, I would make one of my performance goals the establishment of policy that defines readiness in the context of the NDS and prescribes the applicable institutional roles and responsibilities.

**What is your understanding of the degree to which units are completing all planned training before deploying?**

Department policy in DoD Directive 1322.18, "Military Training," requires that "individual, collective, and staff pre-deployment training shall be certified to standards by either the mission commander or the commander responsible for the pre-deployment

training.” However, I am concerned that persistent deployments and unpredictable funding challenges our ability to fully execute planned pre-deployment training as designed. If confirmed, I would also want to assess how well our current readiness reporting systems account for mitigations taken by commanders to meet deployment timelines (e.g., conducting required training while underway and in transit to the theater of operations).

**In the fiscal year 2019 budget request, the Department requested \$69 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding. What is your understanding of the purpose of this type of funding, its applicability to readiness, and the Department’s future dependence on OCO or other types of supplemental funding?**

For more than a decade, the Department has used Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding to support incremental costs of conducting contingency operations. Over time, however, the Department has also used OCO for what could be described as peacetime readiness requirements, such as ship maintenance and weapons systems sustainment, to relieve pressure on constrained base budgets. Transferring readiness-related funding from OCO to base would stabilize readiness programming and thereby improve the Department’s ability to plan and execute readiness activities.

### **Monitoring Deployments**

**Current DOD policy is to set rotational deployment goals for both active and reserve component service members. However, some service force elements are deploying more frequently than DOD policy intends.**

**Has the high pace of operations for these force elements contributed to readiness concerns and if so, what are the possible mitigations?**

Yes, a higher operational tempo than set in policy will contribute to readiness concerns. Also, some occupational specialties are at greater risk for multiple deployments than others. As a participant in the Global Force Management (GFM) process, the ASD for Readiness has an obligation to point out when units or personnel will exceed Department deploy-to-dwell or mobilization-to-dwell goals, and inform senior Department leaders of any readiness concerns associated with proposed deployments. If confirmed, I would take an active role in the GFM process to ensure that proposed deployments balance meeting Combatant Command requirements with ensuring sufficient dwell time.

**What steps would you take as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness to ensure that the military services deploy service members in accordance with departmental policy, or to adjust policy if needed?**

Based on previous analysis I conducted in CAPE on the effect of deployments on the readiness of certain force elements, I believe our ability to assess historical unit-level deployments and the associated readiness effects (such as on equipment condition or retention rates) is limited. If confirmed, I will work across the Department (especially

with the Joint Staff) to validate Military Service deployment processes, ensure the Military Services are adhering to the Department's deployment policy, and develop a more effective enterprise-wide system for measuring and tracking personnel and unit deployment rates over time.

**What steps will you take to gather reliable data to measure service member time away, as recommended by the Comptroller General in GAO-18-253?**

I agree with the Comptroller General's recommendation to "take steps to emphasize the collection of complete and reliable perstempo data..." and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Office of the ASD for Readiness provides all information and support needed to establish a consistent and reliable department-wide personnel tempo system.

**Balancing Current and Future Readiness**

**The Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force have recently suffered significant mishaps, such as last year's fatal collisions of the *USS Fitzgerald* and the *USS John S. McCain*, and a number of aviation crashes.**

**How will you ensure the readiness of these forces while continuing to meet DOD's operational demands and making investments for future readiness?**

The primary concern for the ASD for Readiness must be advancing the Secretary's priority to rebuild readiness. If confirmed, I will actively work to achieve this priority, including in the role as a participant in the Department's Global Force Management process, and will work to ensure the Department balances meeting operational demands with the Military Services' plans to rebuild readiness. I will also advise the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the USD(P&R) on any risk to building warfighter readiness posed by proposed deployments or investments under consideration.

**Reserve Components**

**How would you factor in the role of the Guard and Reserve as you evaluate manpower needs?**

As a significant portion of the Total Force, it is critical that Guard and Reserve manpower be at sufficient levels and composition to execute the NDS. Having a ready and trained force that is not on active duty, but available to be activated or mobilized if required, is essential. If confirmed, I will give the Reserve Component (RC) readiness requirements the same level of scrutiny as the Active Component (AC), and work with stakeholders to ensure that the Department properly resources manning, training, and equipping needs for the RC accordingly.

**In your view, going forward, should the reserve components revert to a purely reserve function, or should the nation make investments in the reserve components to keep them at an operational level of training and readiness?**

Today, the RC is providing operational support to the Combatant Commands and is also supporting numerous Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) missions at home, including wildfire suppression, border protection and critical infrastructure security. Simultaneously, the rest of the RC stands ready, if required, and is an enabler of Total Force readiness. It is therefore critical that the RC be resourced and integrated with the Active Component (AC) to support the NDS as both an operational and a strategic reserve.

**Training and deployments have placed a toll on both our reserve component service members and their employers. Please provide your assessments of how these challenges affect not only readiness but also retention of highly skilled personnel, and what resources or assistance can be provided that will help to sustain their readiness and retention.**

Members of the RCs, as well as their families and supporting communities, have made significant and vital contributions to our national security, but these have certainly come at a cost. Similar to the ACs, sustained deployments affect both equipment and personnel readiness, though at the same time these deployments have resulted in the most experienced operational reserve force in recent history. However, it is important that the Department set realistic deployment expectations for all members, their families, and their employers. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Reserve Integration team within OUSD(P&R) to ensure these factors are considered in the deployment process. I would also work with the resourcing community to create a specific Budget Line Item for RC equipment to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to maintain the condition of critical assets, effectively equip the force, and strengthen auditability.

### **Aviation Readiness**

**The services are wrestling with significant pilot retention challenges, which some have described as nothing short of a crisis.**

**How will you craft and coordinate a department-wide approach to addressing pilot retention, ensuring the proper data is collected and assessed and implemented mitigations are maximizing efficiency and effectiveness?**

As I understand, the current pilot manning gap is indicative of a broader nation-wide pilot shortage. The Department of Defense bins the challenge in four distinct phases: recruiting/accessions, training/production, absorption/seasoning, and retention. I believe that retention is our most immediate concern; one related area we need to monitor is ensuring pilots gain sufficient flying hours to maintain their proficiency. However, these phases create a complex system, and changes in one phase (e.g., adding an influx of new pilots) affects the outputs in the other phases (e.g., moving the new pilots through the training pipeline). One way that the Department is helping the Military Services address the pilot shortage is by updating exit surveys to better capture the reasons pilots are leaving. If confirmed, I will collaborate closely with the Military Services and other

organizations in the Office of the USD(P&R) to advance this type of effort and ensure that the Department is allocating sufficient resources to train (e.g., flying hours) and maintain an adequate number of military aircrew to meet the demands of the NDS.

**The services continue to be challenged by lower than desired aviation readiness rates.**

**What do you see as the biggest challenges the services face in terms of aviation readiness? If confirmed, what steps would you take to address those challenges?**

The pilot shortage is the most pressing aviation readiness challenge, though an aging aircraft fleet is also a significant issue. If confirmed, I will work with the Military Services and the other stakeholders to identify actions to access and retain the requisite number of pilots, and determine how to increase the number of mission capable aircraft on the flight lines and coming out of the depots.

**As the services has struggled to find the right balance between contract and organic maintainers, if confirmed, how do you plan on ensuring that the services do not become overly reliant on contract maintenance and revert to a more organic approach?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Military Services to ensure that they maintain the requisite number of uniformed maintainers to support the current missions, and future contingencies, most relevant to the NDS. I will also leverage the “50/50” report to Congress that the Department produces annually, in accordance with section 2466(d)(1) of Title 10, United States Code, to identify areas where the Department may be too reliant on contract maintenance or moving in that direction.

**At what timeline and at what cost do you believe it will take to get out of the current shortfall to ensure aviation readiness improves and is maintained?**

The funding provided in the FY17 Request for Additional Appropriations (RAA) and the FY18 Budget are enabling the Military Services to improve aviation readiness, such as through investments in flying hours, spare parts, and aviation depot maintenance. The recently completed 45-Day Readiness Review, which the Office of the ASD for Readiness led, also identified specific actions that the Military Services will take to increase readiness for major aviation force elements within the FY20-24 period. These are summarized in the recently delivered Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress, which the Office of the ASD for Readiness can brief to Congress in a classified setting. In addition, the Department is currently identifying the systemic impediments to increasing the mission capability rates of critical aviation assets. Together, these efforts will inform the FY20 Budget Request and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that the proposed readiness actions are fully funded.

**Looking forward, what do you believe is the next crisis on the horizon as far as personnel shortfalls beyond the pilot and maintainer shortfall, and how will you be**

**proactive in trying to avert another operational emergency besides just hiring costly contractors?**

Given the low percentage of today's youth population that is eligible for military service, I am concerned about personnel shortfalls in critical areas that affect our overall military readiness. I am particularly concerned about competing with the commercial sector to fill crucial positions in areas like cyber and IT. If confirmed, I will collaborate with my counterparts in the Office of the USD(P&R) and within the Military Services to ensure we are doing all we can to recruit and retain the personnel we need to face future threats.

### **Joint Training System**

**What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the current Joint Training System?**

The Joint Training System (JTS) is a Chairman-owned process that enables Joint Force Commanders to identify mission-based training requirements, design training programs to meet those requirements, and then assess joint readiness to perform their missions. The JTS consists of four phases, in a cycle: Requirements; Plans, Execution, and Assessment. Over the past year, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Education & Training) has been working closely with the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands to emphasize and improve the currency and completeness of the reporting and use of information in the Assessments phase of the Joint Training System. This will enable the JTS to further support joint Force Commanders as they design training programs that support the objectives outlined in the NDS.

### **Training Ranges**

**The DOD is fielding Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in greater numbers, which has created a strong demand for access to national airspace to conduct training and for other purposes. The demand has quickly exceeded the current airspace available for military operations.**

**What is your understanding and assessment of the DOD's efforts to develop a comprehensive training strategy for the Department's UAS, to include identifying any shortfalls associated with current policies, education, stationing plans, and simulator technologies?**

The development of a Department-wide strategy is underway, and the DASD for Force Education and Training office is actively engaged in this area. If confirmed, I will work in concert with the Military Services to integrate UAS operations into all aspects of training and with respect to range considerations.

**What infrastructure improvements must be made to ensure DOD training ranges are equipped for fifth generation aircraft?**

If confirmed, I will work with the ASD for Sustainment to identify infrastructure improvements that should be made and determine what resources can be made available to address these in the near-term.

**Numerous military aviation and ground leaders have expressed concern that legacy ranges and training areas cannot accurately create an environment that encompasses the electronic and cyber threats currently arrayed against our forces.**

**If confirmed would you consider creating “5th generation” sets of training areas?**

Both 4th and 5th generation platforms would be part of the joint fight so the Department’s training ranges must support both 4th and 5th generation platforms. However, I understand the fielding of 5th generation platforms has created challenges for our legacy ranges and training areas. This will need to be addressed through enhancements to our live ranges, investments in simulators, and experimentation of using new technologies to inject synthetic entities into airborne platforms. If confirmed, I will collaborate closely with the ASD for Sustainment, F-35 Program Office and Military Service training communities to identify and address future training and infrastructure needs.

### **Defense Strategic Guidance**

**The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance stressed that the Department will need to examine the mix of active and reserve component elements and stated that the expected pace of operations over the next decade will be a significant driver in determining an appropriate mix of AC/RC forces and level of readiness.**

**What is your assessment of the implications of a reduction in the pace of operations on the AC/RC mix and reserve readiness?**

The increased use of the Reserve Component (RC) has built operational readiness and increased Active and Reserve Component integration. While the pace of operations has reduced, we still have over 40,000 RC Service members activated today, and therefore need stable and predictable funding to provide integrated training with the Active Component, as well as RC equipment reset and modernization. If confirmed, I will examine the AC/RC mix to ensure it provides the optimal level of Total Force readiness.

**In your view, how can the missions of the Reserve forces expect to change to meet new priorities?**

As long as we maintain a Total Force approach in resourcing, training and equipping both our Active and Reserve Components, I believe the Reserve Component will evolve with the Active Component to support the NDS. If confirmed, I will work with stakeholders across the Department and the Military Services to ensure the Total Force has the readiness required to meet all operational requirements and any new missions.

## **Flexibility in Operation and Maintenance Execution**

**The Services have consistently maintained the struggles of the military services to execute operation and maintenance funding when a continuing resolution is forced upon them.**

**Would you recommend any changes in the requirement for how or when operation and maintenance funding is executed in the event of a continuing resolution? If so, what would those changes be?**

As a former budget analyst and programmer, I have seen the damaging effects of continuing resolutions (CR). The Department warned that CRs impose "administrative costs that are wasteful, and readiness costs that are unrecoverable." CRs also drive inefficiency, which is something we cannot afford in our readiness efforts. The Operation & Maintenance (O&M) appropriations are particularly important to readiness, as they fund most of our training, maintenance, and readiness-support activities. In FY 2018, I understand that Congress worked closely with the Department to extend new authorities such as allowing 5% more [from 20% to 25%] execution to take place in the last two months of the fiscal year. If confirmed, I will work with the USD Comptroller and the Office of General Counsel to assess other proposals that will afford readiness activities some relief from the detrimental impacts of continuing resolutions.

## **Balancing the Needs of the Services with the Requirements of the Combatant Commanders**

**Congress has received testimony from multiple combatant commanders that COCOM unfunded requirements are either underfunded or ignored altogether by the services. There is a growing concern that as services move further into a joint warfighting environment, the readiness of the joint fighter is outweighed by the desires of the individual services.**

**If confirmed, how would you attempt to rectify this perceived imbalance?**

In the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress (QRRC), the Combatant Commanders (CCDRs) report their most concerning readiness shortfalls, relative to the operational demands in their respective areas of responsibility. Under the new QRRC construct, the Department must identify mitigations to address these shortfalls. If confirmed, I would work closely with the CCDRs and the Military Services to more fully understand why these shortfalls exist and what actions may be taken given available resources.

## **Reserve Component as a Trained and Ready Operational Reserve**

**One outcome of 15 years of continuous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, that has included the mobilization of thousands of Guard and Reserve forces, has been the realization that our reserve components have evolved from a rarely used strategic reserve to a more frequently used operational reserve.**

**In your view, what are the essential elements of readiness, if any, that distinguish the reserve component as an operational reserve as opposed to a strategic reserve?**

An operational Reserve must be ready to operate with the joint force so that it may rapidly deploy and seamlessly integrate. As such, it requires predictable funding, and auditable transparency of equipment procurement from the initial allocation of funds to the delivery of equipment to the unit. As part of transparency reform, and in line with audit readiness and business management reforms that are underway, I would support, if confirmed, the implementation of Guard and Reserve budget line item numbers in the Military Services' budget request.

### **Relations with Congress**

**What are your views on the state of the relationship between the ASD for Readiness and Force Management and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?**

I appreciate that the FY19 NDAA preserved the position of the ASD for Readiness and if confirmed, I look forward to developing a much stronger relationship with Congress. If confirmed, I would seek to demonstrate the value of having an OSD organization solely focused on the policies and practices that further the Secretary's vision to build readiness and increase the lethality of our force.

**If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with Congress?**

If confirmed, one of my priorities will be to develop a strong working relationship with Congress. For example, I would seek to regularly update Members and Professional Staff on the Military Services' and Combatant Commanders' readiness status, as reported in the Quarterly Readiness Reports to Congress. I would also maintain open lines of communication and make myself available to meet with interested Members and Professional Staff on the different lines of effort within the Office of the ASD for Readiness.

### **Congressional Oversight**

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

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

Yes.

**Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness?**

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.