

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Nickolas H. Guertin
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition

Duties

Section 8016 of title 10, United States Code, states the Assistant Secretaries of the Navy shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of the Navy may prescribe and that the principal duty of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASN (RDA)) shall be the overall supervision of research, development, acquisition, and sustainment (including maintenance) matters of the Department of the Navy.

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the ASN(RDA)?

Under 10 U.S.C.8016, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASN (RDA)) is responsible for the overall supervision of research, development, acquisition, and sustainment (including maintenance) matters of the Department of the Navy (DON). ASN (RDA) serves as the Service Acquisition Executive for the DON with the authority, responsibility, and accountability for all acquisition functions and programs within the Department, and for enforcement of Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD (A&S)) procedures. As such, ASN (RDA) represents the Department of the Navy to USD (A&S) and to Congress on all matters relating to acquisition policy and programs, establishes policies and procedures, and manages the Navy's research, development, acquisition, and sustainment activities in accordance with governing statutes, acquisition regulations, Department of Defense policies and instructions, and Department of the Navy policies and instructions.

What recommendations, if any, do you have for changes in the duties and functions of the ASN(RDA), as set forth in section 8016 of title 10, United States Code, or in Department of Defense regulations pertaining to functions of the ASN(RDA)?

In 2018, Congress wisely added duties related to sustainment and maintenance of Naval weapon systems. If confirmed, I look forward to examining how that transition is progressing and to reviewing the other statutes and regulations, then recommend changes (if any) to the Department that may warrant consideration.

If confirmed, what additional duties, if any, do you expect will be prescribed for you?

If confirmed, I expect the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy to assign me duties and functions commensurate with the ASN (RDA) position, and others they deem appropriate.

Do you believe that there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the ASN(RDA)?

I believe that the Naval acquisition community is well positioned to transform the way technology is quickly transitioned from idea to prototype to scalable quality products for the fleet and force. As a part of that, if confirmed, I intend on continuing to press the government/industry/academia team to innovate to more quickly deliver affordable and effective capability.

Major Challenges and Priorities

In your view, what are the major challenges that you would confront, if confirmed?

The most pressing issue appears to be in the public and private shipyards to quickly and affordably build and maintain the fleet. Also, if confirmed, I also intend on examining the foundations of how designs are instantiated to position the Naval acquisition community to respond to maximize the time platforms are able to be deployed, to quickly integrate changes in capability needs, or to flexibly adapt game-changing technologies in platforms, weapons, sensors, combat management systems across all operational domains.

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

I intend, if confirmed, to invigorate a sense of urgency throughout the acquisition community and to empower all elements of the team to think and act differently to bring about the transformation that is needed to outpace our pacing challenges to overcome shortfalls in warfighting performance and, empowered by appropriate authorities from Congress - to deliver game changing capability.

If confirmed, what management actions and timelines would you establish to address these problems?

The first step in any leadership position like this is to take stock of the team and listen to what they think their problems are. I have ideas too that, if confirmed, I will use to evaluate what they have to say, but their inputs must be taken in and valued in order to gain trust and engender a spirit of collaboration. Coupled with this will be to ensure I have deep and honest relationships with the Commandant, the CNO and most importantly, the Secretary of the Navy on which to build openness, honesty and trust.

If confirmed, what broad priorities will you establish and how will you measure progress in achieving these priorities?

As you might surmise from my past leadership initiatives and research, I intend, if confirmed, to take a hard look at the way the Navy and Marine Corps thinks and acts on establishing open business and technical architectures with industry, government labs and academic researchers. The Naval acquisition team must nurture fruitful relationships while preserving the opportunity for bringing in new ideas and designs throughout the portfolio. This balancing act is something that the Naval team has had some success in, but appears not to have fully embraced across all programs. Also, a clear message to industry needs to be sent that the Naval acquisition environment is business-friendly, while also being a demanding customer that will act on the best interest of the American Taxpayer as a primary responsibility. As taxpayers themselves, they should expect nothing less.

Relations with Congress

If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the Office of the ASN(RDA)?

If confirmed, it is my intention to be open and honest with Congress first and foremost. If you ask me to appear before you, I will make haste to do so. If you want someone from the Naval acquisition team to come brief you, I will see to it that you get them. If there is information that you want to see from the team, I will see to it that you get it, consistent with executive branch obligations. If there are delays in getting you any briefings or information, or if there is new data that substantially impacts prior discussions, I will be forthright about it and be as responsive as possible. Lastly, I will make sure that for any testimony given that there are no acts of retaliation against members of the Naval acquisition team and that they will be protected.

Budget

If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of the Navy's funding for the programs under your purview?

I would measure the adequacy of the Department's budget to support the Navy and Marine Corps team based on how it supports the National Strategic Objectives set forth by the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense. Fundamental to this would be an assessment on how the budget provides the weapons, systems, platforms, and readiness enablers to the men and women in the Navy and Marine Corps to successfully carry out the mission this Nation asks them to execute. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) to ensure our investment accounts provide affordable and effective capabilities to meet Combatant Commander mission.

Acquisition

If confirmed, what would be your plan for improving Navy acquisition activities?

If confirmed, I will assess the operations of the Department of the Navy research, development, and acquisition enterprise in order to make recommendations for improving acquisition activities. I will make recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy as necessary.

What do you perceive to be the recent successes and shortfalls in Navy acquisition activities?

There are two aspects to answering this question. To achieve more reliable long-term successes, the Navy and Marine Corps is more readily embracing the inherent need to improve capability over time as a fundamental design requirement. My understanding is that the DDG(X) design will have more capacity to incorporate capability than the current set of surface combatants. However, acquisition enterprises have often underestimated the maturity and readiness of technologies to begin production. This can lead to over committing to concurrent development of the required technologies while simultaneously entering production. History is clear that over-reliance on concurrent development has led to significant cost increase and schedule delays. These include DDG-1000, CVN-78, and the Littoral Combat Ship programs. I believe the Navy is reversing this trend by adopting other proved design practices such as; early prototyping, incorporation of land-based test sites, and ensuring designs are mature prior to production. If confirmed, I would look to assess the effectiveness of these actions, and where needed, apply leadership to reduce risk to ensure programs meet cost and schedule objectives.

If confirmed, what steps would you take specifically to improve oversight in the requirements determination, resource allocation, and acquisition management processes?

In my view, it is critical to balance resources, requirements, and acquisition management processes to ensure the timely delivery of capability to the warfighter. If confirmed, I will work with the CNO, CMC, and the Naval acquisition team to identify potential improvements in these processes and communicate those recommendations to OSD and the Joint Requirements Oversight Council. When appropriate, I will ensure that recommended changes are coordinated for implementation in Department of the Navy policy.

How can the Department of Defense and the Navy better access and integrate commercial and military technology to remain ahead of potential adversaries?

In my view, the key to accessing and integrating commercial and military technology is to both embrace collaboration and innovation and to foster a culture of integration of new

capability as a life cycle strategy in order to prioritize speed and agility in the procurement process. By doing so, the Department of Defense and the DON will be able to catch up (where necessary) or remain ahead of potential adversaries to maintain our warfighting edge. If confirmed, I will examine options such as: fostering partnerships with commercial technology companies to leverage their expertise and access cutting-edge technologies; investing in research and development initiatives to create new technologies and aggressively apply open architectures to adapt new capabilities to meet warfighter needs. In doing so, if confirmed, we can further develop a culture of innovation by encouraging experimentation, risk-taking, and creative thinking.

What roles do you see for developmental planning, prototyping, and experimentation in the fielding of future Navy capabilities?

My goal would be to establish the technical and business models in our acquisition architectures to flexibly and fluidly bring in needed capabilities and execute programs through the powers of the available acquisition pathways. Still there will be instances that require urgency of action that can only be achieved using the more accelerated acquisition authorities provided by Congress. If confirmed, I will balance the ability to mainstream new functionality and also take advantage of rapid acquisition to achieve a best-match on delivering against the urgency of warfighting needs. I will work to foster a strong partnership with the CNO and CMC and work together to determine the best process to address those mechanisms.

How would you propose better integrating successful outcomes from experimentation exercises like Task Force 59 and SCOUT into acquisition programs?

Experimentation is a foundational learning tool used across the full spectrum of technology maturity and CONOPS refinement. Experimentation exercises like Task Force 59 and SCOUT bring together discovery-based exploration of emerging technologies and rigorous evaluation of specific technology. If confirmed, I am fully committed to evaluating the lessons learned from these efforts and working with our industrial base partners to productionize, integrate and scale successful outcomes into acquisition programs.

How would you propose the Navy better plan and prepare for weapon system sustainment as part of its acquisition activities?

In 2018, Congress expanded the SAE responsibilities to include maintenance and sustainment. If confirmed, I will be using this lens to enable the development teams to establish design requirements about these life cycle aspects much earlier in the life cycle. In addition, to improve future readiness and control sustainment costs, the Department needs to trace acquisition activities and investments to the outcomes that matter in sustainment. If confirmed, I will work to optimize measurable sustainment outcomes with proven metrics such as maintenance turn-around-time and supply effectiveness at the lowest possible life cycle cost. I will strengthen our governance of sustainment activities

and investments throughout the lifecycle through rigorous, focused early design considerations, Independent Logistics Assessments, and Sustainment Reviews.

Cost and Schedule Estimates

The Government Accountability Office has reported that the Navy's use of unrealistically optimistic cost and schedule estimates is a major contributor to cost growth and program failure.

What institutional factors do you perceive to contribute to the Navy's use of unrealistically optimistic cost and schedule estimates?

Based on my experience, I understand that immature design, immature technology development, immature planning, or industrial base readiness can contribute to inaccurate cost and schedule estimates. I believe that prior to committing the nation's resources to an acquisition decision, we must ensure we have characterized the development risk across every facet of the program and have realistic maturation efforts in place to ensure we have stable and mature designs. This includes, where appropriate, a design requirement for incorporating new technologies as a part of a life cycle strategy. We must start to look at our platforms and systems as landing pads for evolving performance and hosts for improving technologies when they are robust and ready to support the program. This includes more aggressive use of modeling the use of well-understood open systems architectures to smooth integration issues, and to make sure industry has both the capability and capacity to produce the capability, with quality and at scale. It is my understanding that the DON has a robust and multi-layered cost estimate process, which includes estimates from program offices, independent estimators from the Systems Commands, and review at the Echelon 1 level, along with active engagement and participation with the Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation for the Department's largest and high-interest programs. If confirmed, you have my commitment to ensure we will do due diligence prior to making acquisition recommendations and that we continue to strengthen Navy/Marine Corp's robust cost estimating procedures.

If confirmed, how would you propose to counter or mitigate these factors leading to unrealistic estimates?

It is my understanding the Navy has implemented best practices in major acquisition programs to ensure realistic estimates. This includes the use of mature designs, prototyping new technologies at land-based test sites where appropriate, and developing a collaborative environment with industry early in the design process to ensure producibility of a program. If confirmed, I would assess the effectiveness of these efforts and make necessary adjustments to ensure programs meet established cost and schedule benchmarks.

What steps do you believe the Navy can and should take to ensure that cost and

schedule estimates are based on adequate empirical evidence, and that such estimates provide a sound basis for decision-making on Navy programs?

The formulation of cost estimates for major programs should be based on sound data and analysis. Underlying assumptions, approaches, risk, and data supporting the independent component cost estimate and the program office estimate is compared through the Cost Review Board process to understand the differences in order to better inform the program budget and acquisition strategies to mitigate risk. If confirmed, you have my commitment to provide a fresh look at Navy processes to ensure that we are taking full advantage of evolving capability delivery methods, modern development practices and that our assumptions, estimates, and execution of programs are based on sound data and analysis.

Software Activities and Acquisition of Information Technology (IT)

What is your understanding of the role of the ASN (RDA) with respect to IT acquisition and software activities of the Department of the Navy?

As the Acquisition Executive for the Navy, I understand that ASN (RDA) is responsible for all IT and software acquisitions for the Department of the Navy. If confirmed, I would work very closely with the Department's Chief Information Officer, Principal Cyber Advisor, and Service Chiefs to procure affordable, effective, and cyber-survivable systems that meet mission requirements.

If confirmed, how would you plan to address systemic and persistent cultural, process, and technical barriers to improving the Navy's treatment of software activities and IT acquisition?

The United States' IT industrial base is the preeminent world leader in IT systems and software innovation. The Department of the Navy's IT and software systems must embrace these state-of-the-practice methods to be agile and adaptable in order to respond to a rapidly changing environment. A critical enabler in remaining agile and adaptable will be to harness commercial systems, software applications and robust development methods, where applicable. I am particularly supportive of using the evolving acquisition tools, such as the software and business acquisition pathways, to ensure we are using the best-fit methods for acquiring this kind of technology. If confirmed, I will look at things like these best practices for working with our laboratories, academia, industry and other government agencies to drive a culture that values this mindset.

If confirmed, how would you work with the testing community, the Navy's Chief Information Officer, and with the other Military Services—including their Chief Information Officers—in the development and deployment of Navy business IT systems?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Navy's Chief Information Officer and the Principal Cyber Adviser to develop a testing framework that embraces iterative capability

improvement, manages risk based on commercial accreditation, to include cyber-safe certification, as well as other industry and government best practices. The DON's Zero Trust initiative is a fundamental paradigm change to improve cyber survivability while empowering appropriate data sharing across DON's networks. This trust-but-verify strategy will enable the department to have better control and visibility, while increasing safety and decreasing security risk. Additionally, if confirmed, I will reach across the Military Services to ensure alignment, sharing of information and capturing of lessons learned to benefit all the Military Services.

If confirmed, what major improvements would you make in the Navy's development and deployment of major IT systems?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's Chief Information Officer and Service Requirements Officers to ensure that the Department is fielding modern enterprise IT systems. One of the key areas that I would look to better understand is how to transition unique or "stove-piped" systems to an enterprise solution that transforms the organization into a data informed culture, enabled by IT that evolves as the Naval force evolves.

If confirmed, what would be your highest priority IT and software-related initiatives?

If confirmed as the Navy's Acquisition Executive, I will work with the Department's Chief Information Officer and Service Requirements Officers to identify priority IT and software needs and then work to deliver and scale those priorities in a cost effective and timely manner.

In your view, what is the appropriate relationship between the Navy's efforts to implement enterprise IT programs and supporting computing services and infrastructure to support Navy missions, and the efforts being undertaken by the Defense Information Systems Agency?

It is my understanding that Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) is the provider of DoD enterprise services and tools which are available to all the Services to leverage. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Naval team to review these tools and services to ensure they are cost effective and operationally responsive to the DON and to determine if provided services are meeting mission requirements.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that appropriate business process reengineering is undertaken and accomplished before initiating new business systems, IT program development, and deployment?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's Chief Information Officer to assess the DON's current approach to business system development and ensure business process reengineering is accomplished as a critical initial step in business system development.

If confirmed, how would you coordinate the development or procurement of cloud computing services within the Navy with other Department of Defense and federal government cloud computing initiatives?

I believe that cloud computing is an incredibly useful approach to transforming how the DON delivers, protects, and manages access to data and applications across all mission areas – business, warfighting, and intelligence. However, in the bandwidth-limited environments at sea or in the field, we often have to basically take a cloud with us, but even so, cloud computing should be exhaustively examined as a first-option method fulfill our requirements. If confirmed, I will work with Department leaders to assess the DON's current policies and processes for development, procurement, and delivery of cloud services to ensure that they are consistent with industry best practices and support the evolving needs of the warfighter. I will also assess DoD's recently-awarded Joint Warfighting Cloud Capability (JWCC) multi-vendor contract to determine the most appropriate and effective way to leverage the JWCC to meet the Department of the Navy's enterprise cloud requirements.

In your view, what is the appropriate role for cloud computing capabilities in Navy acquisition, research, testing, and logistics programs and activities?

Cloud computing provides significant benefits compared to traditionally-acquired business systems. These include increased productivity, collaboration, portability, upgradability, connectivity, and security. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Navy's acquisition and research leaders to understand areas where cloud computing can improve business processes across the entire Research, Development, and Acquisition enterprise.

Where do you believe the best opportunities for collaboration and joint execution between the Navy and the Chief Data and AI Officer (CDAO) might exist?

The Department of the Navy is embracing machine learning, artificial intelligence (ML/AI) and data analytics to increase speed of decision, drive innovation, and improve both operational and business processes. As these technologies and tools improve overtime, I believe there must be alignment across the DoD to ensure enterprise-level infrastructure and services are available to advance adoption of data collection, curation, related analytics, cross-organization transparency and thoughtful application of ML/AI. The CDAO is also working on the challenges with data interoperability and the mechanisms for how we communicate as a joint force and also with our allies and partners to achieve the objectives of Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2). If confirmed, I would work closely with the Department of the Navy's Chief Information Officer and the DoD Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office to share best practices, ensure alignment and collaborate to improve interoperability.

In your view, what is the role of Navy software factories and how do you plan to assure the success of these entities?

It is my understanding that software factories have become a key piece of the DON's approach to promulgate a Development, Security, and Operations (DevSecOps) culture which invests in and leverages state-of-the-practice methods such as continuous integration / continuous delivery (CI/CD) as a preferred approach to instantiate agile development practices and speed capability to the fleet. If confirmed, I intend to continue implementing the DON's vision to provide mission-driven and user-focused software to our sailors and marines through the ever-evolving software development practices like these. As such the community will need to move these capabilities forward while continuing to assess and rationalize the software factory capability ecosystem.

Contracting

What are the major challenges facing the Navy with respect to contracting activities?

If confirmed, I want to evaluate the current challenges by meeting with the DON contracting activities as well as members from industry to gain a full perspective on their current limitations, trends and future needs. Based on my past experience, challenges in contracting will need to address talent management, capability and capacity gaps for long-range planning, requirements definition, speed to contract, oversight, and overarching acquisition workforce.

If confirmed, how would you drive greater use of flexible contracting authorities while also ensuring appropriate oversight of such use?

If confirmed, I will strongly encourage the acquisition workforce to utilize the tools Congress has authorized to maximize flexibility. These reforms provide military departments with valuable tools to increase innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness in responding to the needs of the warfighter. I will ensure the DON continues to have an educated and trained acquisition workforce and to utilize accountability and oversight processes to ensure there are appropriate checks and balances throughout the acquisition lifecycle.

What factors drive procurement administrative lead time, and what actions will you take to reduce lead times?

Based upon my experience in the DON, I have seen several areas that drive procurement lead times from requirements definition, proposal preparation, negotiations, and post award administration. If confirmed, I will meet with the DON contracting activities, program offices, and industry partners to identify and remove barriers that are contributing to excessive procurement lead times.

In what instances do you believe the Navy should use fixed price contracts for development programs?

It is my understanding that there are guidelines for using the appropriate contract type and if confirmed I will ensure that DON contracting professionals continue to use sound judgement when determining the most appropriate contract type for each action based on the risks inherent to the specific requirements. Traditionally, programs in the development phase have more inherent cost, schedule and performance risk, driving a need to have thoughtful use of contract types and incentives that are best-matched for the business and technical problem at hand.

Do you perceive that the Navy is making appropriate use of non-FAR-based contracting approaches, such as Other Transaction Authority (OTA)? If confirmed, how might you modify the Navy's efforts to and processes for the use of these approaches?

I support the use of every tool in the acquisition toolbox. If confirmed, I will encourage the continued use of non-FAR based contracting approaches as they provide the military departments with valuable tools to increase innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness in responding to the needs of the warfighter. Use of these non-FAR based contracting approaches removes barriers to entry for non-traditional defense contractors, providing access to critical and emerging technologies in the execution of our mission.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that Navy personnel are properly trained in the use of non-FAR-based contracting methodologies?

If confirmed, I will assess the sufficiency of the training to the Department's acquisition workforce to ensure they are fully trained to enable the DON to successfully leverage non-FAR based contracting methodologies to deliver improved program outcomes. I will leverage the use of resources from sources such as DAU, DIU, and DARPA, and other organizations that have used these methods effectively.

In your view, what are the general advantages and disadvantages of FAR and non-FAR based contracting approaches, respectively?

Both contracting approaches provide benefits in meeting the Department's mission. Contracts governed by the FAR provide standard terms and conditions for use which are built upon decades of acquisition experiences but which may create barriers to entry. Whereas use of non-FAR based contracting approaches provide military departments access to critical technologies from non-traditional defense sources and offer more flexibility than the traditional government acquisition process allows. If confirmed, I will encourage the use of all tools available to the acquisition workforce.

Multivear Procurement Contracts

Section 3501 of title 10, United States Code, provides the criteria Congress expects will be met to exercise multiyear contract authority.

What types of programs are appropriate for the use of multiyear contracts?

Multiyear contracts are appropriate for programs that have a stable requirements, realistic cost estimates, stable designs, and that could result in significant savings for the Department when compared with annual contracting. Department of Navy programs such as the Virginia Class submarine program, DDG 51 Destroyer program, and V-22 Tilt Rotor Aircraft have allowed the Department to take advantage of mature designs and continuing requirements to realize savings for the government.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps fully comply with the requirements of section 3501?

Yes.

What is your understanding of the requirement that a multiyear contract result in “significant savings” compared to the cost of carrying out a program through annual contracts?

It is my understanding that multiyear procurements should achieve “significant” savings compared to annual procurements. What constitutes significant savings of the total anticipated costs of carrying out the program through annual contracts will vary for each individual program. It is my understanding that the “significant savings” standard is not based upon any particular percentage of savings. However, a benchmark of 10% has historically been used as a starting point.

What is your understanding of the requirements regarding the timing of a Department of Defense request for legislative authorization of a multiyear procurement contract for a particular program?

It is my understanding that, in the ordinary course, the Department of Defense typically requests statutory authority to enter into a multiyear procurement contract with the President’s Budget in either the fiscal year in which the contract will be initiated or in the year prior.

The Navy budget request for fiscal year 2022 included insufficient funding to avoid breaking a multiyear contract for the DDG-51 destroyer program. The committee views such actions as breaking a moral commitment from the Department to fully fund multiyear procurement programs for the duration of the contract. Such an action should only be taken in the direst of circumstances.

Can you assure the committee that you intend to fully fund all multiyear contracts within the purview of the Navy in future budget requests and that you would only recommend a budget request that fails to do so in a dire emergency?

Yes.

Middle Tier Acquisition

Section 804 of the FY 2016 NDAA authorized DOD to employ an acquisition approach (“Middle Tier Acquisition”) that was intended to support the rapid delivery of new capability to meet emerging operational needs.

In your view, what benefit has the Department of the Navy derived from its use of Section 804 authorities?

In my view, the Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) is an important tool to rapidly develop prototypes, demonstrate new capabilities and rapidly field production quantities of systems with proven technologies that require minimal development. It is my understanding that the DON is using these authorities to drive capability to the hands of Sailors and Marines. MTAs can also improve affordability by facilitating a tailored approach to program oversight, and empowering programs to leverage data, use innovative strategies, and actively manage risk to improve responsiveness to the warfighter. If confirmed, I am committed to responsible use of this pathway, and I will engage with Congress to ensure proper oversight as the Department learns and adapts.

What risks have accrued and been accepted by the Navy as a consequence of the use of these authorities?

It is my understanding that the Department of the Navy has been very judicious in using these authorities to reduce technical risk, validate designs and feasibility of design concepts, obtain early feedback from warfighters, and obtain information on potential costs, challenges, and other similar factors. If confirmed, I will be committed to ensuring the Department remains diligent with the management of MTA processes and policies so that any risks remain manageable and are quickly addressed.

If confirmed, how would you balance the need to rapidly prototype and field systems with the need for appropriate oversight of the Department’s use of 804 authorities? Please explain your answer.

If confirmed, I will closely examine the Department’s use of these authorities to ensure that we achieve the appropriate balance between flexibility and oversight. I will remain vigilant in ensuring all programs aligns with both DoD and DON policies through open communication with our stakeholders, lessons learned across the Department and Services, and maintaining management rigor. I am confident that the benefits of Section 804 authorities outweigh the risks associated with the Department’s need to learn and adapt to oversight of this new pathway.

Test and Evaluation

Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe it appropriate -for the test community to take risk and modify its assessments of operational effectiveness and suitability to support continuous development or rapid fielding?

My current position requires me to establish policy to assess programs' operational effectiveness, suitability, survivability, and lethality that informs both acquisition and fielding. I do, and will continue, to work closely with program managers and warfighters to make risk-based decisions that balance the desire to go fast with managing a balance between technical and operational risk.

One of my points of leadership with DOT&E was to update our forward-looking strategy to better position my current organization for the future. Over the past year, we have been working with the Services and the other stakeholder organizations in DoD to explore how the T&E community engages earlier in the development life cycle (shift left) to establish testability requirements and operational test considerations when a design is being established. We have also begun to establish the foundation of practices associated with thinking into the future about what test needs should be positioned in order to ensure that, in the end, the warfighter has quality weapons that are effective and work when they use them (look right). By having the T&E community involved early – to shift left - and by working with the acquisition community to plan around how to adequately test in the future – to look right – we seek a strong and effective collaboration between the developers, testers and users to ensure we can move fast into the future for delivering excellence at the speed of need.

If confirmed, I intend to bring that experience to the Naval acquisition team to continuously improve our methods and products to deliver game-winning capability at the speed of need.

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

The test and evaluation community plays a significant role in all aspects of acquisition, especially as it pertains to fully utilizing all the acquisition processes that are available to creative program managers to deliver working capability, at scale, rapidly. The recently updated SECNAV acquisition policy, SECNAVINST 5000.2G, provides guidance regarding the development of tailored, capability focused test and evaluation for each of the DoD acquisition paths, including Middle Tier and Urgent Capability Acquisition. This approach ensures that each program has adequate levels of test and evaluation rigor and related strategies designed to provide the data required to inform the analysis necessary for making sound acquisition and fielding decisions.

In your view, does the Department of the Navy have adequate test and evaluation capabilities? In which areas, if any, do you feel the Navy should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?

As the current Department of Defense Director for Operational Test and Evaluation, I have identified areas that require improved test and evaluation capabilities. One example is how we carry out live fire test and evaluation. Due to the enormous cost of some

weapon systems and increased ranges of weapons, it may not be practical or affordable to carry out a representative live fire test and evaluation. We must look to innovative solutions that provide us the assurance that testing results are reflective of the performance expected in the operational environment. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the Navy's test and evaluation capabilities and sharing best practices I have learned as DoD Director for Operational Test and Evaluation with the DON.

Technology Transition

The Department of Defense continues to struggle with the transition of new technologies into existing programs of record and major weapons systems and platforms. Further, the Department also has struggled with moving technologies from the Department's programs or other sources rapidly into the hands of operational users.

What impediments to technology transition do you see within the Department of the Navy?

One of my key focus areas, should I be confirmed, will be to examine the methods used to mature innovative technologies that can be smoothly integrated into scalable, quality solutions. I would also ensure a tight coupling between the science and technology community and the program managers who would be charged with transitioning those technologies. In addition, building a strong foundation of research requires talented and committed people in the Department, and with partners in government, academia and industry. My experience as a senior leader in DoD acquisition is that many of the roadblocks to change and rapid transition of new technologies are slowed by a lack of an enabling environment (technical, business and cultural). These impediments include slow adoption of state-of-the-practice technology trends (particularly when they are commercially driven), self-limiting impediments for adopting the authorities provided by Congress and taking advantage of the multiple pathways now available and lack of training in the acquisition workforce. If confirmed, I will assess these and other factors that hamper technology transition within the DON, and work with the Defense Industrial Base, commercial/non-traditional suppliers, academia and the Naval Research and Development community to investigate avenues to accelerate and transition technology to the warfighter.

To what extent could and should the Navy Research Laboratory and other Navy systems engineering commands play a greater role in enabling the transition of promising technologies from a successful initial demonstration to a program-of-record, which may include working with industry and the desired program executive officer (PEO) to develop and assist with a systems engineering plan necessary to achieve transition to the PEO?

The Navy Research Laboratory and Systems Engineering Commands provide a vital role in the evaluation, development, assessment and oversight of technologies intended to fill warfighting capabilities gaps or to exploit gaps in our potential opponents. Should I be confirmed, I will ensure that technology developed at our research laboratories has the

best chance to transition by making sure the foundational elements (technical architectures, business models, transition agreements, etc.) for speeding technology insertion into programs of record. The community also needs to constantly be introspective about fostering increased collaboration between the government stakeholders such as the PEO, resource sponsor, and project leads.

If confirmed, what steps, if any, will you take to enhance the effectiveness of technology transition efforts?

If confirmed, I will assess existing Department of the Navy technical and business processes to ensure effective transition mechanisms are in place and that a robust dialogue exists between the Naval Research and Development community and the acquisition programs of record to enhance the effectiveness of the technology transition efforts. I will also review the training of the DON acquisition workforce to ensure the workforce has the training needed to effectively transition technologies into acquisition programs

What can be done from a budget, policy, and organizational standpoint to facilitate the transition of technologies from science and technology programs and other sources, including small businesses, venture capital funded companies, and other non-traditional defense contractors, into acquisition programs?

In recent years, Congress has given the Navy additional authorities needed to facilitate technology transition from the Science and Technology community to acquisition programs and the warfighters. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Naval Research and Development community, industry, academia and acquisition programs to assess the processes in the Department of the Navy to ensure these new authorities are being fully utilized to facilitate greater collaboration and to ensure the warfighters maintain technological superiority. In instances where we identify additional authorities that can improve in this area, you have my commitment to bring it to Congressional attention for consideration.

Navy-Related Defense Industrial Base

In recent years, the Navy has been struggling with manpower shortages and other supply chain issues within the industrial base supporting Navy acquisition and sustainment activities. Congress has responded by implementing such programs as additional funding to support second and third tier vendors in the submarine production supply chain.

What is your understanding and assessment of the systems and processes for identifying, evaluating, and managing risk among the entities that form the Navy industrial base and supply chain?

Our industrial base is made up of essential partners for delivering capability and maintaining the nation's enduring advantage. It is my understanding the DON has made it a priority to understand the entities that comprise its industrial base and supply chain. If

confirmed, I will continue the DON's investment in tools and data analysis products to further illuminate the current supply chain risk and identify ways to prioritize areas of investment in the industrial base. This effort requires continued focus and measurement to ensure the DON is focusing investments in the industrial base to those areas where it will most effectively assure resiliency and support industrial base/supplier expansion.

What is your view of the current health of the industrial base that supports the Navy?

I would like to better understand the challenges that are being experienced by our industrial base. If confirmed, I would personally visit their facilities and engage with their supplier base, then come back to you with my observations and some recommendations.

As a general observation, I believe that the most important area that our industrial base partners would request is a clear and steady demand-signal to plan around. Without a clear and sustainable demand, it is very difficult for our industrial base partners to plan what capital projects will be required, what investments need to be made to support future demand, and how many workers they will require. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary of the Navy, CNO and CMC to support a predictable workload that allows our industrial base partners to plan effectively.

How should Navy acquisition leaders consider impacts on the industrial base when addressing requirements for recapitalization or modernization of major end items such as aircraft, munitions, or key repair parts?

Recapitalization and modernization programs are critical to keeping platforms relevant to meet future threats. If confirmed, I would work closely with government and industry partners to incorporate innovative solutions that enable recapitalization and modernization of major end items in an affordable and timely manner. I would carefully consider the industrial base as part of the acquisition strategy development and future procurement plans to ensure we have the industrial base capacity to develop, produce, and field major end items, such as aircraft, munitions, and the key repair parts required to support warfighting requirements.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you pursue in systems and processes to improve identification, monitoring, and assessment of actions to ensure that risk in Navy-relevant sectors of the defense industrial base is adequately managed?

It is my understanding that the Navy is proactively improving visibility into its industrial base and associated workforce and is actively identifying risks and fragilities within those entities. It is also my understanding that the Navy is working in close partnership with contractors to support supply chain monitoring and health assessments to improve industrial base health and outcomes. If confirmed, I will work with industry and government partners to continue the framework of policies, procedures, and tools used to address our collective challenges in Navy-relevant sectors of the industrial base.

In your view, what actions should the Navy take to maintain access to critical elements of the defense industrial base, including special programs to ensure that of manpower resources sufficient to meet the Navy's needs?

It is my understanding that the Navy is collaborating with industry and government stakeholders to ensure a skilled workforce is available to support Navy shipbuilding, aviation, and repair capacity needs through ongoing workforce initiatives in key maritime and aviation regions and supply base centers of gravity. I recognize and support the Department's work with local, state, and national organizations to identify opportunities to generate resiliency and productivity in the defense industrial workforce and in the supply chain. If confirmed, I will add my voice and ensure that messaging, incentives and policies are in place to continue to identify and monitor Navy's access to the people needed to support our critical supply chain. If required, I would also seek additional measures, in consultation with Congress, which would enable the Department to reconstitute critical industrial capabilities which may include, when necessary, the acquisition of intellectual property and special manufacturing equipment.

If confirmed, what would you see as your office's role in working with or supporting efforts of the Navy Office of Small Business Programs?

Small businesses play a crucial role in any economy as they often form the backbone of local communities, create jobs, and promote innovation and diversity. In my past acquisition experience, I have enjoyed great outcomes in working with small businesses. They are a foundational element of the Defense ecosystem, and many directly support the larger prime contractors. It is my understanding that since I left the Department of the Navy, it has continued to be a strong performer in utilization of small business, and I am aware that DON has several ongoing initiatives to increase that utilization at both the prime and subcontractor levels. If confirmed, I will renew my commitment to ensuring that the Navy continues to advocate for small businesses and promote the critical role these businesses play in support of the DON and strive to continue to lead the DOD in this area.

If confirmed, what would you see as the relationship between your office and DIU?

The pace of technological change dictates that we look to all sources for technologies that can, with minimal additional investment, be repurposed to address warfighting gaps or to improve existing capability. It is my understanding that DIU provides increased opportunities for the DON to leverage private sector investments in innovation to rapidly deploy capability to meet defense needs. If confirmed, I will work with our operational community to prioritize those proven technologies for scalability through DIU and other similar organizations.

Navy Shipbuilding

Congress has adopted a goal of 355 ships for the Navy fleet based on previous Navy

Force Structure Assessments (FSA). The previous FSA requirement was 308 ships. The Navy’s current naval battle force contains roughly 285 ships, and will not achieve a force level goal of 308 ships until at least 2035 at the earliest.

In your view, what size Navy, consisting of what mix of ships, will be needed in coming years to adequately perform Navy missions?

I am committed to building a naval force with sufficient size and capability to campaign effectively, deter aggression, and, if required, win decisively in combat. It is my understanding the Navy continuously reviews the numbers and types of ships—and the capabilities they require—to meet the evolving demands of the National Defense Strategy. Although I have not had the opportunity to review the Force Structure Assessment that established the number of ships, if confirmed, I am committed to working closely with the Secretary of the Navy, the CNO and CMC to deliver the most relevant capabilities and platforms on schedule.

What steps would you recommend evaluating to achieve a 355-ship Navy, particularly related to additional ship procurement and the funding required?

I am committed to building a naval force of sufficient size. If confirmed, a key task would be to work closely with industrial base partners to ensure they have a consistent and predictable demand signal to support the Navy this Nation requires. We must balance the industrial base capacity across the entire enterprise to ensure they can build and deliver the required capabilities needed in the future on time and on cost.

The Navy recently made a commitment to procuring large uncrewed surface vessels that could be used to augment crewed platforms as a way of bringing more firepower to the point of need while minimizing complexity and cost, which would in-turn affect future force structure assessments. Should the CNO and CMC require these types of vessels, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy and Congress to get the right mix of crewed/uncrewed platforms and to invigorate the shipbuilding community (government and industry) to accelerate this concept.

Lastly, modernization programs are important to keeping existing ships relevant to meet future threats, especially ships which have a 30-40 year service life. I believe that these upgrades must be accomplished early in a ship’s life cycle and at a regular interval. As threats change, we must have the ability to quickly adapt our ship platforms to meet these new threats. If confirmed, I would work closely with our government and industry teams to seek innovative solutions that enable us to modernize ships in an affordable and timely manner.

The Navy has begun acquiring the replacements for the *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). The new *Columbia*-class boats are projected to have an acquisition cost of \$10 billion per ship. The Navy has stated publicly that it could not afford to buy both the new SSBNs and maintain other required procurements under expected funding toplines.

What steps do you believe will be necessary to enable the Navy to expand to a 355-ship fleet, while also procuring the *Columbia*-class SSBNs?

I support the *Columbia*-class SSBN as the Navy's number one acquisition priority and most survivable leg of the nuclear triad. Continuing to fully fund the program will be essential to ensure on time delivery, so that the nation's sea based strategic deterrent requirements continue to be met as the *Ohio*-class is retired. To minimize the impact to the rest of the fleet, I believe in continuing to prioritize efforts to reduce cost and schedule risk, increase the capacity of the submarine industrial base, and improve affordability. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress on delivering this important strategic capability while also modernizing and expanding the rest of the Fleet.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the United States procured the current *Ohio*-class SSBN submarines within the Navy's shipbuilding (SCN) account. In 2015, Congress created a special fund, the National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund (NSBDF), for procurement of *Columbia*-class SSBNs.

Do you have a view on how the cost of *Columbia*-class SSBNs should be funded—solely from Navy resources, from a combination of Navy and other-than-Navy (e.g., OMB and other Defense) sources, or with a different approach? If so, please explain.

I understand that the Navy has budgeted for the *Columbia*-class program in the Shipbuilding and Conversion account and then used the authorized National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund to execute the program. I support this approach for implementing this important program, as it maximizes transparency and provides valuable authorities to control costs.

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy and Congress to determine the best approach for funding the program and ensure the proper acquisition authorities are used to make this critical program more affordable.

Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and *Constellation*-class Frigate (FFG-62)

The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program has had mixed success at best. Last year, the Navy proposed to retire most of the LCS-1 class of ships substantially before they would have been tired under normal circumstances. To replace many of the capabilities the Navy had expected from the LCS program, the Navy has begun the *Constellation*-class frigate (FFG-62) program

What is your view of the lesson that should be learned from the experience of the LCS program?

From a sustainment perspective, the experience of LCS highlighted the logistical challenges caused by over-reliance on Contractor Furnished Equipment (CFE), over-

commitment to reducing crew size, and dependence on original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) for maintenance support. Utilization of Navy programs of record that can be maintained and sustained organically provides a more maintainable, sustainable, reliable, and available capability. In addition, utilizing mature designs and technologies from the outset, as well as employment of a Land-Based Engineering Site (LBES), will minimize engineering changes, promote a smooth transition to fleet introduction, and ultimately improve operational availability.

What is your understanding of the FFG(X) program and how it will differ from LCS?

I understand that the Constellation Class Frigate (FFG 62) is the evolution of Small Surface Combatants with increased lethality, survivability, and improved capability to operate in more severely contested environments. The first ship of the class was awarded with full and open competition and leveraged mature and sustainable designs and technologies. It is my understanding that the program ensured sufficient design maturity and production planning prior to the start of production, reducing concurrency risk. I am aware that the ship will be equipped with Navy standard Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) systems, leveraging proven program of record combat, control, communication, computing, and intelligence systems. Additionally, the FFG 62 Class is utilizing a proven hull form to minimize Hull, Mechanical, and Electrical (HM&E) risk. The program is aligned with Congress' intent on land-based testing and is establishing an FFG 62 land-based test site to validate power and propulsion systems prior to lead ship delivery.

Do you support the current FFG-62 class acquisition strategy?

Yes.

Naval Aviation

What is your assessment of the most important challenges facing naval aviation? If confirmed, what steps would you take to meet those challenges?

Naval aviation must work to build a modern and sustainable capability, balancing readiness of the force today while modernizing an aging fleet and developing the Air Wing of the Future. This challenge is not unique to the NAE community. If confirmed, I will work with the NAE to ensure our investments support continued readiness improvement efforts and incremental capability improvement programs to order to meet the evolving aircraft mission performance needs and deliver greater capability to the fleet to meet the next generation of security challenges,

Does the Navy have a sufficient number of strike-fighter aircraft? If not, if confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure they do?

It is my understanding that the Department has stated they have a sufficient number of 4th

Generation Strike Fighters. In my view, further investment in 5th Generation procurement and development of 6th Generation platforms should be the focus moving forward. If confirmed, I will review the current strike fighter inventory and projected procurements to ensure the DON is using all available levers to achieve the correct capability and capacity to meet current Global Force Management requirements and manage strike fighter inventory.

What is your understanding of the physiological episodes that the naval aviation community is confronting and plans to address such episodes?

Providing for the safety of our Sailors and Marines in of the utmost priority. I understand that the DON has taken a comprehensive approach to both evaluate the causes of and mitigate the occurrences of Physiological Episodes (PEs). These efforts have resulted in a steady decline in the incidence of PEs, and the rate is now the lowest it has been in 10 years. I assure you that I will continue this commitment to safety, if confirmed, and will work with the NAE to ensure that the necessary resources are applied to ongoing modifications to the aircraft, improved maintenance practices, and improved aircrew interface.

Marine Corps Aviation

What is your assessment of the most important challenges facing Marine Corps aviation? If confirmed, what steps would you take to meet those challenges?

Marine Corps aviation challenges are similar to those facing Naval Aviation and the Department as a whole. The DON must continue to invest in readiness and sustainment, modernization of the Marine Corps aircraft fleet, and 5th Generation strike fighter aircraft that incorporate advanced capabilities to support the objectives of the National Defense Strategy and the Commandant's Force Design 2030. If confirmed, I will work with Marine Corps leadership to ensure our resources are invested to deliver the most effective Marine Corps aviation capabilities and capacity.

Is Marine Corps aviation readiness at an acceptable level? If not, if confirmed, what steps would you take to improve aviation readiness?

It is my understanding that the Marine Corps has made measurable improvements in aviation readiness due to a comprehensive readiness recovery plan that includes changes in resourcing and multiple initiatives to improve material readiness across all type/model/series. If confirmed, I will work with Marines Corps and DON leadership to ensure readiness accounts are adequately funded and that investment accounts are sufficiently resourced to build on these efforts in accordance with the 2022 Marine Corps Aviation Plan.

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter

What is your assessment of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program? If confirmed, what changes would you seek to implement in the program?

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is a dominant, multirole, fifth-generation aircraft capable of projecting U.S. power and deterring potential adversaries. In my current capacity as Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, I am aware that the F-35 presents unique challenges in areas such as development, testing, fielding, and sustainment. If confirmed, my role will be to serve as the Service Acquisition Executive for this critical program. I will be committed to working with the Joint Program Office the Services and Partners to increase capabilities, reduce costs, and complete all required testing.

In your view, what are the considerations for the Department of the Navy should take into account in evaluating alternatives to purchasing 340 F-35C fighter aircraft, such as purchasing advanced fourth generation fighters still in production, such as enhanced F-18s, or developing a next generation fighter aircraft beyond the F-35's capabilities?

The F-35 is currently the most technological advanced fighter in the DON inventory and is needed to fight and win in the future fight. If confirmed, you have my commitment that I will evaluate all capabilities and technology available and under development to ensure an effective and efficient Naval force. I also believe unmanned systems are and will continue to play an important role in the future of warfare. If confirmed, it would be my intent to evaluate all available technology.

Carrier Air Wing

Do you believe the Navy's carrier air wing is designed to provide the capability we expect it to contribute to the carrier strike group? Specifically, will the projected air wing have sufficient available strike range, available payload, electronic warfare capability, and command and control capability? Why or why not? If not, if confirmed, what steps would you take to address any gaps?

In my view, the carrier air-wing (CVW) has been designed with the right mix of capabilities. However, it is critical that those capabilities continue to be reviewed and modernized to stay ahead of the threat. It is my understanding that today's Air Wing is transitioning to a mixture of 4th and 5th Generation strike fighter aircraft that incorporate advanced capabilities to support the objectives of the National Defense Strategy (NDS). If confirmed, I will work with the CNO and the Commandant to review CVW capabilities to ensure they are adequately meeting current requirements and are properly resourced to ensure the CVW will remain lethal and viable against future threats.

Unmanned Aviation

What is your assessment of the appropriate role unmanned aviation should play in Naval and Marine Corps aviation? If confirmed, what steps would you take to achieve that vision?

It is my understanding that the DON is undertaking fundamental shift in naval aviation

operations by continuing to integrate unmanned systems into the Fleet. These efforts provide significant advantages including decreased risk to personnel, greater persistence, longer ranges, improved data speed and accuracy, and a faster decision cycle. If confirmed, I will work with the CNO and Commandant to support development and test of these capabilities that increase operational opportunities and tactical advantages to the warfighters.

Unmanned Surface Vessels and Unmanned Underwater Vessels

What is your assessment of the maturity of unmanned vessels in the surface and underwater domains? Do you support the Navy's autonomy roadmap? If confirmed, what steps would you take to reduce risk and transition one or more programs of record?

My understanding is that the Navy is in the prototyping and experimentation phase for examining all sizes of unmanned surface vessels in order to mature the technology prior to committing the Nation to official programs of record. The exception to this is the Mine Counter Measure Unmanned Surface Vessel, which is an Acquisition Category II program in the production and deployment phase. I also understand that prototyping and experimentation is progressing with large and extra-large unmanned undersea vehicles, including their core enabling technologies.

In my view, autonomy will provide additional warfighting capability and capacity to augment the traditional combatant force, allowing the option to take on greater operational risk while maintaining a tactical and strategic advantage. If confirmed, I will support the development of an autonomy roadmap that will lay out an approach to address our technology gaps, reduce development risk and optimize manned/unmanned teaming. If confirmed, I will also support continued land and sea-based experimentation, and ensure the core and enabling technologies are at the appropriate level prior to committing into programs of record.

Amphibious Combat Vehicle

Since canceling the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) in 2011 after spending \$3 billion, the Marine Corps has chosen to pursue a more measured multi-phase acquisition strategy to fulfill their amphibious combat vehicle (ACV) modernization requirements.

What is your understanding of the ACV acquisition strategy?

With the cancellation of the EFV Program in 2011, the Marine Corps shifted its strategy to focus on mature, commercially available technologies for the ACV program, which I currently have under DOT&E oversight. It is my understanding that the first phases concentrated on a personnel variant and a command and control variant. Follow-on phases incorporate technologies to develop and test a medium caliber cannon variant and a recovery variant.

Do you support this acquisition strategy?

Yes, the acquisition strategy for the ACV program is an example of expeditiously executing a competitive major acquisition program to provide the warfighter a much needed capability. If confirmed, I will support the fielding of ACV personnel and command and control variants, and the continued development of the medium caliber cannon and recovery variants.

Ground/Air Task-Oriented Radar (G/ATOR)

With development initiated more than a decade ago, the Marine Corps is moving forward with a long-delayed and expensive radar system, the Ground/Air Task-Oriented Radar (G/ATOR), which will replace a number of older radars and will protect Marines from rockets, artillery, cruise missiles, and UAVs while also serving as an air-traffic control system.

What is your understanding of the G/ATOR acquisition strategy?

It is my understanding that the G/ATOR program provides a next generation radar using one hardware configuration for multiple operational capabilities. The Air Surveillance/Air Defense and Counter-fire capabilities began fielding in 2018 and 2019 respectively, and an Air Traffic Control variant is on the near horizon.

Do you support this acquisition strategy?

Yes. I understand that the acquisition strategy for the G/ATOR program developed a state of the art radar that is providing the Marine Corps an enhanced multi-function capability. If confirmed, and when appropriate, I will support the Full Rate Production of this program and the development of the Air Traffic Control capability and other system upgrades.

Munitions

Munitions inventories, particularly those of precision guided munitions, have declined significantly due to high operational usage, insufficient procurement, and a requirements system that does not adequately account for the ongoing need to transfer munitions to our allies and operations short of major combat, such as in the current operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. In addition, we also now have to replace munitions stocks drawn down to support Ukraine.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure we have sufficient inventories of munitions to meet our combatant commanders' needs?

Because munitions are a critical national priority, if confirmed I will support investments in the industrial base that increase capacity of critical components and work with

suppliers to identify opportunities to increase resiliency. Aggressively supporting critical outsourcing and engaging with small and non-traditional businesses will help the DON expand the industrial base to remove chokepoints in production and supply. In addition, I will look for opportunities to leverage the new authorities provided in the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act that provide temporary acquisition flexibilities to increase the Department's stocks of critical munitions.

Science and Technology

What is your understanding and assessment of the role that science and technology programs have played and will play in developing capabilities for current and future Navy and Marine Corps systems?

DON investment in science and technology is critical to ensuring future Naval superiority, preventing technological surprise and developing the science needed to outpace our adversaries and other threats to mission readiness. Investments in academia support the world's most productive research and development ecosystem, increase diversity in the workforce, and leverage funding from other federal agencies to accomplish the DON mission. These investments are the source of both evolutionary capabilities for programs of record and revolutionary game changing capabilities for the Navy and Marine Corps. If confirmed, I will work across the broader Research and Development community of industry, academia, and government to ensure the Department maintains its scientific and technical advantage.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that successful Navy and Marine Corps science and technology programs will have a pathway for a timely transition to operational warfighting capabilities?

If confirmed, I will investigate the tools and methods being used for transitioning technology and work to strengthen collaboration between the science and technology community and the program managers who transition the technologies to operational warfighting capabilities. In addition, I will leverage title 10 USC 4123 authority which provides Naval Warfare Centers and Labs a valuable tool to enhance the speed of technology transition. The goal that I would set would be to continue to develop capabilities while reducing cost and increasing the speed and scale of integrating technology into the fleet and force.

Laboratories and Warfare Centers

What has been your experience in working with the Navy's labs and warfare centers?

The Naval Warfare Centers and Laboratories house a world-class workforce and capabilities that provide innovative solutions for rapid prototyping, fielding and technical execution for programs of record. Having served in several of these facilities, I have seen

how they serve an essential role in all aspects of developing and delivering critical capabilities to the warfighter as we compete with near-peer adversaries for technological advantage. We need to renew a sense of urgency with our laboratory personnel and ensure our investments develop cutting-edge technologies for our warfighter at the speed of need.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to assess and enhance the interaction between Navy labs and warfare centers and with the acquisition community?

It is my understanding that the ASN (RDA) organization is structured to ensure close coordination between Programs of Record and the research and development communities, including in some cases being geographically co-located. This provides synergy across the Acquisition lifecycle as well as opportunities to infuse new technologies developed by Scientists and Engineers into Programs of Records to meet strategic needs. If confirmed, I will work to ensure this synergy continues to grow.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the Navy's labs and warfare centers can attract and retain a technical workforce with the necessary skills and capabilities?

If confirmed, I will partner with our Nation's Educational Institutions to develop science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) talent. I will enable our Naval Warfare Centers and Laboratories to further leverage the authorities provided under the Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory (STRL) Congressional authority. These authorities allow Naval Warfare Centers and Laboratories to quickly attract, recruit, and retain our Nation's best and brightest STEM talent. I will continue to revitalize Navy's culture to foster a greater level of collaboration across the Enterprise, which will result in greater speed and lethality to meet our warfighter's need.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the Navy's labs and warfare centers have the resources they need to acquire and maintain research and testing infrastructure and equipment?

If confirmed, I would support the use of current authorities -- such as Capital Investment Program and 10 U.S.C. 4123 authority (also known as Naval Innovation Science and Engineering) to acquire and maintain the required infrastructure and equipment. I would continue to support additional financial flexibilities offered to the STRLs to allow resourcing infrastructure and equipment requirements. Finally, I would pursue the development of a long-range infrastructure plan that would utilize a programmatic approach to optimize laboratory infrastructure over the coming decades.

Investment in Infrastructure

Witnesses appearing before this Committee in the past have testified that the Services under-invest in both the maintenance and recapitalization of facilities and infrastructure compared to private industry standards. Decades of under-investment in

Defense Department installations have led to substantial backlogs of facility maintenance activities, created substandard living and working conditions, and made it harder to take advantage of new technologies that could increase productivity. These challenges have been exacerbated by current budget pressures.

What is your view of Navy and Marine Corps infrastructure investment?

I understand that the DON infrastructure portfolio carries risk due to chronic underinvestment in facilities sustainment and recapitalization. If confirmed, I look to better understand the challenges that the Navy and Marine Corps have balancing investments for current and future infrastructure to meet the Department's urgent readiness needs, future force requirements, and business reforms.

If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you propose to increase resources to reduce the backlog and improve Navy and Marine Corps facilities?

If confirmed, I will work with leaders across the Department to address infrastructure needs and challenges across the enterprise. I will support reviews of Department requirements to ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps are focusing resources on the most critical and highest priority projects.

Senior Military and Civilian Accountability

If confirmed, what steps would you take to improve individual and organizational accountability in acquisition management?

Accountability is the fundamental foundation for every action taken to facilitate trust and confidence. I am committed to being accountable and transparent in executing the duties of ASN(RDA), if confirmed, in accordance with all governing laws, policies, and regulations. I would expect the same for every individual within Navy's acquisition organization. I would also ensure there is clear and unambiguous guidance on the conduct and expectations that governs our actions.

If confirmed, how would you propose to hold acquisition officers accountable for using authorities to accelerate the fielding of critical capabilities and within all applicable acquisition laws and regulations?

Acquisition officers must have the responsibilities, authorities, and accountability to carry out their assigned mission. I expect acquisition officers to execute their duties in accordance with the laws directed by Congress and the policies and regulations within the Department. If confirmed, I would ensure that I provide direct oversight to ensure that the authorities being requested or used are appropriate and consistent with laws and policy.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that senior leaders of the Navy under your supervision and oversight are properly held accountable for their

actions and performance?

Every action we take on behalf of the American public must be consistent with the laws, policies, and regulations that govern our actions. If confirmed, I would ensure that senior leaders under my supervision clearly understand the standards of conduct that govern our actions. If an accountable individual fails to uphold these standards, I would recommend actions to enforce the accountability.

Management and Development of the Acquisition Workforce

The transformation of the armed forces has brought with it an increasing realization of the importance of efficient and forward thinking management of the acquisition workforce.

What is your vision for the management and development of the Navy and Marine Corps acquisition workforce, including the scientific and technical fields?

This is an exciting time to be leading the acquisition of Naval capabilities. I have researched and published on how to improve delivery of capability at the speed of need. My most recent efforts in this area include an updated strategy for the improvement of operational test and evaluation, the center focus of which is to acknowledge that capability improvement as a life cycle strategy is a growing aspect of the military portfolio. If confirmed, I would explore how to develop the acquisition workforce to take full advantage of new tools and methods now available to accelerate excellence in performance, at scale. If confirmed, I will work with the Naval acquisition team to meld their innovations with validated research, proven best practices, past successes from both the Navy and other elements of the DOD to bring excellence to the warfighter.

Do you believe that the Department of the Navy has an appropriately sized acquisition workforce, with the proper skills, to manage the Department into the future?

If confirmed, I would examine the current needs of the Naval acquisition workforce and analyze that against the demands being made of them for technical and business excellence, both now and in the future. If there are noted weaknesses, I will utilize available authorities to close those gaps, and where necessary work with the Secretary of the Navy and Congress to get any other authorities that might be needed to ensure the acquisition community can live up to the high standards necessary to support our Sailors and Marines.

Do you recommend any changes to the statutes, regulations, or policies regarding the Department of the Navy's acquisition workforce? If so, please describe.

At this time, I do not recommend any changes to statutes, regulations, or policies. If confirmed, I will carefully examine the statutes, regulations, and policies governing the DON's acquisition workforce and make any necessary recommendations to the Secretary

of the Navy.

How will you work with the Defense Acquisition University and other educational institutions to improve the education and training of acquisition officials?

If confirmed, I will collaborate with the Defense Acquisition University to influence the continued creation of credentials necessary for DON military and civilians in the Acquisition Workforce. Professional currency is a mainstay to ensure acquisition professionals have the necessary tools to perform their mission.

In your judgment, how should decision-makers determine which acquisition tasks are best accomplished by government employees, military personnel, and support contractors?

In order to acquire systems and services, the DON must have an acquisition workforce with the best combination of skill and experience. If confirmed, I will review the processes in place to ensure the Department is selecting the right team members for the task.

Anti-Access/Area Denial

Do you believe emerging anti-access and area denial capabilities have been given appropriate concern by the Navy?

Yes, the CNO's 2022 Navigation Plan specifically highlights the importance of free and open access to the seas, and China's designs to deny U.S. Navy access to the western Pacific and beyond. I believe that Sea control and power projection provide freedom of maneuver and deter aggression, and are foundational to the CNO's priority to strengthen integrated deterrence.

What additional steps do you believe the Navy and Marine Corps need to be taking now and in the next few years to ensure continued access to all strategically important segments of the maritime domain?

I fully support the National Defense Strategy, which highlights key actions to mitigate adversary anti-access/area-denial (A2AD) capabilities, including: developing concepts and capabilities that improve our ability to reliably hold at risk those military forces and assets that are essential to adversary operational success, while managing escalations; building a lethal force that possesses A2AD-insensitive strike capabilities that can penetrate adversary defenses at range; seeking new technologies and hedging against continuing adversary missile developments and emerging capabilities; and collaborating with Allies and partners to strengthen defensive A2AD capabilities and indications and warnings. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Navy and Marine Corps in executing the National Defense Strategy and ensuring open access to the seas.

Sustaining Air Power and Logistics Support in Great Power Conflicts

The People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) anti-access/area denial strategy includes deploying massive numbers of long-range ground attack missiles and formidable long-range air defense systems and capabilities. The PRC’s ground-attack missiles are intended to threaten the airfields and carriers from which fixed-wing aircraft are launched and recovered, and thereby limit the effectiveness of U.S. 5th generation fighters and limit our ability to conduct re-supply operations using existing transport aircraft.

Broadly speaking, what technical and operational approaches do you think are viable to operate from locations that are within PRC missile ranges? What relative priority and importance do you ascribe to these approaches?

I understand that China is the pacing challenge to U.S. national security, and the pacing challenge of the National Defense Strategy. They continue to rapidly advance and expand their warfighting capabilities. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Joint Staff and CNO to better understand the threats from our adversaries, and the technical and operational approaches that the Department of Defense is developing to counter such threats. I intend to play an active role in developing and delivering the capabilities needed to protect U.S. national interests in the critical Indo-Pacific region.

Energy and Acquisition

How can our acquisition systems better incorporate improved efficiency and conservation of energy in military platforms, and how, if at all, are assessments of future requirements taking into account energy demands as a key performance parameter?

If confirmed, I will work with Department leaders to pursue a comprehensive approach to improving our platforms and weapons systems operational reach, reducing their fuel requirements, and enhancing their lethality. Improving the energy performance of platforms and weapons systems is essential to providing a combat effective force that is capable in wartime and efficient in day-to-day operations. In my view, the acquisition system can be improved to increase the efficiency of platforms by focusing not only on policy improvements, but improvements in engineering, design tools, and organization.

Sexual Harassment

In responding to the 2018 DOD Civilian Employee Workplace and Gender Relations survey, 17.7 percent of female and 5.8 percent of male DOD employees indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment and/or gender discrimination by “someone at work” in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.

What is your assessment of the current climate regarding sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the office of the ASN(RDA)?

I am not aware of any complaints or grievances associated with sexual harassment or gender discrimination within ASN (RDA). However, if confirmed, it is my intent to stay attuned to the operating environment and morale of the workforce to ensure the safety and mutual respect of all assigned employees through enforcement of all current DoD and DON policies regarding these matters.

If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from an employee of the Office of the ASN(RDA)?

The DON's policy on sexual harassment, misconduct and discrimination is very clear in emphasizing that any of these actions will result in immediate corrective, administrative, and/or disciplinary action. If confirmed, I will clearly support this and make it a top priority to stay abreast of the organization's continuous implementation of the policy. If made aware of any complaints, I will ensure swift action is taken to lawfully investigate and that appropriate measures are carried out in accordance with DON policy while continuing to promote an environment of trust in the Department.

Congressional Oversight

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

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 with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

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 with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

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 with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

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 with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

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 with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

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 with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

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 with a simple yes or no.

Yes.