

**Senate Armed Services Committee**  
**Advance Policy Questions for William A. LaPlante Jr.**  
**Nominee to be Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment**

**Duties**

**Section 133b of title 10, United States Code, describes the duties and powers of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)).**

- 1. In your opinion, what are the most important roles of the USD(A&S) in supporting the missions of the Department of Defense (DOD)?**

As the Principal Staff Assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all matters relating to acquisition and sustainment in the Department of Defense, the USD(A&S) is responsible for ensuring that secure and resilient capabilities are delivered to our forces and allies quickly and cost effectively. The USD(A&S) must maintain effective oversight of the Department's entire acquisition and sustainment enterprise; establish policies and processes as appropriate to drive innovation; sustain and modernize our weapons systems; improve cost efficiency; empower a capable and agile acquisition workforce; support a robust defense industrial base; build a resilient logistics and mission support enterprise; address environment and energy resilience challenges; and ensure Service members have safe and resilient places to live and work.

- 2. Do you believe the USD(A&S) has been provided appropriate authority over the DOD acquisition and sustainment enterprise?**

At this time, I believe the USD(A&S) has the appropriate authority over the Department's acquisition and sustainment enterprise. If confirmed, I will work with my staff and senior OSD leadership to review these authorities and identify any recommended changes.

- 3. What changes, if any, would you recommend to section 133b of title 10, United States Code?**

I do not have any specific recommendations at this time. If confirmed, I will work with my staff and senior OSD leadership to identify any recommended changes.

- 4. If confirmed, how do you plan to assess the organizational structure, workforce, authorities, and availability of resources to ensure that the Office of the USD(A&S) is able to effectively execute its mission?**

If confirmed, I will work with my staff and senior OSD leadership to identify any recommended changes to A&S's organizational structure, workforce, and resourcing.

**5. If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (DUSD (A&S))?**

If confirmed, I will prescribe duties to the DUSD(A&S) in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 137a(b). I will work in close partnership with the DUSD to maintain oversight and accountability for the entire A&S portfolio, and expect the DUSD to provide the support necessary to deliver secure and resilient capabilities to our forces and allies.

**6. If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Assistant Secretaries and other officials (e.g., Executive Directors for International Cooperation and Special Programs) who will report to you or the DUSD (A&S)?**

If confirmed, I will prescribe duties to the Assistant Secretaries and other direct reports within A&S in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 138(b), the A&S charter, and their individual organizations' charters. I will work closely with them to maintain oversight and accountability for their portfolios, and expect them to provide the management and subject matter expertise necessary to deliver secure and resilient capabilities to our forces and allies.

**Qualifications**

**If confirmed, you would be responsible for managing the defense acquisition system. Section 133b of title 10, United States Code, requires the USD(A&S) to have “an extensive system development, engineering, production, or management background and experience with managing complex programs.”**

**7. What background and experience do you have that qualify you for this position?**

I have over 36 years of experience in the national security and non-profit technology communities, including as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, member of the Defense Science Board, and as a member of the Section 809 Panel charged to reform the defense acquisition system. I have a proven track record of delivering material and conceptual innovations that enhance our national security capabilities and efficiency, and will continue to do so if confirmed as the USD(A&S). I also have significant executive leadership experience – including budgeting, finance, talent management, enterprise security, and driving culture change.

**8. If confirmed, how would you leverage the skills and knowledge gained through your prior experiences to carry out the duties of the USD(A&S)?**

The duties of USD (A&S) require technical, programmatic, financial, and talent management experience at an enterprise level. If confirmed, my skills and knowledge will be directly applied to this position on a daily basis.

### **Priorities and Challenges**

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

Our troops must have what they need to confront and overcome rapidly evolving challenges from a fast-moving pacing threat and peer competitors. As such, my top priority, if confirmed, would be ensuring that the defense acquisition system has a laser-like focus on delivering capabilities that meet the needs—both current and future—of U.S. forces.

I would also focus on improving our ability to acquire software and software-intensive systems, sustaining our fielded weapon systems in a cost-effective manner, and strengthening the Defense Industrial Base and our supply chains.

I would do this by transitioning emerging technologies—hypersonics, artificial intelligence, autonomy, directed energy, and others—into programs of record and fielding them for operational use; tapping the innovation of the private sector by lowering barriers to doing business with DoD for small businesses, commercial firms, non-traditional defense contractors, and startups; and empowering and enabling the dedicated professionals who comprise the defense acquisition workforce.

- 10. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing the DOD's acquisition and sustainment communities?**

I believe the greatest challenge facing these communities is the rapidly evolving threat environment and the constant changes in acquisition and sustainment priorities that result. Russia's invasion of Ukraine only a few weeks ago has provided a stark reminder that the threat environment can change at any time, and the DoD's acquisition and sustainment communities must be postured to deliver the capabilities needed to confront and overcome rapidly evolving challenges from a fast-moving pacing threat and peer competitors. Technology is also changing fast, and our warfighters must have access at scale to the best technology to do their job.

At the same time, we face an enduring strategic challenge from China that comprehensively stresses the Defense Acquisition System and on which we can never lose focus.

- 11. What would be your plans for addressing these challenges, if confirmed?**

The key to addressing these challenges is an innovative, empowered workforce, backed by an acquisition system that empowers decision-making authorities and program managers, institutionalizes critical thinking, and employs shorter, iterative product delivery cycles. Close cooperation with the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Research & Engineering (OUSD(R&E)) will also be critical to ensuring we can bring leading edge capabilities to the field as quickly as possible.

I understand the Department continues to implement a number of acquisition reforms that will ensure the Defense Acquisition System is capable of keeping pace with a dynamic threat landscape. This includes the Adaptive Acquisition Framework, which provides an adaptable, flexible, and responsive policy foundation which encourages greater flexibility and empowers common-sense decision making, while also maintaining discipline and the employment of sound business practice. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize innovation and look for additional opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Defense Acquisition System and improve collaboration with OUSD(R&E).

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

Data that is robust, readily accessible, and measured against sound metrics is critical to understanding Defense Acquisition System performance and making informed acquisition and sustainment decisions. I understand there is a Department-wide effort to develop enterprise-wide business health metrics system that integrates data from a wide variety of sources across the Department and performs advanced analytics on that data. If confirmed, I will review this effort and work to identify metrics and tools that support delivery of timely, cost-effective, and uncompromised capabilities to the warfighter.

**Implementation of Acquisition Reforms**

**13. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure the Department continues its progress in implementing congressionally-mandated and Department-driven reforms to the acquisition system?**

If confirm, I will prioritize innovation and timely fielding of needed capabilities to address key challenges, leveraging Congressionally-provided authorities and responsibilities to do so, and promoting additional Department-driven reforms as appropriate.

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

I do not have specific recommendations at this time. There will always be ways to improve processes as complicated as acquisition, and I understand the Department has implemented a number of changes to Acquisition recently. If confirmed, I will examine how these changes are being implemented and seek opportunities to improve upon them.

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

I do not have specific recommendations at this time. If confirmed, I will assess where we are and work with leadership throughout the Department, Congress, and our industry partners to ensure that ongoing efforts are effectively implementing the reforms directed by Congress.

**16. In your view, of the congressionally-mandated or Department-driven reforms, which specifically have been the most successful and impactful acquisition reform initiatives of the past decade?**

The expansion of Other Transaction Authorities has provided a key tool for adopting new business models and working with non-traditional providers. Similarly, the mid-tier acquisition path (Section 804) has also provided flexibility to move faster and get to operational capabilities. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the additional impacts that acquisition reform has had on the Defense Acquisition System since 2017. I will work with my staff to develop a data-driven understanding of the impact of the changes, especially the Adaptive Acquisition Framework, in the last few years.

**You served as a commissioner on the Advisory Panel on Streamlining and Codifying Acquisition Regulations (Section 809 Panel), which made nearly 100 recommendations for “transforming” the defense acquisition system to enable consistent, timely, and cost-effective acquisition of the goods and services the DOD needs in order to carry out its national security mission. The majority of the Panel’s recommendations have not been implemented. Nevertheless, in 2019, you advocated for taking a “breather” from further reforms to the defense acquisition system.**

**17. Do you still hold this position?**

The Section 809 Panel concluded its mandate and published its final report in July 2019. If confirmed, I look forward to understanding the impact made by instituting the Adaptive Acquisition Framework and determining in a data driven way the changes that have been made to the Defense Acquisition System. After I fully understand the impact of the changes from the last four years, I will determine if additional changes are need to the Defense Acquisition System.

**18. If so, please elaborate, and if not, explain why your viewpoint has changed, and what additional reforms to the defense acquisition system, particularly stemming from the Section 809 Panel, you view as especially important.**

I continue to support the Section 809 Panel’s core recommendations, particularly its support for acquiring innovative commercial technologies and approaching the market in a way that allows commercial capabilities to complement our defense-unique capabilities by solving many problems for which they are suited. I also support portfolio management approaches to acquisition as outlined by the Section 809 panel.

## **Key Relationships**

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

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

I believe having two separate organizations allows each to focus on its respective area of expertise. While the transition area between these portfolios can introduce challenges as we transition emerging technologies from research and development programs into fielded capabilities, these can be overcome through close collaboration between A&S and R&E.

- 20. If confirmed as the USD(A&S), how would you envision your relationship with the USD(R&E)?**

A&S and R&E can complement each other and must be close partners to keep pace with technological advancements and deliver timely, cost-effective, and uncompromised capabilities for the Armed Forces. If confirmed, I will focus on building strong relationships and trust between the two organizations to bridge any seams that may be present.

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

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

It is my understanding that delegating much of the program management has led OSD to focus on implementing reform efforts and improving the Defense Acquisition System. If confirmed, I will fully review the advantages and disadvantages of the delegation of authority and responsibility to the Services and make recommendations as appropriate to Congress.

- 22. If confirmed as the USD(A&S), how would you envision your relationship with the SAEs and the Service Chiefs? Are there any programs for which Milestone**

**Decision Authority should be moved to the OSD-level or, conversely, returned to the SAEs?**

It is my understanding that the role of OSD, consistent with Title 10 authorities, is to provide oversight and advice to the Secretary of Defense of the appropriate resource and capability balance between the different Military Departments, Military Components, and Agencies. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Military Departments and Military Services while working to optimize the capabilities available to the entire Department. I do not have any specific recommendations at this time on moving programs. If confirmed, I will conduct a review of the Department's acquisition programs to determine if any require changes to their Milestone Decision Authority.

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

I believe the role of the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment and the Service Acquisition Executives is to operate in combination, consistent with their statutory responsibilities, to ensure the effective operation of the Defense Acquisition System.

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

I believe that aligning authority and accountability is a critical endeavor and a continuous process. I can't make any recommendations at this time but, if confirmed, I will make assessment of the authorities and accountability a high priority.

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

If confirmed, I will ensure that decision authority is maintained at the proper level to account for program complexity, dollar value, and technological maturity. The relevant entities identified in statute and policy must be the Department's honest brokers.

I think many challenges lie in understanding the interdependencies between programs and the ramifications to other defense acquisition programs. If confirmed, I will focus on these program inter-dependencies and cross-portfolio risks ensuring that decisions are made at the appropriate level in the Department.

**The acquisition of information technology, ranging from embedded software in weapons systems to cybersecurity tools to the procurement of commercial cloud computing services, is an increasingly important challenge for defense acquisition programs.**

- 26. If confirmed, what role will you have in developing acquisition strategies for information technology systems and services and how is that role different, in your view, from that of the Chief Information Officer and other Department officials?**

I look forward to working with CIO and the newly-established Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Officer (CDAO) on information technology systems and services acquisition strategies. The USD(A&S) provides the acquisition oversight and guidance necessary to ensure those systems and services are effectively and efficiently developed and meet user requirements. I will work with the proper Component Acquisition Executives to ensure they are implementing sound acquisition strategies.

- 27. If confirmed, what responsibilities related to policies for and oversight of the acquisition of information technology systems and services should be delegated to the Chief Information Officer or other Department officials, as opposed to the USD(A&S)?**

I will work with CIO and CDAO to support the Service/Component Acquisition Executives (SAEs/CAEs). Having properly supported SAEs/CAEs is critical to successfully implementing acquisition programs. I will also review related policies with CIO, CDAO and other Department officials to understand the needed roles and responsibilities.

### **Managing the Performance of the Defense Acquisition System**

**Many of the Department's major defense acquisition programs have established overly optimistic cost, schedule, and performance goals that they have subsequently struggled to achieve, resulting in cost growth, performance shortfalls, and schedule delays.**

- 28. If confirmed, what steps would you take to address cost growth, schedule delays, and performance shortfalls on the Department's major warfighting and business system programs?**

If confirmed, I will work with my staff and the Service and Component Acquisition Executives to address cost growth, schedule delays and performance shortfalls on major programs. I will emphasize rigorous independent cost and schedule estimates, updated at each critical program milestone. I will also work with the Joint Staff and CAPE to understand how to better synchronize the JCIDS and PPBE processes with the Defense Acquisition System to address these concerns. I believe setting realistic cost, schedule and technical baselines is key to address these issues. I will focus on the early phases of program and technology development; in my experience, risk that is not retired early ends up driving costs later. We should also examine and learn lessons from the many programs that do better than originally planned.

- 29. What is your assessment of the Department's ability to estimate lifecycle costs for its programs and activities? If applicable, what specific changes would you make or propose to make to improve this ability?**

Estimating and managing sustainment costs is a significant challenge. If confirmed, I will work closely with the CAPE cost assessment group and the Service Acquisition Executives to understand the status of the Department's current lifecycle costing capabilities.

- 30. What is your assessment of the Department's ability to assess and appropriately manage programs based on the programs' technical maturity?**

In general, my understanding is that our evaluations of technical risk are good. If confirmed, I will work closely with the USD(R&E) and Service Acquisition Executives to understand the Department's ability to assess technical risk for programs.

- 31. What is your assessment of the Department's ability to assess a program's health over its lifetime, with respect to the necessary industrial base and availability of the supply chain?**

Our greatest risks develop when the broader economy moves on to newer technologies but our defense systems continue to depend on outdated technologies with diminishing manufacturing sources or sources of supply. If confirmed, I will work closely with the newly-established Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy to assess a program's health over its lifetime, with respect to the defense industrial base and supply chain risk management.

- 32. Traditionally, acquisition programs are managed on a program-by-program basis. In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of moving toward a more portfolio-based management approach?**

As a member of the 809 Panel, I recommended a review of moving to a portfolio-based management approach. If confirmed, I will work with USD(R&E), the SAEs and CAPE to review the advantages and disadvantages of moving toward a more portfolio-based management approach.

- 33. In your view, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current Adaptive Acquisition Framework?**

If confirmed, I will lead a data driven review of the advantages and disadvantages of the Adaptive Acquisition Framework.

- 34. If confirmed, do you plan to make major changes to DOD's Adaptive Acquisition Framework? If so, please explain.**

At the end of my review, I will recommend ways to improve the performance of the Defense Acquisition System.

## **Acquisition Data**

**In order to implement a risk-based approach for managing acquisition programs, many experts believe that DOD needs to adopt modern tools and methods for collecting and analyzing large amounts of acquisition data.**

- 35. In your opinion, does the Department have sufficient and timely data to assess the full range of risks facing acquisition programs, including risks pertaining to development and sustainment costs, schedule, performance, integration, supply chains, and technical maturity, among others?**

If confirmed, one of my initial priorities will be to assess the status of relevant data, its availability and accessibility, as well as our tools and human capital to use that data to inform decision-making. I will build on progress made to date to make data accessible and usable at all levels of the Department. I will focus my efforts to work with other leadership in the Department and Executive Branch, Congress, and Industry to address any shortcomings identified.

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

The Department has been taking steps to ensure availability of authoritative data for a number of years and I will continue scaling these efforts. I intend on leveraging my previous experiences along with current efforts across the Department to scale while preserving transparency to Congress and ensuring effective use of data throughout the Department. As such, I will evaluate current data collection to ensure alignment with industry best practices. Accurate, timely, clearly understood and authoritative data is absolutely essential to transparently understanding the status of how we're performing and where we should seek to improve.

## **Controlled Unclassified Information**

The Committee has seen an increased use of the new “Controlled Unclassified Information” (CUI) designation to reports and information submitted as part of NDAA mandates and has heard repeatedly from representatives of the Government Accountability Office that the services and OSD are increasingly using the label. The Pentagon’s Director of Operational Test and Evaluation for the first time this year has issued a CUI and non-CUI version of its important annual report, for example. The committee is concerned the designation could be abused to limit the public dissemination of critical cost, schedule and performance information.

- 37. If confirmed, what steps will you take with your service counterparts, DoD Public Affairs and DOD information security officials to review the size and scope of CUI and other unclassified but not publicly releasable markings (e.g., For Official Use Only) to ensure that the use of such designations is appropriately limited?**

If confirmed, I will review the policies and guidance for use of CUI and other classifications to ensure they are being utilized appropriately.

### **Software and IT Acquisition**

**Software has become one of the most critical components of DOD systems, but recent studies by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Defense Innovation Board, and the Defense Science Board, among others, show the Department's software development practices have not kept up with leading industry practices. While DOD has taken significant steps in the last few years, such as establishing a software acquisition pathway emphasizing rapid delivery and user engagement, programs have yet to consistently incorporate leading software development practices.**

- 38. What do you believe are the major barriers to DOD fully adopting modern software development approaches, and what additional steps, if confirmed, would you take to drive their adoption throughout DOD?**

While DoD has made considerable progress in adopting modern software practices over the last few years, there is still much work to be done in transforming our processes, tools, culture, and workforce. If confirmed, I will work with OSD, Joint Staff, the Services and others to further build on DoD's initial momentum, and modernize enterprise processes, strategies, tools, and culture for rapid digital capability delivery. I would partner with key organizations to further tailor DoD interoperability, test and evaluation, contracting, and requirements processes for software. I would champion investments in DoD's workforce to hire more software experts and develop DoD's workforce with modern training and career fields for software development and acquisition. As software is central to every DoD mission and system, we must ensure our policies, processes, and culture support speed and agility in development.

- 39. What is your assessment of the current capabilities of the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) to properly execute agile software development?**

The Section 809 Panel, on which I served, identified many recommendations needed to move the DoD and its industrial base toward a more streamlined and agile acquisition system in sync with the information age. I understand many of the firms in the DIB are growing their agile software development capabilities and practices, yet we still see many struggles with software approaches integrated into major hardware development. There are barriers preventing widespread adoption of business models and best practices common in the tech industry. If confirmed, I would seek to promote leading private-sector industry practices throughout DoD where delivery of capability is done iteratively and collaboratively with the government, which can reduce cycle times and be more responsive to changing technologies, operations, and threats. This is particularly true for software, which is central to every major DoD mission and weapon system.

## **Iterative Development Approaches**

- 40. What is your opinion on the merits of DOD incorporating iterative development approaches centered on fielding minimum viable capabilities?**

Best practices in software development focus on rapidly fielding a minimum viable capability to get into the hands of users to accelerate learning, capture feedback, and use the insights to shape requirements, design, and strategies. The Defense Science Board Study on Software and Acquisition, which I co-chaired, made many recommendations I support. Similarly, the Defense Innovation Board's Software Acquisition and Practices (SWAP) study came to many of the same conclusions. The Section 809 Panel, on which I served, likewise articulated "the need for speed" in acquisition, "without forgetting integrity, competition, transparency, and delivering lethality." Iterative development can reduce cycle times and be more responsive to changing technologies, operations, and threats. If confirmed, I would seek to promote the DoD's use of this leading industry practice.

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

I understand the DoD has made significant progress over the last several years to enable more modern software development and acquisition practices, policies, pilots, and training, with strong Congressional support. I also understand DoD has taken important steps such as issuing the new Software Acquisition Pathway which is purpose-built to implement best commercial agile approaches and enable modern software practices for both applications and embedded software. DoD is still in the early stages of effectively implementing agile and modern software approaches with progress in software intensive systems that can be leveraged for application to more of our hardware systems. If confirmed, software acquisition will be a high priority.

## **Advanced Technology Adoption**

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

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

If confirmed, I will ensure we meet the imperative to offer a range of options to the programs such as applying new technologies and concepts. I believe we have improved flexibility in the Defense Acquisition System, but must continue to evolve to become more agile and leverage these innovative technologies. I will also leverage the recent legislation which authorized the establishment of an Acquisition Innovation Research Center to research, model and pilot innovative practices for

adoption by the Department. In terms of changes, I have no specific recommendations at this time, but I know how important it is to leverage leading-edge commercial capabilities to the military faster and more cost-effectively, and if confirmed I will be looking at those options as well as any others recommended by the staff of the office of the USD(A&S).

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

The Department has many opportunities to leverage current and emerging technologies to ensure military superiority. If confirmed, I will work the Services, the Combatant Commanders, and USD(R&E) to ensure we are successful in converting those technologies into warfighting capabilities. I support Undersecretary Heidi Shyu's recent Technology Priorities memo, signed by the Secretary recently that outlined 14 technologies across 3 major areas including hypersonics, directed energy weapons, and integrated sensor and cyber resiliency. If confirmed, I will place special attention on ensuring we can attract commercial industry partners in those areas, like AI, autonomy, and advanced computing so that the Department can obtain the most cutting-edge technology at the most affordable price.

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

If confirmed, I will encourage acquisition decision makers at all levels to balance risk and reward when crafting technology development and fielding strategies. To achieve the desired outcomes and innovation, I believe that some failure will need to be accepted as part of the learning and discovery process. This learning will occur throughout the program lifecycle but with the appropriate application of prototyping and experimentation, major issues should be identified as early as possible. Embracing the concept of iterative development whereby a basic capability is delivered and improved over time will also reduce the number of risks a program has to manage, increase technology insertion opportunities, increase user feedback, and enable accelerated fielding.

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

I believe transparency between industry and government is critical to deliver the capabilities we need at costs we can afford. Technical exchanges and continuous interactions will help us inform industry to focus their investments. Non-traditional companies struggle with long timelines from DoD budgeting and contracting, concerns about intellectual property, and a vast amount of certifications (e.g., cost

accounting systems, cybersecurity). If confirmed, I will continue to encourage engagements with industry, work with the Services to simplify requirements, stress use of novel contracting strategies such as commercial solutions opening, and work to ensure we can provide the required capabilities at the best cost possible.

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

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

Technology transition continues to be a critical issue across the DoD. We must aggressively exploit new commercial and government technologies, integrate them into our programs, and deliver to operations. DoD needs the ability to rapidly invest in new technologies and products and must rethink our technology and business approaches to do so. From my view, there are a few key impediments that make collaboration and alignment of emerging technology to current needs difficult: budgeting timelines with the PPBE process, outmoded requirements systems preventing programs from moving rapidly, and complex decision-making processes.

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

DoD should build and deliver capabilities in iterations similar to industry to reduce cycle times and be more responsive to changing technologies, operations, and threats. This is particularly true for software which is central to every major DoD mission and weapon system. We must continue to employ modular, open systems approaches as well as commercial as-a-service models, and invest in foundational enterprise infrastructure that allow rapid insertion of emerging technologies. We must organize around capability or mission area portfolios that rapidly harnesses a wide-array of commercial and defense solutions and enable rapid insertion of emerging technology. If confirmed I will work with my counterpart in USD(R&E) to align acquisition programs with advances in the technology sector.

**Other Transactions Authority (OTA)**

**48. In your opinion, what adjustments, if any, to OTA authorities, cost share arrangements, and limited competition features are appropriate to consider?**

At this time, I do not have any recommendations about whether any statutory adjustments to this authority are warranted; however, I understand that Section 824 of the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act requires the Department to provide a report to the Congress by the end of the year to address this matter. If confirmed, I look forward to engage stakeholders who use this authority to understand what adjustments, if any, might be appropriate.

**49. What steps will you take to promote the appropriate use of OTAs to encourage the participation of new and non-traditional defense contractors in the defense industrial base?**

If confirmed, I will engage with DoD Components to understand how they are effectively using this authority now to attract new entrants and non-traditional defense contractors. I will promote appropriate use of OTAs by ensuring the Department has provided the workforce with the necessary guidance and training.

**50. What do you see as the benefits and downsides of using OTA consortium agreements?**

I understand that when used appropriately, OTA consortium agreements enable access to a wider range of entities that might not otherwise participate in the Department's research and development and prototyping pursuits to accelerate innovative technology into capabilities for DoD. To the extent agreements with consortium management firms mitigate real or perceived barriers to entry and broker administrative management of participants for a given issue area, they are a beneficial form of OTA. However, I also understand the need for transparency in using OTA authority and concerns that using consortium agreements limit reporting and accounting of individual transactions. If confirmed, I will investigate, and if necessary, address these concerns.

**Earned Value Management**

The earned value management system (EVMS) is used to assess the cost, schedule, and technical performance of major capability acquisitions for proactive course correction. However, the Section 809 Panel reported that EVM does not measure product quality and concluded, “EVM has been required on most large software programs but has not prevented cost, schedule, or performance issues.” In 2009 DoD reported to the committee that “a program could perform ahead of schedule and under cost according to EVM metrics but deliver a capability that is unusable by the customer” and stated the program manager should ensure that the EVM process measures the quality and technical maturity of technical work products instead of just the quantity of work performed.

**51. If confirmed, what steps would you take, if any, to require contractors to report valid measures of cost, schedule, and technical performance for all acquisition pathways?**

If confirmed, I will work across the Department and with the industrial base—current and emerging—to validate, improve, or establish appropriate metrics across the acquisition pathways. I have no specific recommendations at this time. I plan to continue open communications to ensure transparency and allow individual programs to continually improve and tailor approaches to best meet the warfighter need.

- 52. If confirmed, what steps would you take, if any, to require contractors that employ the DOD Digital Engineering (DE) Strategy to maintain valid information in the digital authoritative data source that is sufficient for program managers to make informed and timely decisions to manage cost, schedule, performance, and risk?**

If confirmed, I would seek to engage with our industry partners and Service representatives to better understand how they are currently employing DE and how we can work in partnership to better collaborate within and outside of the Department. Today, many of our contractors are independently employing Digital Engineering as they are developing systems. A combination of strong data, tool and modeling standards and environments, training of our Acquisition Corps, and proper contract and data rights guidance are foundational to enabling successful adoption of DE to feed the right cost, schedule, performance and risk data to our acquisition decision makers.

### **Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE)**

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

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

The PPBE process requires years of planning before finally getting funds appropriated, which is not conducive to the kind of responsiveness and agility necessary to counter adversaries who do not have to operate under similar constraints.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the PPBE Commission and stakeholders across the Department and in Congress to examine the system issues and develop proposals to address these challenges.

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

I think there are pathfinder initiatives that may offer benefits at the margin, but it is not clear that these approaches address the issue holistically and at scale. If confirmed, I will work with CAPE, the Comptroller, and Congress to identify solutions that support the acquisition system.

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

**55. What changes are needed to the PPBE and other processes to help bridge the “valley of death”?**

The Defense budget development and appropriation process can make it difficult to fund an unproven technology as an acquisition program. If confirmed, I will continually assess our processes to ensure transparency and security while balancing the imperative for speed. I would advocate re-evaluating our decision processes to ensure we are event driven vice calendar driven, responsive to change, and incentivizing innovation.

**56. To what extent should the role of the government’s systems engineering commands (e.g., Naval Warfare Centers and the Air Force Research Laboratory), as the government’s technical experts in particular technology areas, be enhanced or otherwise modified to help emerging technologies bridge the “valley of death”?**

If confirmed, I will work diligently with my USD(R&E) counterpart in ensuring the warfighter’s prioritized capability gaps are appropriately communicated and aligned with the efforts of our laboratories and industry partners, to include small businesses and venture capitalists. Organizations such as Warfare Centers and Research Labs provide great opportunities to engage with non-traditional companies and create long lasting partnerships and talent pipelines.

**57. In your experience, to what extent have military departments and defense agencies had different results in transitioning technology developed “in-house” versus technology developed by others, such as DARPA, the Strategic Capabilities Office, or the commercial sector?**

The Military Departments inherently have a greater opportunity to transition technology developed “in-house” since they have processes in place to align the investment of science and technology funds with their individual priorities. This is what was called years ago, “requirement pull”. DAPRA, SCO and others have the ability to look at needs differently and bring “technology push” to the table to look at emerging technologies. Both requirement pull and technology push can address changes in threat technologies that are unplanned. The transition of these technologies relies on the needs of the individual services as represented by their requirements and resource offices. Aligning the requirements, resource and development communities is critical to reversing the erosion of technical advantage.

**The Goldwater-Nichols Act (GNA) of 1986 was enacted just prior to the explosion in information technology. The GNA successfully instilled a “joint” culture in the Department’s warfighting operations, but the PPBE, requirements, and systems acquisition processes remained service-centric. Today’s information technology could enable interoperability between ground, maritime, air, space, and cyber systems to proliferate options to detect, locate, identify, track and guide weapons to targets. However, systematically constructing “kill chains” across domains, systems, and services and managing such joint operations may be very difficult given that the “man, train, and**

**equip” role is performed by the separate military departments and a small number of defense agencies. Currently, DARPA is struggling to determine how it can “transition” its Assault Breaker II initiative, since the interconnectedness it is working on transcends any one military service or department.**

**58. Do you agree? Why or why not?**

I understand that the Joint Staff has been working to focus on overarching joint requirements rather than individual system specifications.

**59. If so, what are some ways in which the Department can address these problems?**

I believe a portfolio management approach can help us focus on key kill chains and other mission threads. If confirmed, I will work to take a portfolio management approach to assist with transition and identify critical technology areas for investment.

**60. As there are few options other than the military departments, Special Operations Command, and Cyber Command to field and maintain systems, do you believe consideration should be given to creating joint acquisition and sustainment capabilities? Please explain your answer.**

If confirmed I would work with the organizations with Title 10 responsibilities to man, train and equip to understand the benefits and the disadvantages of creating joint acquisition and sustainment capabilities. I would review past Department efforts in creating joint efforts to understand the utility of applying those concepts to future efforts.

**Requirements**

**The Joint Capabilities and Integration Development System (JCIDS) process was established nearly twenty years ago with the intention of addressing overlap and duplication in the Military Services’ acquisition programs.**

**61. With respect to driving the acquisition system to deliver capabilities that meet the national security needs of the nation, to what extent is the current requirements system effective, and what do you see as the primary shortfalls?**

I believe the Department needs to aggressively modernize its requirements system to enable greater speed, flexibility, and interoperability in a digital age. Instead of programs defining and locking down system requirements upfront via a years-long process, I believe the Department should draw lessons from highly successful and innovative companies to foster practices that enable innovation, rapid tech insertion, and product delivery in response to conditions of uncertainty. We must rapidly exploit leading commercial technologies and solutions and adapt our way of fighting. Insights from prototypes, experiments, challenges, and pilots should continuously shape requirements and designs with active user engagements. We

cannot predict what operations, threats, and technologies will look like decades from now, so our requirements approach must be dynamic and allow rapid iterative technology insertion. Decisions on how to invest must be data-driven based on programmatic, threat and capability gap information.

**62. If confirmed, how would you propose to reform the process?**

If confirmed, I will work with my staff, the Service and Component Acquisition Executives, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and CAPE to understand how to better synchronize the JCIDS and PPBE with the Defense Acquisition System (DAS).

**The requirements process has often been incapable of developing requirements that consider technological advances made by DOD's own research programs. In recent years, DOD has also undertaken a number of initiatives to improve the Department's connectivity with commercial technology companies.**

**63. If confirmed, what changes would you suggest to ensure that emerging technologies from within DOD, defense industry, and the commercial sector are better accounted for and leveraged within the requirements process?**

I would work closely with the Joint Staff to understand the impact of the Joint Warfighting Concept on the requirements process. I think it is critical to understand the capabilities needed by the warfighter and then let the acquisition process determine how to meet those capability needs.

**Many requirements are established with technical goals that are unachievable at any reasonable cost or schedule.**

**64. What changes would you recommend to the requirements development process to support the development of requirements that are technically feasible at reasonable costs and schedules?**

If confirmed, I would work with the Joint Staff, services, USD(R&E), and CAPE to ensure we well understand the technical risk of meeting stated requirements before starting any major programs. I look forward to exploring how the use of Middle-Tier Acquisition efforts can reduce these risks.

**The USD(A&S) is not a member of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, but does advise the Secretary of Defense how to acquire capabilities and what capabilities should be acquired.**

**65. In your opinion, should the requirements process for new capabilities continue to be exclusively the province of the military departments, and military officers of the Joint Staff and the combatant commands?**

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Joint Staff and fully understanding their implementation of the Joint Warfighting Concept. I believe USD(A&S) and

USD(R&E) have an important advisory role to the JROC and look forward to working with them in the development of future capability needs.

- 66. If confirmed, in what circumstances or fora would you consider it appropriate to recommend that the Secretary invest in a capability you consider of high importance, for which there is either no formal requirement or no military department is funding a solution to a requirement?**

It is my understanding that, in special circumstances, the Secretaries of the Military Departments or the Secretary of Defense may establish requirements after consulting with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This can sometimes include providing a capability for an ally or partner or other another government agency.

### **Modularity and Interoperability**

**Section 805 of the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) established requirements for implementing Modular Open Systems Approaches (MOSA) for all major systems acquisitions in DOD and for rights in interface data for the critically important objectives of improving interoperability and increasing potential competition throughout the life cycle of the system. This section further required the use of widely supported and consensus-based standards for system interfaces. Since enactment of section 805, DARPA has developed and transitioned technology that should revolutionize interoperability, under the STITCHES program (System of Systems Technology Integration Tool Chain for Heterogeneous Electronic Systems). STITCHES enables auto-generation of software to achieve interoperability across any interface that has been properly characterized and defined, including when neither system or subsystem has been built to a common standard. STITCHES achieves this interoperability with less performance degradation than with a common standard. Accordingly, Congress enacted section 804 of the Fiscal Year 2021 NDAA to require that all DOD programs characterize system interfaces and that these interface specifications be available in multiple databases for rapid integrations.**

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

It is my understanding that the Department is working to implement modular open systems approaches through updating DoD instructions and regulations, developing capability reference architectures and repositories for modular systems interfaces, working with industry, and developing workforce training for acquisition professionals. While progress has been made, the “MOSA mandate” is a complex mix of technical, business, and legal aspects with more to be done for full implementation and industry acceptance.

- 68. Are you familiar with DARPA’s technical achievement in the STITCHES program?**

It is my understanding that DARPA recently transitioned the program to the Air Force and that there are a number of use cases for this innovative tool across the

Department to create greater interoperability. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about how the Air Force is supporting that effort.

- 69. If confirmed, will you commit to assisting in fulfilling the requirements of section 804 with respect to defining interfaces and making them accessible in databases?**

Yes, if confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department meets the section 804 statutory requirements to define modular system interfaces and make them accessible for authorized use.

### **Test and Evaluation**

**The objective of test and evaluation activities is to ensure that system performance meets specifications and requirements, and that deployed capabilities are operationally effective against threats.**

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

Realistic testing is critical to the acquisition process. If confirmed, I will work with my staff, the Service and Component Acquisition Executives, the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation and the DDR&E, Advanced Capabilities to understand the role of testing in the acquisition process.

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

If confirmed, I will work with my staff, the Service and Component Acquisition Executives, the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation and the DDR&E, Advanced Capabilities to address issues and deficiencies that arise in testing.

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

If confirmed, I will work with my staff, the Service and Component Acquisition Executives, the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation and the DDR&E, Advanced Capabilities to appropriately manage risks in programs where field in urgent and when new capabilities provide essential functions that current systems cannot provide.

- 73. If confirmed, under what circumstances would you support programs accepting more risk upfront (e.g., flight test failures) to attempt to accelerate fielding schedules for a potential conflict with China?**

Some test failures are an inevitable element of realistic testing and we learn from these events. Accelerating capability requires discipline in managing these risks and rapidly implementing corrections.

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

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

My understanding is that the Department has moved to integrated testing, an approach emphasized via DoD's newly published Test and Evaluation policy. I believe that across the Department there has been much investigation and investment in new techniques and automation, including development and test automation. However, if these efforts are stove-piped, they will constrain the pace of the integration effort. I believe the Department must work to bridge our engineering organizations and our test and certification entities to ensure they work together; standardize data collection so that test and certification entities can conduct their processes early and often; and reskill our workforce and automate our processes to allow us to operate within our adversaries' decision processes.

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

I have no immediate recommendations but, if confirmed, will actively monitor the effectiveness of our current policies to ensure they facilitate the desired outcomes.

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

If confirmed, I will work across all these organizations to unify our mission of delivering capability to the warfighter. Through acquisition, I will ensure critical decision data is freely accessible and transparent through the development, deployment and sustainment; as well as ensure test and operations equities are embedded in the development process. I will work to ensure that acquisitions are structured to allow capabilities to be fielded quickly with realistic and relevant testing and adapted readily to meet changing technology, missions, and threats.

**Defense Industrial Base (DIB)**

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

**77. If confirmed, what do you assess to be the most significant challenges facing the DIB and how would you propose to address them?**

As I understand it, the most significant challenges facing the DIB stem from steady de-industrialization of the economy over the last 50 years, China's well-resourced efforts to undermine a rules-based international order, and the complexity of managing global supply chains. Additionally, unpredictable budgets and erratic DIB investments weaken the DoD-industrial base relationship and prompt limited DIB interest in DoD as a customer.

If confirmed, I will work with Congress to assess challenges and opportunities within the DIB, promote capabilities through targeted investment and small business support, protect against adversarial capital and cyber intrusions, and partner with international partners and allies.

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

If confirmed, I would focus on maintaining a defense industrial workforce that is robust and balanced across both traditional and, in partnership with R&E, next-generation scientific, technical, and industrial skills. This includes a continued emphasis in critical STEM education and technological innovation underpinning the DIB's scientific and engineering workforce, as well as focused efforts in ensuring the health of the nation's industrial trade skills which are key to producing and sustaining our weapon systems.

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

I believe the Defense Production Act, Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment, and other authorities are key to DoD efforts to support the DIB. If confirmed, I will continue to leverage these authorities as effective tools to continue DoD's strong partnership with industry and explore what modifications to the authorities and what other tools may be required.

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

I believe the United States must develop a whole-of-nation approach to incentivize commercial industry to on-shore and ally-shore their supply chains. We must work to build resilience into our supply chains, support innovative small businesses, and expand domestic manufacturing capacity. If confirmed, I will review how A&S and its authorities can be used to support these efforts within and external to the Department, with an emphasis on productivity and competitiveness. I will also work

with R&E to transition manufacturing innovations and reduce dependence on foreign sources.

**The Biden Administration has made domestic sourcing a key portion of its policy agenda. If confirmed, you would oversee the beginning of a significant push to increase DOD's procurement of American-made goods, products, and materials.**

**81. Do you see any associated challenges or opportunities? Please elaborate.**

I strongly support the DoD's and other Federal agencies' efforts to better leverage authorities, such a "Buy America," to encourage increased domestic and allied production of critical items and raw materials.

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

I believe domestic sourcing requirements can be leveraged to promote domestic and allied industrial capabilities and reduce U.S. dependence on competitor nations.

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

In my view, we need to facilitate better access to vetted financing and resources for DIB companies, particularly small- and medium-sized DIB companies. We must also effectively utilize our authorities to prevent the transfer of sensitive U.S. technology and information to foreign adversaries.

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

I believe Chinese and other adversarial investments in U.S. infrastructure, data, and emerging technologies are a significant concern. I understand that the Department works closely with interagency partners and international allies to combat these efforts and develop a common understanding of these threats. If confirmed, I will review these efforts and provide any recommendations on additional actions or authorities as appropriate. Existing authorities under the Committee for Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) and export and technology controls are our major tools for technology protections.

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

It is my understanding that DoD's role with respect to merger and acquisition activities of DOD contractors is to assess their anti-competitive implications on the Defense Industrial Base and their ultimate impacts on national security.

**86. What are your views on defense industry mergers and acquisitions in terms of Pentagon guidance to industry?**

Generally speaking, I believe this should be a subject of on-going dialogue between the Pentagon and the defense industry as we implement our acquisition policies and ensure effective competition.

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

I understand the United States is strengthening its NTIB through exploring opportunities to pursue joint action against supply chain vulnerabilities, especially for critical materials and rare earth elements. If confirmed, I will also work with NTIB partners to enhance our combined capabilities and ensure that we are protecting our mutual interests from adversarial practices and threats, alongside our allies and partners.

**The NDAA for FY 2021 established an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy, responsible for overseeing the Department's efforts to manage and support the DIB.**

**88. In your view, what should be the key priorities and activities of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy?**

If confirmed, I would work with the ASD(Industrial Base Policy) to determine what the key priorities and activities of the office should be. This would include continual assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the defense industrial base to identify risks, and then determining the best authorities available to mitigate those risks.

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

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the relevant DoD components and the Congressional Defense Committees to determine the appropriate resource and support requirements to support the OASD(IBP)'s mission.

**90. What steps would you take to assess the health of the current and future defense industrial base?**

If confirmed, I would work with the Office of the ASD(IBP), other relevant DoD components to assess the health of the current and future DIB, building upon the efforts of the Executive Order 14017 report.

## **Defense Industrial Base Cybersecurity**

**Section 1648 of the FY 2020 NDAA requires the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive framework to enhance cybersecurity for the DIB.**

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

In my view, the loss of intellectual property and sensitive information from all U.S. industrial sectors, including that due to theft and other malicious cyber activity, threatens economic and national security. It is imperative that we share information with the DIB so that critical national security information is protected. At the same time, we must hold also industry accountable for doing what is required to protect this information. If confirmed, I will work with the CIO's office to enhance the cybersecurity of the DIB.

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

The Department must work with small businesses and help with the information resources necessary for them to meet cybersecurity standards. However, it is my understanding that this activity was transitioned to the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO). If confirmed, I will work with the CIO's office to enhance the cybersecurity of the DIB.

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

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

It is my understanding that the CMMC program was transferred to the Office of the Chief Information Officer. If confirmed, I will support their efforts and work with the CIO to determine if any changes or recommendations are necessary.

**94. If confirmed, what actions would you take to increase efforts to strengthen other (non-CMMC) aspects of the framework required in Section 1648 of the FY 2020 NDAA?**

It is my understanding that, if confirmed, I will be responsible for the cybersecurity of DoD weapon systems. If confirmed, I will work closely with the CIO and facilitate robust industry engagement—especially with small businesses—to address cybersecurity concerns.

**95. What do you believe is the appropriate role of DOD in the CMMC effort?**

It is my understanding that the CMMC program was transferred to the Office of the Chief Information Officer. As such, I respectfully defer this question to the DoD CIO.

**96. What do you believe is the appropriate role of the CMMC Advisory Board (CMMC-AB)?**

It is my understanding that the CMMC program was transferred to the Office of the Chief Information Officer. As such, I respectfully defer this question to the DoD CIO.

**COVID-19 Progress Payments Relief Payments**

The Pentagon has continued issuing accelerated payments to defense contractors to insulate the impact of COVID-19 on their defense workforce and on program delays, with \$5.3 billion expedited through June. Under the Defense Department program that began in March 2020, large companies have been paid as much as 90% of incurred costs, up from the usual 80% paid as progress goals are met. For small businesses, the figure climbs to 95%, up from 90%.

**97. If confirmed, how will you assess whether these payments are still needed and for how long?**

If confirmed, I will lead the Department's efforts to consider the operational and economic effects of COVID-19 that necessitated the increased progress payment rates. I expect Defense Pricing and Contracting, the Defense Contract Management Agency, and Defense Finance and Accounting Services to assess the conditions and advise me on the continued need for increased progress payment rates. I will ensure the Department provides industry advance notice of any changes to the current payment structure.

**98. Should Congress be concerned that contractors may be using the funding to pay for dividends and share buybacks?**

I understand there have been substantive increases in share buybacks amongst the top DoD contractors recently. As a condition for receiving progress payments, contractors must have already incurred costs associated with DoD contracts. If confirmed, I will examine this matter more closely to ensure the objectives of increased progress payments are being achieved.

**Defense Production Act (DPA)**

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

**99. What is your understanding of how DOD has leveraged DPA authorities, including as an interagency funding mechanism, during the pandemic?**

It is my understanding that the DPA Title III authorities were leveraged to increase domestic production capacity for necessary health resources and to sustain defense industrial base capabilities during the pandemic.

**100. What are your views on DOD's recent use of traditional (non-COVID) uses of DPA Title III authorities to support the defense industrial base?**

I understand that the DPA Title III authorities allowing the Department to develop different approaches to sustain, expand, and modernize the DIB. If confirmed, my goal would be to continue to use the DPA to make key investments to strength the DIB and improve resiliency of our supply chains.

**101. What are your views on the DPA loan and loan guarantee programs? If confirmed, would you advocate expanding this program, and if so, for COVID relief only, or for more traditional uses as well? How would you monitor the effectiveness of the loan program?**

It is my understanding that Title III of the Defense Production Act offers a wide array of authorities to sustain, expand, and modernize the industrial base. To date, the Defense Production Act Program has largely focused on grants, contracts, and purchases.

If confirmed, I will evaluate the loan authorities to determine its applicability to the DIB's challenges, particularly where a loan program could mitigate the DIB's reliance on foreign adversary capital.

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

Currently, I don't have any specific recommendations. If confirmed, I will work with leadership throughout the Department, Congress, and industry to identify and implement improvements on how DoD employs DPA Title III authorities.

**Organic Industrial Base**

**103. In your opinion, what role does the organic industrial base play in modernization efforts and in the sustainment of warfighting capabilities?**

The organic industrial base plays a vital role in the modernization and sustainment of our warfighting capabilities. It is the nation's insurance policy to safeguard readiness and provides a ready and controlled source of technical competency for responding to contingencies, and for sustaining and modernizing capabilities to address warfighting requirements.

**104. What is your assessment of the status of the facilities and workforce in DOD depots, logistics centers, arsenals, and other elements of the organic industrial base?**

Both facilities and workforce for the organic industrial base are in need of deliberate reinvestment after nearly two decades of persistent conflict. If confirmed, I will work to build mechanisms and improvement processes to modernize and optimize the facilities, workforce, and other key elements of our OIB.

**105. What role should the organic industrial base play in the sustainment of software in defense systems?**

The OIB is essential to sustaining current and future software intensive weapon systems, along with the capabilities provided by the private sector. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to focus on improving OIB efficient and effective software sustainment operations that are timely, effective, and affordable.

**106. What role should the organic industrial base play in the sustainment of dual use and commercial technologies used by DOD?**

DoD's organic industrial base must work collaboratively with industry to ensure that these technologies can continue to support the Department's requirements. While there are existing mechanisms to encourage this cooperation, including cooperative agreements and technology transfer authorization, if confirmed, I would work with senior leaders in the DoD sustainment communities and industry to seek opportunities to enhance these relationships.

**107. What role, if any, does USD(A&S) have in ensuring that the facilities and equipment at the military depots are modern, operable, and effective?**

I understand the Military Services regularly update their depot maintenance strategic plans and are actively working on Infrastructure Optimization Plans (IOPs) to make targeted improvements to the Organic Industrial Base. If confirmed, I will continue the process of evaluating the Military Services' plans against their current and future logistics and depot maintenance requirements. I will work with Congress to ensure the Military Services' depot maintenance strategic plans are properly aligned and resourced with the National Defense Strategy readiness priorities and meet applicable statutory depot maintenance requirements.

**108. If confirmed, what steps would you take to strengthen the Department's organic industrial base?**

Both facilities and workforce for the organic industrial base (OIB) are in need of deliberate reinvestment after nearly two decades of persistent conflict. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to build mechanisms and improvement processes, and resource the modernization and optimization of our OIB facilities and workforce, together with other key elements of our OIB.

## **Sustainment**

**DOD has committed to rebuild its readiness to conduct large-scale combat operations against near-peer competitors such as China and Russia. The readiness of critical weapon systems relies on the quantity and timeliness of sustainment. However, sustainment challenges continue to impede readiness across the warfighting domains and military services.**

- 109. What is your assessment of the sustainment challenges facing the Department's naval vessel, ground vehicle, and aviation fleets, and what actions would you take to improve mission capable rates for these fleets?**

The combination of aging fleets of weapon systems combined with high operational tempo over the last twenty years and the impact of unpredictable defense budgets has undermined the near-term readiness of DoD weapon systems. In addition, an aging infrastructure combined with decades of underfunding of military construction and Facilities, Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (FSRM) has created a bow wave of installation sustainability issues. If confirmed, I will work with each of the Services to understand and advocate for funding to support sustainment.

- 110. What is your assessment of the sustainment challenges facing the F-35 program and what steps should the Department take to mitigate or resolve those challenges to improve sustainment outcomes and availability of the aircraft?**

The F-35 is the premier, multi-mission fifth generation strike fighter for three U.S. Services, seven international partners, and a growing number of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customers. My understanding is that there are clear sustainment challenges facing the F-35 program in terms of both readiness and affordability. Addressing these challenges is critical to the continued success of the F-35 program. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to address the root causes of those challenges to ensure a capable, affordable weapon system that meets warfighter readiness requirements.

- 111. In your view, what are the most viable options for the Department to reduce F-35 sustainment costs?**

At this time, I do not have the access to the information necessary to evaluate the various options for F-35 sustainment. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Military Departments, the Joint Program Office, and industry partners to evaluate and implement viable options to reduce sustainment costs for the F-35 enterprise.

- 112. In your opinion, what steps should DOD take to ensure our ability to execute the current and expected volume of ship maintenance and modernization?**

I understand the Navy is working multiple initiatives to improve both our public and private maintenance performance. If confirmed, I will get insights and recommendations from the Navy on the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan (SIOP), as well as information from our private industry partners about what

opportunities there are to improve maintenance and modernization programs. Understanding the constraints in the supply chain, workforce, capacity and capability of the nation's ship repair infrastructure is critical to planning effective improvements.

**113. In your view, what are the biggest challenges in sustainment of software systems and embedded software in other systems?**

I believe increasing costs, access to software source code, early focus on designing for sustainment, and investment into modernizing software laboratories are critical issues in the software community. If confirmed, I will work across the DoD software sustainment community to provide rigorous oversight, improve policies, and promote sharing of best practices in order to provide solutions to the software sustainment challenge areas.

**114. In your view, what are the biggest challenges in the sustainment of commercial technologies that are fielded to warfighters?**

Many of the existing processes within the DoD were not developed for the pace of commercial technology advancement we are seeing in the 21st century. Recent acquisition reforms begin to address this, but other structural challenges remain within the USD(A&S) area of responsibility, including changes to the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) process, and enabling the workforce to adapt quicker to exploit these technologies.

**Improving Planning for Sustainment**

**The GAO has reported that operation & sustainment (O&S) costs account for about 70 percent of a system's total lifecycle costs, and that O&S costs are largely pre-determined by decisions made during the acquisition process, such as decisions about requirements, system design, and technical data. Given this, it is critically important that programs effectively consider and plan for the sustainment of a system early in the acquisition process.**

**115. In your opinion, how well are the Department's acquisition programs planning for sustainment?**

I believe this is an area where the Department needs to make additional progress. If confirmed, I will work with the Services and Defense Agencies to ensure we instill comprehensive sustainment planning for new programs and that we continuously assess and refine sustainment planning for existing programs at all stages in their lifecycle.

**116. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure acquisition programs are planning for sustainment early and often during the acquisition process?**

If confirmed, I will ensure sustainment planning is an integral aspect in weapon system development. Given that sustainment represents the bulk of the cost of a

weapon system, I believe the Department needs to do careful planning up front to ensure sustainment requirements are designed into weapon systems delivery readiness at best cost.

**When faced with cost and schedule pressures during the acquisition process, some programs have reduced or deferred activities that would have improved long-term sustainment outcomes, in order to save money and time in the near-term.**

- 117. If confirmed, how will you ensure acquisition programs make upfront investments that could help keep sustainment costs down and improve readiness, such as conducting reliability testing, designing for maintenance, and negotiating for technical data rights, among others?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Services and Defense Agencies to ensure acquisition program offices perform sustainment analysis as part of weapon system design and development. This includes necessary reliability investments, maintenance analysis, and government access to data rights needed for sustainment planning and system maintenance.

- 118. If confirmed, how will you ensure lifecycle operation and support costs have appropriate visibility, as a key performance parameter or equivalent consideration, in DOD's acquisition system and budget presentations to Congress?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Services and Defense Agencies to ensure acquisition program offices perform sustainment analysis as part of weapon system design and development. This includes necessary reliability investments, maintenance analysis, and government access to data rights needed for sustainment planning and system maintenance.

- 119. In your opinion, what opportunities exist to increase coordination and communication between the Department's acquisition and sustainment communities, to help ensure sustainment is adequately considered during the acquisition process?**

The Department has the benefit of past and continuing investments across the acquisition and sustainment workforce. Because of this, DoD has two highly professional communities that are more than capable of working together to arrive at mutually beneficial strategies. If confirmed, I will work with both the acquisition and sustainment communities to ensure they are sharing data and are making data driven decisions as a team.

- 120. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure the Department's Major Defense Acquisition Programs and large Middle Tier Acquisition Programs effectively plan for sustainment?**

Regardless of the acquisition pathway, sustainment must always be an integral part of weapon system design, development, and fielding. If confirmed, I will work with

the Services and Defense Agencies to ensure program offices are held accountable for sustainment outcomes under all acquisition pathways.

### **Facilities Sustainment**

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

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

If confirmed, I will review and assess the Department's approach for prioritizing and funding investments in our built infrastructure. I will work with organizations across DoD to strike a balance between increasing funding and reducing unneeded infrastructure to ensure investments enhance military readiness.

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

- 122. What actions, if any, will you take to fund facilities that have been treated as lower priority, such as unaccompanied housing and childcare centers—but that are facilities that contribute directly to service members' and their families' quality of life—to assure their continued availability?**

I am committed to ensuring that DoD appropriately invests in facilities that directly impact the quality of life for Service members and their families, which is critical to ensure readiness including the Department's ability to recruit and retain the force. If confirmed, I will review and assess the Department's approach for prioritizing and funding investments in our built infrastructure. I will work with organizations across DoD to strike a balance between increasing funding and reducing unneeded infrastructure to ensure facility investments enhance military readiness.

### **Contracting for Services**

**In FY 2019, the Department obligated about \$190 billion on services acquisitions, which accounted for nearly half of the Department's total contract obligations. The GAO has identified a number of shortcomings with the Department's management of services contracts and has placed this oversight challenge on its High Risk list since 2001.**

- 123. What is your assessment of the Department's ability to manage its services contracts?**

Service contracts present different challenges from weapon systems contracts and require different management mechanisms. It is my understanding that the Department has established policies and procedures in place, grounded in statute and regulation, to help decision makers at all organizational levels of the Department make determinations regarding the management of services contracts. If confirmed, I will work with the Services and Component Acquisition Executives to ensure that the acquisition of contracted services is made in a manner that ensures a balance of effectiveness and efficiency while meeting unique needs of the mission.

**124. If confirmed, what steps would you take to improve the Department's ability to strategically assess and manage its requirements for services contracts?**

If confirmed, I will work to strategically improve the requirements process for service contracts by infusing their decisions with improved data to inform their tradeoff decisions. This assessment will require working closely with the Services to leverage review processes they may already have in place.

**125. What steps would you take, if confirmed, to improve the quality of data collected on services contracts and the analysis performed on such data, so as to better understand and control spending on service contracts and improve management of these activities?**

I believe the Department should continually improve its ability to collect, disseminate, analyze, and use data in this new digital age to support decision makers. If confirmed, I will work with the empowered leaders who own the mission that the service contracts support and who make key requirements and funding tradeoff decisions to understand what data they will need to control their spending and evaluate the success of the resulting tradeoffs. I expect the data that they will need will come not only from Department-wide repositories of awarded contract documents, but also from their own systems for services requirements, financial management, contract writing, and contract management.

**126. What do you believe is the most important factor in determining whether a service role should be performed by government or contractor personnel, i.e., cost, flexibility, efficiency, ability to meet mission, or some combination thereof?**

If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts in the personnel community to ensure that the acquisition of contracted services is made in a manner that ensures a balanced and cost effective mix of labor. For work that is not considered inherently governmental or sensitive, I believe each of the elements identified should be considered in combination when making decisions regarding the sourcing of work.

**Acquiring Commercial Technology**

Since the end of the Cold War, Congress and successive leaders in DOD have recognized that the technological superiority and modernization that is critical to national security increasingly takes place in the commercial sector, and that in many technical

**areas, the pace of commercial technological advance is much quicker than that of the government.**

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

I believe the Department could do better to consider commercial solutions to shape requirements. Traditionally, requirements are documented upfront often with a bias of legacy systems with increased performance. DoD needs to increase its understanding of the commercial technology landscape before defining requirements.

**128. In your opinion, are there new ways to reward and incentivize the acquisition workforce and programs to choose commercial solutions, if available?**

If confirmed, I will work to place greater emphasis on DoD business processes while also encouraging greater use of proven and less risky commercial solutions. I believe an understanding of the workforce's challenges is essential to managing these kinds of efforts and will work with Department leadership to support a culture that provides the necessary resources to encourage innovation to improve decision making as well as incentivize and encourage modern business approaches.

**129. In your view, how should the USD(A&S) work with the Chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council to promote the acquisition of commercial technologies?**

I believe there should be a close partnership between USD(A&S), the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and their counterparts in the Services to modernize DoD's requirements system. We need a system that integrates operational needs "requirements pull" with commercial solutions "tech push," informed by experimentation, via a collaborative, iterative approach to exploit new technologies and adapt our ways of fighting.

**130. Do you believe that current bid protest processes are adequate to enable commercial firms to protest DOD acquisition decisions that may be inconsistent with the statutory preference for commercial products?**

If confirmed, I will review the bid protest processes and consider recommendations to improve existing processes and gain efficiencies where possible.

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

If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to do more to increase competition, including competition from commercial sources, non-traditional Defense contractors, small businesses and other historically underserved communities. Using

the most appropriate procurement tools for a given acquisition, including FAR Parts 12 and 15, ensures the Department is getting the best value for the taxpayers' money.

**Federal acquisition regulations and statutes establish a clear preference for commercial capabilities, products, and services wherever commercial solutions are able to reasonably meet DOD's needs at reasonable cost. Faithfully pursuing this preference is all the more important today when commercial technological innovations could play a pivotal role in great power competition. Section 807 of the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act requires the USD(A&S) and the Chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council to jointly assess the impediments and incentives for pursuing commercial capabilities, products, and services wherever commercial solutions are able to reasonably meet DOD's needs at reasonable cost.**

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

I am aware of the FY2022 NDAA Section 807 requirement for the Department to assess impediments and incentives to improving the acquisition of commercial products and services. I look forward to engaging as required as the review progresses. I am also familiar with the significant amount of thought that the Section 809 Panel put into this area of acquisition. In this time of strategic competition, the Department will certainly benefit from improvements to how we find, acquire, and employ commercial products and services.

**133. In your view, can improvements be made without mandates and additional processes?**

If confirmed, I will assess our process and identify what changes, if any, are necessary.

**Intellectual Property**

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

I believe IP must be a higher strategic priority, considered earlier and more often in planning, and more focused on longer-term needs. I believe this will be key to make sustainment more affordable and to ensure DoD can take full advantage of industry's faster pace in technology innovation.

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

If confirmed, my initial focus in this area will be to better understand the practical obstacles that DoD program personnel are facing related to IP. I anticipate the need to improve our training for the DoD acquisition workforce and contracting officers to take greater advantage of agile tools and techniques such as negotiating specialized licenses, and fully implementing modular open systems approaches in DoD programs. If confirmed, I will bring my insights from Air Force acquisitions to make the acquisitions system more flexible for traditional and nontraditional contractors and technology innovators to affordably develop, procure and sustain new and existing systems and technologies.

### **Reform of the Protest Process**

**136. To what extent do you think that the time required to settle protests warrants reform in order to protect the interests of both industry and the government?**

I understand the Department previously submitted reports to the Congress on protest timeframes along with recommendations for change. If confirmed, I will review the regulatory and policy approaches along with the recommendations to determine what changes, if any, are necessary.

**137. Do you have any recommendations on how to improve the protest process?**

If confirmed, I will review the previously submitted recommendations and determine if there are any additional recommendations that would improve the protest process.

### **Small Business**

**138. If confirmed, what steps would you take to increase the participation of small businesses in the defense technology and industrial base?**

Small businesses are a critical component of the Defense Industrial Base and a source of significant innovation, which is critical to the development, fielding, and sustainment of operational capabilities. If confirmed, I will work to increase the participation of small businesses in the defense technology and industrial base. I will collaborate with others in the department to apply those opportunities more holistically alongside other small business activities.

**139. In your view, what are the biggest barriers that prevent small businesses from becoming prime contractors for the Department?**

If confirmed, I will make it a high priority to understand and create solutions to the biggest barriers that prevent small businesses from participating fully with DoD.

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

If confirmed, I will work with the broader acquisition community to better understand and create avenues for small businesses to subcontract and to ensure that we are leveraging the small business community to the maximum extent possible.

**141. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that small businesses that provide goods and services to the Defense Logistics Agency are monitored and supported when facing financial pressures that challenge their viability?**

Small businesses face financial challenges for any number of reasons, and the Department should support businesses facing those financial pressures when appropriate to maintain a healthy industrial base. As I understand it, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) has an Office of Small Business Programs that maintains ongoing dialogue with industry associations and small businesses to mitigate financial pressures, including COVID-19 impacts. If confirmed, I will continue working with DLA to assess and evaluate options that will minimize financial impacts to small businesses, while balancing the readiness and cash flow needs of the Department.

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

Small and disadvantaged businesses are a critical part of the Defense Industrial Base. These businesses are a source of new and innovative technologies and capabilities that provide significant operational capabilities, when fielded. These businesses are also a source of competition that help drive down cost and increase innovation and efficiency and speed capability deliveries to the warfighter.

**143. What recommendations do you have to improve the Department's use of the Small Business Innovation Research programs in order to develop and field new, advanced capabilities?**

The Small Business Innovation Research program is a key tool in the development and fielding of new technologies and capabilities for the DoD. One of the most significant challenges that the Department has faced is transitioning these new technologies to fielded systems. If confirmed, I will work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering to identify opportunities to more closely tie SBIR with other small business programs and bridge the gap between emerging technologies and fielded systems.

**Acquisition Workforce Education and Training**

**A well-trained and empowered acquisition workforce is a critical enabler in the implementation of acquisition reform and in the management of acquisition programs.**

**144. What is your assessment of the Department's acquisition workforce, both in terms of its capacity and capability? Does the Department have enough acquisition professionals with the right skills?**

Overall, I believe the Defense Acquisition Workforce has great talent and capacity. Since 2008, the Department has made a significant effort to rebuild the acquisition workforce and to modernize its implementation of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act. If confirmed, I will assess the results of these efforts. I will also look at the specialty knowledge and skill areas that the Department requires to deliver the latest in capabilities to the warfighter. We will need to study how we can make the best use of existing expertise across the workforce in addition to how we are recruiting, developing, and retaining top talent.

If confirmed, I will assess targeted capacity and skill needs to ensure the Department has enough professionals in the acquisition workforce, with the appropriate skills, to deliver overmatch capabilities to the warfighter.

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

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's Acquisition Executives, functional leaders, and the Defense Acquisition University to ensure the workforce is provided with an agile learning environment that meets the needs of today's workforce, including how to use different acquisition pathways and tools.

- 146. If confirmed, what steps would you take to empower program managers to execute acquisition programs and hold them accountable for how their decisions contributed to program performance, including over the life of a system?**

Fundamentally, program managers are accountable for cost, schedule, and performance of their programs. I believe program managers will be successful if they are empowered to execute their programs using all of the currently available legal and policy authorities as well as functional support. I will also exercise robust oversight to hold program managers accountable for program performance.

- 147. What is your assessment of the Department's training, education, certification, and credentialing programs for the acquisition workforce?**

In order to deliver necessary capability to the warfighter, the Defense Acquisition Workforce must be able to adapt to a variety of new and rapidly evolving threats. This requires training and learning in new and emerging areas and across one's career, not just in the first few years on the job. It is my understanding that DAU, the Services, and Components have been collaborating to better meet the training needs of the workforce and, if confirmed, I will review such efforts to make sure we have effective planning and investments.

- 148. If confirmed, what role would you play in ensuring that there is an adequate supply of technical talent available for the Department and industry partners to meet the challenges of the future?**

I believe the most important resource of any organization is its people. For acquisition and sustainment, the workforce is significantly STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) oriented. Strengthening the pipeline of STEM talent is a national need and must be a top priority as we revitalize the national security workforce. If confirmed, I will assess the existing pipeline of STEM talent and work across the Department and with industry to identify how we can accelerate and grow such efforts.

**149. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to improve the effectiveness of the Defense Acquisition University?**

If confirmed, I will evaluate each aspect of the Defense Acquisition University's current transformation initiative and ensure its supporting activities are aligned to strategic workforce readiness needs. It is my understanding that DAU has endeavored transform the way it develops and delivers training and to build stronger relationships with the Services and Components. The capabilities of our workforce are critical to our success, and if confirmed, review the steps being taken to improve these capabilities.

**150. What specific steps would you take to assess and ensure that the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Account (DAWDA) is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the Department?**

If confirmed, I would review the process in place to assess acquisition workforce requirements and ensure planned budget levels are requested to meet requirements. I would also ensure DAWDA resources are prioritized and allocated to the greatest need(s).

**151. How would you engage with the Acquisition Innovation Research Center (AIRC) to perform research on acquisition issues of interest, and to engage a future workforce for defense acquisition?**

If confirmed, I will engage with the AIRC to understand how it supports and enables the A&S mission.

**Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment**

**The FY21 NDAA recently reestablished the position of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment.**

**152. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to expedite the reestablishment of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense as an effective organization and address persistent understaffing in the domains of privatized housing, PFAS, energy, resiliency, and the remainder of the environmental portfolio?**

It is my understanding that the Department recently finalized the reestablishment of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations & Environment (EI&E), in accordance with Section 904 the FY2021 National Defense

Authorization Act. If confirmed, I will review EI&E resources and staffing and ensure the Office is postured to carry out the priorities within its portfolio.

- 153. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to improve the incorporation of the energy Key Performance Parameter (KPP) and incorporation of operational energy and sustainability into maintenance requirements and the acquisition system, which should also save money over the lifecycle of a weapons platform?**

The energy key performance parameter is a significant tool for improving the supportability and lethality of Department capabilities in contested operating environments. If confirmed, I will work with my staff and the Services to ensure sustainability, energy supportability and demand reduction are integral to acquisition and sustainment decision-making for new and current platforms.

- 154. What is your understanding of the role of the Department as compared to that of other agencies with regard to environmental research and regulations?**

If confirmed, I will ensure that DoD conducts research along with other Federal agencies to improve DoD's environmental performance, increase the adoption of sustainable alternatives, reduce costs, and enhance and sustain mission capabilities. I will also ensure the Department continues to support the needs of the warfighter, be a good steward of the environment, preserve our Nation's resources and respect Federally recognized Tribes. This includes managing environmental compliance, emerging chemicals of concern, clean-up efforts, and conservation of natural and cultural resources.

### **Microelectronics**

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

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

As I understand it, DoD is hampered by lack of access to assured sources for leading edge microelectronics technologies. DoD requires quantifiably secure access to microelectronics that meets all its requirements, especially for trust and assurance. The Department develops new systems that require state-of-the-art microelectronics, but also needs to acquire and sustain our existing systems – most of which use legacy and state-of-the-practice microelectronics – as well as modernizing systems in the field. If confirmed, I will continue DoD's effort to secure assured sources of microelectronics components for current and future weapons systems.

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

While DoD is the largest U.S. government buyer of microelectronics, it is a small part of the overall U.S. market demand. As such, I believe collaborating with the other affected agencies and industry is critical to both establish and sustain domestic production of microelectronics.

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

DoD needs to leverage commercial microelectronics technology and production wherever possible to be able to help ensure future capacity for microelectronics that meet DoD requirements. The CHIPS Act is an important priority, as it will help re-energize domestic commercial microelectronics production. If confirmed, I would prioritize that DoD leverage the resources provided by the CHIPS Act and the commercial industrial base.

**158. If confirmed, what actions would you take to partner with the USD(R&E) on this issue?**

I believe the USD(R&E) is a critical partner to A&S on this strategy. Their focus is on developing and demonstrating new technologies that will provide the best future capabilities for the warfighter. If confirmed, I will partner with them by providing input into the requirements for those new approaches and faster transition pathways to programs of record.

### **Weapon Systems Cybersecurity**

**The GAO reported in March 2021:**

**The Department of Defense has struggled to ensure its weapons systems can withstand cyberattacks. Since we last reported, DOD has taken some positive steps toward that goal, like conducting more cyber testing.**

**But we found that DOD programs aren't always incorporating cybersecurity requirements into contract language. And contractors are only responsible for meeting the terms written in a contract. Some contracts we reviewed had no cybersecurity requirements when they were awarded, with vague requirements added later.**

**159. What is your assessment of the Department's posture towards weapons systems cybersecurity?**

If confirmed, I will work with SAEs and CAEs to assess the cybersecurity posture of the DoD weapon systems that they are responsible for. For those programs where I

am the MDA, I will assess the cybersecurity posture of programs during program reviews.

**160. If confirmed, what actions would you take to improve the cybersecurity of the Department's weapon systems?**

I firmly believe that cyber hardening DoD weapon systems and DoD critical infrastructure is a warfighting imperative required to support the National Defense Strategy.

If confirmed, I will work SAEs and CAEs to assess the cybersecurity posture of our highest priority weapon systems. Based on that status of the cybersecurity posture identified, I will work with DoD Senior leaders to identify and prioritize funding for mitigating cyber vulnerabilities for our highest priority weapon systems and the missions they support, in alignment with the Congressionally mandated Strategic Cybersecurity program and related NDAAAs.

**Space**

**As part of the creation of the Space Force, the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act created a Service Acquisition Executive (SAE) for Space to consolidate space acquisition functions in the Air Force. The FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act subsequently expanded the role of the SAE to oversee space acquisition across the “space systems and programs of the armed forces in support of the Chief of Space Operations.” This was part of a series of reforms to empower the SAE for Space and the Chief of Space Operations as the Space Force achieves institutionalization of its Title 10 status.**

**161. If confirmed, will you support the SAE for Space per the duties included in the FY 2020 and FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Acts?**

Yes, if confirmed, I will work with the Department of the Air Force's Service Acquisition Executive for Space programs and the other Service Acquisition Executives in accordance with the FY 2020 and FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Acts to strengthen, enable, and synchronize space related acquisition efforts for the armed force.

**The USD(A&S) co-chairs the Council on Oversight of Defense Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) Enterprise. The major activities of the Council have been to coordinate the Military GPS User Equipment (MGUE) across the Department of Defense, given the increasingly contested electromagnetic spectrum within which DOD systems must operate.**

**162. If confirmed, what do you see as the major issue(s) with acquiring and coordinating the installation of MGUE components across the myriad number of DOD systems that rely on GPS signals, to include synchronization with the GPS satellites?**

If confirmed, I will work closely with the other tri-chair members of the PNT Oversight Council. Together with the USD(R&E) and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we will continue to address the issue of ensuring access to trusted and assured microelectronics in order to field advanced MGUE systems to support America's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Guardians.

**The Committee is deeply concerned about vulnerabilities in the GPS system that could prove to be devastating in a conflict with near-peer competitors and the lack of urgency and resolve within the Department for addressing the problem. The M-Code modernization effort will close only some of the PNT vulnerabilities, and also will not be completed for a long time. Section 1611 of the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act established a mandate for fielding alternative resilient PNT capabilities for the most critical operational components within two years, but the Department does not appear to be on track to achieve that.**

- 163. If confirmed, will you commit to studying carefully the problems in the GPS system, the limitations of the M-Code modernization, potential methods of closing those vulnerabilities, and alternative methods for achieving resilient PNT?**

Yes. If confirmed, I commit to carefully studying the problems, limitations, vulnerabilities and alternatives to achieve resilient Position, Navigation and Timing architecture. I will work closely with the other tri-chair members of the PNT Oversight Council. Together with the USD(R&E) and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we will address these challenges and opportunities in order to field resilient PNT systems to support America's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Guardians.

- 164. If confirmed, will you advocate alternate sources of PNT for DOD systems and if so, how?**

Yes. If confirmed, I will work closely with the other tri-chair members of the Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT) Oversight Council. Together with the USD(R&E) and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we will identify, assess, and leverage alternate sources of PNT via partnerships with allies, industry, and academia as well as through DoD-internal research, development, and acquisition efforts.

### **Electronic Warfare**

**The Department recently moved oversight of Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations from the Joint Staff to the Chief Information Officer as the Senior Designated Official. The USD(A&S) co-chairs the Electronic Warfare EXCOM (EW EXCOM), which was created in 2015 (Electronic Warfare Executive Committee Charter) and is part of DOD Directive 3222.04 to oversee DOD acquisition-related investments and synchronization amongst the services of the multitude of EW related systems for the Joint Force.**

**Please explain your views on the following issues:**

**165. The role of the EW EXCOM?**

As the Air Force SAE I attended EW EXCOMs to help facilitate synchronization and integration of EW by sharing tactics, techniques across the department. If confirmed I look forward to getting an update on the activities of the EW EXCOM and the way forward.

**166. The responsibilities of the USD(A&S) with respect to EW acquisition and the current state of acquisition coordination across DOD?**

EW was treated as a portfolio area with the standup of the EW EXCOM. If confirmed, I will review the status of the EW portfolio and how we are coordinating EW across the Department.

**167. Whether the CIO office has the requisite knowledge or experience to serve as the Senior Designated Official for Electronic Warfare/EMSO?**

If confirmed, I will work with the CIO and other stakeholders to understand the abilities of the CIO to undertake the role of Senior Designated Official for EMSO.

**168. How the EXCOM will coordinate its activities, with the recent shift of Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations oversight from the Joint Staff to the CIO?**

If confirmed, I will work with the EW EXCOM to understand the shift of oversight of EMSO from Joint Staff to the CIO.

**169. The EW EXCOM's advisory role for future investment as it relates to decisions by the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Deputy's Management Action Group (DMAG)?**

In my past involvement with the EW EXCOM, they made recommendations on issue papers for the budget review process. If confirmed, I will work with the EW EXCOM to understand their current role in the budget review process.

**Nuclear Modernization**

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

**170. What is your understanding of the state of U.S. nuclear forces, global nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) architecture, and the supporting weapons sustainment and production capabilities within the National Nuclear Security Administration?**

The Nation's nuclear platforms, delivery systems, Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications, warheads, and infrastructure have been extended far beyond their original service lives and are undergoing recapitalization, refurbishment, and replacement. The on-time replacement of our aging nuclear forces and associated systems is critical. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our nuclear modernization programs continue to provide a safe, secure, and effective strategic deterrent for the future.

**171. Do you agree with the assessment of the past four Secretaries of Defense that nuclear deterrence is DOD's highest priority mission and that modernizing our Nation's nuclear forces is a critical national security priority?**

Yes, I agree with the past four Secretaries of Defense that nuclear deterrence is DoD's highest priority mission and that modernizing our Nation's nuclear forces is a critical national security priority.

**172. Do you support and intend to advocate for the modernization of all aspects of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, particularly the B-21, LRSO, GBSD and *Columbia*-class programs?**

Yes, if confirmed, I will support and advocate for modernization of the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

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

Nuclear deterrence is DoD's highest priority mission and modernizing our Nation's nuclear forces is a critical national security priority. I understand the importance of maintaining our fielded nuclear systems while simultaneously modernizing each leg of the nuclear triad. If confirmed, I will take immediate action to review each of our modernization programs and understand any associated acquisition challenges, and I will work with leadership throughout the Department, Congress, and our industry partners to ensure our modernization programs deliver the capabilities needed on time to meet the dynamic security environment.

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

Yes, if confirmed, I will support sustainment, recapitalization and design of the Next Generation NC3 systems. A reliable and modern NC3 is essential to ensuring a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent.

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

Nuclear deterrence is DoD's highest priority mission and modernizing our Nation's nuclear forces is a critical national security priority. I understand the importance of maintaining our existing NC3 capability while simultaneously delivering a reliable and modern NC3 enterprise – sometimes called "NC3 Next". If confirmed, I will take immediate action to review and understand the acquisition challenges and opportunities associated with NC3 modernization programs, and I will work with leadership throughout the Department, Congress, and our industry partners to provide robust and survivable Next Generation NC3 systems to ensure a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent.

**The nuclear enterprise functions through collaboration among the Navy, the Air Force, the Joint Staff, the Offices of the Under Secretaries of Defense for Policy, Acquisition and Sustainment, and Research and Engineering, the NNSA headquarters, and the NNSA national laboratories and production plants.**

**176. Do you believe that the current system adequately connects military requirements to acquisitions and procurement to technical expertise and production?**

Yes. However, if confirmed, I will review this process more comprehensively and recommend improvements as appropriate.

**177. If confirmed, do you have any recommendations for improving the functions of the complex?**

Coordinating the efforts of the defense nuclear enterprise is a critical and highly complex task. If confirmed, I will review the system and recommend improvements as appropriate.

**Nuclear Weapons Council**

**Section 179 of title 10, designates the USD(A&S) as the Chair of the Nuclear Weapons Council.**

**178. What is your understanding of this role?**

My understanding of the role of Chair of the Nuclear Weapons Council is to ensure the Council fulfills the requirements set forth in Section 179 of Title 10 and ultimately to ensure that the Departments of Defense and Energy are postured to ensure a safe, secure, reliable, and effective nuclear stockpile.

**179. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the duties and responsibilities of the Nuclear Weapons Council are effectively executed?**

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Nuclear Weapons Council is focused on the most critical issues facing the enterprise and will work with the Staff Director to enable timely, data-driven decisions.

**180. What is your understanding of the modifications to the role of the Nuclear Weapons Council (with respect to performance requirements and budget) that were enacted in section 1632 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021?**

I understand that section 1632 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 provided a clarified role for the Nuclear Weapons Council in establishing and validating performance requirements for nuclear warhead programs as well as a process by which the Secretary of Energy and the Nuclear Weapons Council communicate and cooperate to align resources and to certify the adequacy of the National Nuclear Security Administration's annual budget request.

**181. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure effective implementation of these modifications?**

If confirmed, I would work with fellow members of the Nuclear Weapons Council, the Secretary of Energy, and the White House Office of Management and Budget to ensure that current processes and procedures meet the intent of this provision.

**182. Are there any changes that you would recommend to the membership, organization, structure, or responsibilities of the Nuclear Weapons Council?**

If confirmed, I will work to understand the current operations and procedures of the Nuclear Weapons Council and offer recommendations as appropriate or necessary.

**183. What do you see as the primary challenges that the Nuclear Weapons Council will face over the next four years, and if confirmed, what steps will you take as Chair to address these challenges?**

The planned modernization of almost every element of the nuclear enterprise will be the primary challenge for the Nuclear Weapons Council over the next four years. In particular, the Council must ensure the close coordination of these efforts within DoD and with DoE. If confirmed, I will work with all stakeholders to understand and address these challenges, ensuring that the U.S. is prepared to address an evolving security environment.

**In addition to the Department of Defense programs for modernizing U.S. nuclear forces and the NC3 system, the Nuclear Weapons Council has laid out a schedule for modernization of the nuclear weapons stockpile and the supporting National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure.**

**184. Do you agree that modernizing the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile and supporting National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure is a critical national security priority and should be addressed in a timely manner?**

Yes, the nuclear weapons stockpile must be underpinned by responsive and resilient production capabilities and infrastructure.

**185. Do you support and intend to advocate for all aspects of the Nuclear Weapons Council's modernization plan for the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile and supporting National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure?**

Yes, the nuclear weapons stockpile must be underpinned by responsive and resilient production capabilities and infrastructure. If confirmed, I will review plans for the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile and the supporting NNSA infrastructure, and ensure they are postured to deliver the capabilities the nation needs.

**186. In your opinion, are the multiple components of the DOD and NNSA nuclear modernization plans appropriately sequenced and scoped in order to meet the operational needs of the commander of U.S. Strategic Command?**

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command to understand the linkages between challenges facing the scope and schedule of the modernization programs and how those challenges translate to operational risk. I will be prepared to offer recommendations as appropriate.

**187. If confirmed, how do you plan to leverage the USD(A&S)'s various roles within the nuclear enterprise (Milestone Decision Authority for various programs, Chair of the NWC, NC3 Capability Portfolio Manager) to ensure the health of the specialized industrial base needed to produce certain components currently being modernized?**

If confirmed, I will leverage the important roles of the USD(A&S) in stewarding all aspects of the nuclear enterprise and ensuring that the specialized and fragile industrial base is robust and prepared to support the modernization of the nuclear deterrent.

**188. Do you support the Stockpile Stewardship Program, and have you reviewed the elements of this program as conducted by the NNSA?**

I support the Stockpile Stewardship Program as a significant and successful endeavor of the National Nuclear Security Administration to ensure a safe, secure, reliable, and effective nuclear stockpile. If confirmed, I will further review the program to understand its many facets.

**189. In your view, are there any additional capabilities that the Stockpile Stewardship Program should develop?**

If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to understand the capabilities of the Stockpile Stewardship Program and to work with the Administrator of the National

Nuclear Security Administration on any additional capabilities that may support the program.

**190. If the technical conclusions and data from the Stockpile Stewardship Program could no longer confidently support the annual certification of the stockpile as safe, secure, and reliable, what would your recommendation be?**

I understand that a core function of the Nuclear Weapons Council is to provide an annual assessment of the safety, reliability, and military effectiveness of the nuclear stockpile, underpinned by independent assessments of the national security laboratory leaders and the Commander, U.S. Strategic Command. If technical conclusions and data could not support this certification, I would work closely with the laboratory leaders, the Commander, the Members of the Council, and the Secretaries of Defense and Energy to understand the issues and provide the President with a recommendation to remedy.

**Major construction efforts are underway at the NNSA laboratories and plants to support the re-establishment of a U.S. plutonium pit production capability at the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Savannah River Pit Production Facility, as well as the Uranium Processing Facility at the Y-12 Plant to produce uranium components.**

**191. Please explain your understanding of each of these construction projects and your views on each relative to statutory and DOD requirements.**

I understand that the NNSA is focused on re-establishing critical production capabilities required to support nuclear stockpile modernization, specifically plutonium and uranium capabilities. I understand that the DoD and Nuclear Weapons Council play an important statutory role in ensuring these capabilities are delivered on the timelines necessary to support the deterrent. If confirmed, I will work the NNSA Administrator on the challenges and requirements associated with these projects.

**192. The Nuclear Weapons Council works with the United Kingdom through what is known as the “U.S. – U.K. Mutual Defense Agreement.”**

**193. Please explain your understanding of the importance of this agreement and its effects on DOD policies and programs.**

The United Kingdom remains the most important ally of the U.S., and the “U.S.-UK Mutual Defense Agreement” underpins our relationship vis-à-vis our independent nuclear deterrent forces. If confirmed, I am committed to understanding the facets of the agreement and to continuing to fulfill our obligations in support of the UK.

**194. What are your views on the W93 weapon program?**

I understand that the Congress has approved the W93 as a new program of record in support of the US Navy's operational requirements. I also understand that this program plays an important role in support of the United Kingdom's separate but parallel Replacement Warhead Programme. If confirmed, I will prioritize gaining a comprehensive understanding of all programs associated with the modernization of our nuclear stockpile, particularly the W93.

**Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs**

**Section 138 of title 10, United States Code, states that the ASD(NCB) may communicate views on issues directly to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense without obtaining the approval or concurrence of any other official within the Department.**

- 195. What is your understanding of how this access relates to the placement of the Office of the ASD(NCB) as a subordinate officer to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, and the role of the USD(A&S) as Chair of the Nuclear Weapons Council?**

I understand that statute requires the ASD(NCB) to advise DoD's senior-most leaders on the very serious—and very technical—matters pertaining to the programs under the ASD(NCB)'s purview. If confirmed, I am committed to enabling this direct access. Additionally, through the ASD(NCB)'s role as the NWC Staff Director, I am confident that the statutory requirements for the ASD(NCB) and the NWC Chair best enable DoD's senior leadership to receive timely advice and accurate information on the nuclear enterprise and deterrent.

- 196. What is your understanding of why this direct access is necessary?**

My understanding of the need for this direct access to DoD's senior-most leaders rests in the very technical nature of many issues facing the nuclear stockpile and the continuous collaboration between the ASD(NCB) and the NNSA leadership.

- 197. What is your understanding of how this process has functioned in the past?**

It is my understanding that the ASD(NCB) has always had the required access to the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense on all issues under its purview, working with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment.

**Defense Threat Reduction Agency**

- 198. What is your understanding of the relationship between the Office of the USD(A&S) and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)?**

It is my understanding that DTRA reports to the USD(A&S) through the office of the ASD(NCB).

**199. If confirmed, what would be your priorities for DTRA?**

I expect DTRA to serve as the Department's principal advisor on the relationship between tactical, operational, and strategic CWMD and emerging threats assessments, concepts, gaps, and solutions.

**Climate Change**

**President Biden has declared that climate change is an essential element of national security and foreign policy. Secretary Austin has stated that DOD will include the security implications of climate change in risk analyses, strategy development and planning guidance. If confirmed, you would sit on the Secretary's Climate Working Group and would oversee the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment. Thus, you would have a major role in implementing the President's vision and the Secretary's guidance.**

**200. What is your understanding of the ways that climate change poses a risk to national security and the Department's responsibility to prepare for its impacts?**

It is my understanding the Department has identified climate change as a critical national security issue and threat multiplier. Climate change can amplify operational demands upon the force, degrade installations and infrastructure, increase health risks to Department service members, and require modifications to much of the military's existing and planned equipment. The Department's Climate Adaptation Plan discusses these risks and the Department's strategy to adapt to changing climate, mitigate climate change, and improve climate resilience. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department works to adapt its operations and infrastructure to improve resilience and support national priorities.

**201. How do you believe the Department should be incorporating climate change into its risk analyses, strategy development, and planning guidance?**

I believe that the Department should be incorporating climate change into all of its processes, including operations, planning activities, business processes, and resource allocation decisions. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department uses the best available science and actionable information to estimate reasonably foreseeable future conditions facing the Department and the Nation.

**202. How do readiness and budget concerns factor into these assessments?**

In my assessment, climate preparedness is essential to readiness. We cannot be ready if our training ranges and infrastructure are adversely affected. Likewise, our military forces must be agile, flexible and trained and equipped to operate effectively under changing climatic conditions, even in the most extreme cases. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department trains and equips a climate-resilient force.

**203. What steps do you think the Department can feasibly take to leverage its procurement power to accelerate its response to climate-related challenges?**

In my assessment, the Department must increase its awareness of the effects of climate on supply chains, particularly those related to materiel, energy supplies, and transportation acquisition choices. To mitigate climate change, the Department should seek to procure from supply sources that can provide an acceptable product or service that meets the Department's requirements with lower overall net greenhouse gas emissions. For those markets and products where the Department's purchases represent a significant portion of the overall market, the Department should seek to leverage its purchasing requirements to accelerate innovation.

**204. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to take steps to ensure that the acquisition workforce understands the urgency in addressing the climate crisis?**

I understand from reading the Department's Climate Adaptation Plan, that key to all climate adaptation actions, including acquisitions, is to preserve the Department's operational capability over time and under all conditions. If confirmed, I would focus the acquisition workforce on understanding the long-term implications of any procurement decisions in a world altered by climate change.

**205. If confirmed, how will you ensure that measures taken to address climate change do not create additional risk to the supply chain, particularly with respect to China and Russia?**

A truly resilient supply chain is one that protects against all risks, whether from climate change or from excessive dependency on unreliable, or even hostile countries for key components or critical minerals. I am aware of a range of Government-wide efforts to strengthen the resilience of U.S. supply chains, in response to the Executive Order on Securing America's Supply Chain (EO 14017). If confirmed, I am committed to working with other agencies, Congress, and industry to ensure we can meet the challenges of climate change without creating dependencies on unreliable suppliers.

**In a June 2020 report (GAO-20-511) the GAO determined that DOD has not routinely assessed climate-related risks faced by its contractors as part of its acquisition and supply processes, and that current DOD processes in general do not systematically identify and consider climate-related risks to materiel acquisition and supply or the acquisition of weapon systems. The GAO made a number of recommendations that DOD could implement to remedy this deficiency, and all recommendations from this report remain open and unresolved. One of those recommendations was that the USD(A&S) should update, as appropriate, relevant DOD guidance related to acquisition and supply processes to incorporate provisions of DOD Directive 4715.21 pertaining to those processes.**

**206. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to implement that GAO recommendation?**

Climate is a significant influence on national security, and the Department's policies must reflect the need for climate adaptation and mitigation. I am not familiar with the latest status of the Department's response to this GAO report. If confirmed, I will review the Department's approach to acquisition and supply processes related to climate risk and work to provide a full response to GAO and a review of whether DoD guidance should be updated.

**207. In your view, what further steps remain to be taken to address other vulnerabilities related to climate change?**

Given the frequency and intensity with which climate-related global disruptions impact all components of the supply chain, if confirmed, I would take steps to be sure that the Department has fully explored the potential for climate-related financial risk to the materiel acquisition and supply or the acquisition of weapon systems.

**Military Installation Resilience**

**One of the principal responsibilities of the USD(A&S) is to develop and update policies, programs, and guidance, and oversee compliance within the Department to ensure resilience against the current and projected impacts of extreme weather on military installations—both in the United States and overseas. In the FY 2020 NDAA, Congress amended section 2864 of title 10, United States Code, to require that Installation Master Plans include a component addressing the weather resilience of both the installation and of key supporting civilian infrastructure. Notwithstanding Congress' mandate, there does not seem to be any sense of urgency within the Department to comply, even at those installations identified as most vulnerable to impacts of extreme weather.**

**208. If confirmed, what steps would you take to increase the pace of the required revisions of Installation Master Plans to include this resilience component?**

It is my understanding that several Unified Facilities Criteria have been updated since 2020 to direct all installations to develop comprehensive installation resilience plans that incorporate climate resilience analysis and ensure mission sustainment over the intended lifespan of their infrastructure and assets.

In addition, I understand each of the Military Department has published a planning handbook or guidebook supporting adaptation planning that supplements the Unified Facilities Criteria. To me, the sense of urgency is apparent in the Department's 2021 report "Highlights and Examples for the Department of Defense Climate Adaptation Plan." This report provides examples of the Department's past successes and ongoing initiatives to address climate change considerations in the Department's plans, strategies, operations, and infrastructure both inside and outside the fenceline.

If confirmed, I look for opportunities to increase the pace of these actions and ensure that all plans include a component addressing the resilience of both the installation and of key supporting civilian infrastructure to climate change and extreme weather.

**209. What steps would you take to ensure that this component of such Master Plans addresses both the resilience of the installation and the resilience of the key supporting civilian infrastructure?**

If confirmed, I would make installation resilience a priority and emphasize a comprehensive approach to installation resilience that includes climate change considerations.

**DOD has developed and is using a number of tools, such as the Defense Climate Action Tool (DCAT), to assess the vulnerabilities of military installations to the current and projected impacts of an always changing climate.**

**210. In your view, are the outcomes of the assessments generated by these tools adequately factored into the development of actions and measures to reduce vulnerabilities of both military installations and of key supporting civilian infrastructure located outside of the installations to an always changing climate?**

While I am not personally familiar with the specific capabilities of the DCAT, it is my position that tools like the DCAT are essential for evaluating the climate exposure to installations, identifying where additional investment in more detailed information are necessary, and for use in prioritizing climate change adaptation actions on and off installations.

**211. In your view, what should be the next steps in the development of these kinds of assessment tools through either R&D, like the Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program and Environmental Security Technology Certification Program, or through existing program authorities, like Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration, Defense Access Roads?**

If confirmed, I would support continued efforts by Department to expand the use of existing R&D and program authorities to improve on existing climate assessment tools and to ensure that such tools are appropriately utilized.

**212. What do you believe is the appropriate role of the Department, as compared to that of other federal and local agencies, in addressing infrastructure needs outside of military installations?**

The Department's readiness and installation resiliency is intrinsically tied to the functioning and responsiveness of local infrastructure. I believe the Department must: 1) work with state and local officials, in varying collaborations with Federal agencies and the private sector, to plan outside-the-fenceline infrastructure improvements; 2) capitalize on local expertise and experience; 3) promote improvements that are responsive to both the local community's and the Department's needs; and 4) continue to leverage tools, including the Defense Community Infrastructure Program and the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program, that can help facilitate the delivery of mutually-beneficial built and natural infrastructure solutions If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department

remains a leader in promoting infrastructure that supports installation resilience, military value, and military quality of life.

### **Congressional Reporting**

**Selected Acquisition Reports need to be replaced with a modernized reporting requirement that can be tailored to different acquisition strategies and pathways.**

- 213. If confirmed, what are your suggestions for the format, content, and tailoring of future Congressional reporting on acquisition programs?**

It is my understanding that the long term goal for the Department is to provide automated acquisition program dashboards. The Department is currently building this capability beginning with the Major Capability Acquisition and Middle Tier of Acquisition pathways; other pathways will follow as metrics are developed. OSD CAPE is currently researching improvements to the Selected Acquisition Reports; however, legally required content in Selected Acquisition Reports remains the same for at least the next two years. If confirmed, I will review these plans and make adjustments as appropriate.

**The Nunn-McCurdy process, as established by section 2433 of title 10, United States Code, has not been revisited since Congress and the Department began implementing significant acquisition reforms five years ago.**

- 214. Given recent acquisition reforms, do you believe the Nunn-McCurdy process is still an appropriate and effective mechanism for reporting to Congress on troubled acquisition programs? Please explain.**

The Nunn-McCurdy process remains a significant metric and an important process for Major Defense Acquisition Program reporting and accountability. If confirmed, I will review the process and recommend changes as appropriate.

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

I believe the thresholds for significant and critical breaches are appropriate and do not think a change is needed. If confirmed, I will review the process and determine if any changes might be appropriate.

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

If confirmed, I will use the principals of the Nunn-McCurdy law itself along with data driven analyses to inform my recommendation. Decisions have to be informed based on balancing the need for the warfighter capability against further cost growth

issues. Programs that experience significant or critical cost breaches must present a credible plan to meet performance requirements at acceptable cost levels.

### **Sexual Harassment**

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

**217. What is your assessment of the current climate regarding sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the Office of the USD(A&S)?**

I believe that any organization must have zero tolerance for sexual harassment or gender discrimination, and I understand that the Office of the USD(A&S) is aligned with the Secretary Austin’s and Deputy Secretary Hicks’ emphasis on eliminating sexual harassment and gender discrimination. I fully support these priorities and, if confirmed, will ensure that all employees are treated with equity and respect.

**218. In your view, is the civilian workforce harassment prevention and response training for civilian employees in the Office of the USD(A&S) adequate and effective?**

If confirmed, I will evaluate the effectiveness of OUSD (A&S) training and response efforts to maintain a work environment free of harassment, work with subject matter experts to review programs and policies for responding to incidents and complaints, and enhance them as appropriate. reporting these crimes and, subsequently, victim care.

**219. In your view, does the Office of the USD(A&S) program for response to complaints of harassment or discrimination provide appropriate care and services to civilian employee victims?**

If confirmed, I will review recent command climate surveys, work with OUSD(A&S) senior leaders to address any concerns raised in those surveys, ensure appropriate care is provided to victims, and resource outreach programs and educational material to get the message to the workforce that harassment and discrimination among our workforce will not be tolerated.

**220. If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or otherwise become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from an employee of the Office of the USD(A&S)?**

I believe that any organization must have zero tolerance for sexual harassment or gender discrimination. If I am confirmed and I receive a complaint from an employee, I would take immediate action to ensure that their complaint is appropriately investigated and addressed. I would ensure that this employee is treated fairly and with respect throughout this process.

## **Relations with Congress**

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

My priority will be ensuring that OUSD(A&S) has a strong relationship with all of the congressional defense committees, including the SASC. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize regular engagement, and consult with committee professional staff members and the Department's legislative affairs professionals to understand their views of the state of the relationship and where improvements can be made.

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

I believe that frequent, honest, and transparent communication is the foundation to any relationship. If confirmed, I will strive to maintain an open dialogue with the congressional defense committees and ensure that I and my staff are available to engage with Members and staff as appropriate.

## **Congressional Oversight**

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

- 223. 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 the following with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 224. 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 the following with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 225. 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 the following with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 226. 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 the following with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 227. 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 the following with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 228. 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 the following with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 229. 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 the following with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.