

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Ms. Deborah G. Rosenblum
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs

Duties

Section 138 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs (ASD(NCB)) shall advise the Secretary of Defense on nuclear energy, nuclear weapons, and chemical and biological defense.

1. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the ASD(NCB)?

The ASD(NCB) is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) on nuclear energy, nuclear weapons, and chemical and biological defense issues. The ASD(NCB) is the principal advisor to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the USD(A&S) for ensuring the U.S. nuclear deterrent is safe, secure, and effective; developing and sustaining capabilities to counter improvised and weapons of mass destruction threats, effects, and proliferation; and ensuring DoD compliance with certain nuclear, chemical, and biological treaties and agreements.

2. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that the Secretary receives full and complete technical advice on the nuclear stockpile as well as chemical and biological defense programs?

If confirmed, through my role as the Nuclear Weapons Council Staff Director, I will ensure the Secretary has the most pertinent information readily available regarding nuclear weapons safety, security, reliability, and effectiveness; and results and outcomes of all analyses and studies of issues affecting the nuclear weapons stockpile. I will also ensure the Secretary is aware of emerging and current chemical and biological agents that impact the safety and security of our warfighters.

3. How do the roles and responsibilities of the ASD(NCB) relate to those of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, in your view?

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction is responsible for developing policies related to countering weapons of mass destruction. He/she does so in consultation with the ASD NCB who has responsibility for ensuring the U.S. nuclear deterrent is safe, secure, and effective; developing and sustaining capabilities to counter improvised and weapons of mass destruction threats, effects, and proliferation; and ensuring DoD compliance with certain nuclear, chemical, and biological treaties and agreements.

Reporting Chain

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.

4. What is your understanding of why this direct access is necessary?

Maintaining direct access to the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary is statutorily required to allow 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.

5. 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 on all issues under its purview, working with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment.

6. If confirmed, would you expect to have direct and timely access to the Secretary of Defense for matters pertaining to the safety, security, and reliability of nuclear weapons?

Yes. Section 138(b)(4) of Title 10, U.S. Code, states that the ASD(NCB) “may communicate views on issues within the responsibility of the Assistant Secretary 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 of Defense.” Due to the very serious nature of these highly technical matters related to our nuclear weapons, if confirmed I would expect direct and timely access to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on these issues, working with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment.

Qualifications

The position of the ASD(NCB) spans a wide range of technical subjects in the areas of nuclear weapons, chemical and biological defense programs.

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

For over thirty years, I have worked in the field of national security and defense. I spent a good portion of that time, both inside and outside of government, working to reduce catastrophic risks and countering weapons of mass destruction.

8. Specifically, what leadership and management experience do you possess that you would apply to your service as ASD(NCB), if confirmed?

I was a career civil servant in the Senior Executive Service within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (DOD) where I oversaw numerous offices and had management oversight responsibility for planning and executing a roughly \$1B counterdrug budget. I worked in close coordination with the US Department of State, the National Security Council, the DOD components, Combatant Commanders, the Joint Staff, other offices within the Office of the Secretary of Defense as well as foreign governments.

In my current role as the Executive Vice President of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), I support the organization's day to day management, program and budget execution (\$25 M annual budget) as well as personnel matters. I also co-chair NTI's task force on diversity, equity and inclusion.

9. Are there any actions you would take to enhance your ability to perform the duties and exercise the powers of the ASD(NCB)?

If confirmed, I will carefully consider actions to enhance my ability to perform the duties and exercise the powers of the ASD(NCB), but I am not aware of any at this time.

10. What other duties do you anticipate the Secretary of Defense or the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment would assign to you, if confirmed, particularly in light of the National Defense Strategy?

If confirmed, I will have work with the Secretary of Defense and Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment to understand any additional duties they may assign. However, I am currently not aware of any.

Major Challenges and Priorities

11. If confirmed, what broad priorities will you establish?

If confirmed, and based on my current understanding of the position, I would have four key priorities. First would be to ensure that the on-going modernization of the nuclear enterprise is executed in a sustainable and cost effective manner in support of the Department of Defense's highest priority mission. To do so will require a close working partnership within the Nuclear Weapons Council as well as with Congress. Second, would be to ensure that current and future biological threats to the joint force receive the attention that they require and that DOD develops important biodefense capabilities consistent with the broader US Government global health security effort. Third, I would strive to ensure that the joint force has the capabilities necessary to protect itself from existing and emerging forms of chemical weapons. Finally, I would focus on ensuring that the US and allies are effectively closing capability gaps in the joint effort to counter weapons of mass destruction.

If confirmed, these priorities would be executed through close collaboration with other elements of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Combatant Commands, and the Services.

12. What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you would face if confirmed as the ASD(NCB)?

Based on my current understanding of the on-going nuclear modernization program, it is ambitious and challenging to ensure that it is delivered on-time and in a sustainable and cost-effective manner. If confirmed, directing and supporting efforts to ensure both the DoD and the Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA) align and resource the programs needed to maintain the effectiveness of our Nation's nuclear deterrent as it transitions from Cold War era legacy systems to their modern replacements will be a significant challenge.

Additionally, the convergence and pace of science and technological advances are changing the nature of conflict and enabling future threats. We must become more proactive in how we counter chemical and biological threats in order to adapt and respond to the world around us. Rapid response to biological threats and emerging infectious diseases continues to be a challenge. The current global SARS-CoV-2 pandemic indicates that biological threats to the warfighter go far beyond biological weapons, and we must consider impacts to the Joint Force from the full spectrum of naturally occurring, accidentally released, emerging, and intentionally weaponized threat agents. Expansion of the threat environment means that defensive technology and medical countermeasure development must become more rapid and flexible, requiring changes to how the DoD does business. Finally, the DoD must think creatively – with out of the box solutions – to predict future threats and leverage innovation to envision new approaches to counter them.

13. If confirmed, specifically what actions would you take, in what order of priority, and on what timeline—to address each of these challenges?

If confirmed, I would review early on the current status of the on-going modernization of the nuclear enterprise to understand the budgetary requirements, the acquisition schedule and operational requirements. As part of this effort, I would meet with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Staff, the Under Secretary of Policy within OSD, the Chiefs of Staff and Service Secretaries of the Navy and Air Force as well as the Administrator of NNSA along with members of Congress. This approach would enable me to give my best advice on resourcing and integrating this multifaceted, complex, and interdependent set of programs.

If confirmed, an additional immediate priority would be to fully support Secretary Austin's response strategy for the current global SARS-CoV-2 pandemic to ensure the safety and security of our warfighters and Nation.

More broadly with regards to the work of countering chemical and biological threats, I would focus early on, if confirmed, on proactively addressing emerging threats and the future needs of our warfighters to maintain lethality in contaminated environments. Key to that priority are expanding the organization's efforts to understand, characterize, and counter emerging threats, and coordinating with other stakeholders, both within the Department, the broader US Government and private industry. These efforts will better enable the organization to deliver the capabilities needed by the Joint Force to counter future CB threats.

Relations with Congress

14. What are your views on the state of the relationship between the Office of the ASD(NCB) and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

It is my understanding that the current relationship between the Office of the ASD(NCB) and the Senate Armed Services Committee is a strong one, and, if confirmed, further strengthening this relationship will be one of my highest priorities.

If confirmed, I would promote frequent and proactive communications with the SASC and all Members of Congress to ensure you and your staff have the best quality information to perform your important duties.

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

If confirmed, I can assure you, the NCB enterprise will be proactive, responsive, and diligent in our engagements with Congress. The NCB enterprise faces significant hurdles that will require the active involvement of the Committee, and I look forward to potential future engagements.

Defense Threat Reduction Agency

16. What is your understanding of the relationship between the Office of the ASD(NCB) and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)?

It is my understanding that, as with the three Deputy Assistant Secretaries that report to the ASD(NCB), the Office provides oversight and guidance to DTRA – a Defense Agency. ASD(NCB) ensures DTRA is part of a coordinated, Department of Defense-wide approach to addressing WMD related risks as well as synchronizing capability development across the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threat space.

17. If confirmed, what steps would you take to render this relationship more effective? What would you be your expectations for DTRA going forward?

If confirmed, I will place a high priority on working with DTRA leadership and ensuring close coordination continues across the CWMD spectrum.

If confirmed, I would expect DTRA to continue to implement programs, build and sustain partnerships, conduct analysis, and develop capabilities based on ASD(NCB) guidance, and to proactively work with the Services, Combatant Commands, U.S. Interagency, and foreign allies/partners to ensure the U.S. is without peer to detect, deter, and defeat WMD and emerging threats.

Nuclear Weapons Council

Section 179 of title 10, United States Code, designates the ASD(NCB) as the Staff Director of the Nuclear Weapons Council.

18. What is your understanding of this role?

My understanding of the role of the Nuclear Weapons Council (NWC) Staff Director is to serve as the principal advisor and facilitator for the topics, issues, recommendations, and decisions on which the NWC should focus its attention. I understand that the position also facilitates collaboration among the various nuclear enterprise stakeholders on key nuclear weapons issues. The ASD(NCB) also serves as the Chair of the NWC's Standing and Safety Committee, which is the subordinate body that develops and recommends decisions to the NWC itself.

19. 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 would commit to decisively address issues facing our nuclear enterprise, including ensuring that the NWC is provided data-driven options and recommendations. I would collaborate closely with my counterparts within the Nuclear Security Enterprise to foster coordination, collaboration, and communication on critical issues facing our deterrent.

20. What is your understanding of the modifications to the role of the Nuclear Weapons Council with respect to performance requirements and budget, 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 provides a process by which the Secretary of Energy and the Nuclear Weapons Council communicate and facilitate cooperation in support of the Council's requirements to align resources and to certify the annual budget request for the US nuclear stockpile.

21. If confirmed, what would be your responsibilities would implementation of these modifications?

If confirmed, I would work with members of the Nuclear Weapons Council, the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the White House Office of Management and Budget to ensure that current processes and procedures for budget reviews and discussions meet the intent of this provision.

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

If confirmed, in support of the NWC Chair, I would review the operations of the NWC and make recommendations for appropriate changes as needed.

23. What do you see as the challenges that the Nuclear Weapons Council will face over the next four years, and what would you do to address these challenges, if confirmed?

I understand the Departments of Defense and Energy are executing efforts to modernize the Nation's nuclear enterprise while sustaining legacy systems until they are replaced. If confirmed, I would work closely with the NWC, Military Department/Service Components, DOE/NNSA, and other relevant OSD Components to ensure we effectively and efficiently execute nuclear modernization and sustainment efforts and address emerging threats to ensure we continue to deter adversaries and assure allies.

Nuclear Modernization

24. Do you support and intend to advocate for the modernization of all legs of the triad of nuclear delivery vehicles? Please explain your answer.

I fully support the Department of Defense's efforts to modernize the triad, as well as the Department of Energy's ongoing efforts to modernize the Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile and necessary infrastructure. Each leg of the triad provides unique and complementary attributes that collectively ensure that no adversary ever believes it could launch a strategic attack that eliminates the ability of the United States to respond and inflict unacceptable damage.

25. Do you support and intend to advocate for the funding, development, and fielding of the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent? Please explain your answer.

I agree with the statements of both Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks in support of the nuclear triad and the need to modernize it to ensure a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent. I understand that the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent is the program of record to ensure that the Nation continues to have a reliable and effective intercontinental ballistic missile system that meets military objectives. If confirmed, I am committed to a deeper understanding of this program and to participating in Secretary Austin's review of nuclear weapons policy, posture, and programs.

26. Do you support and intend to advocate for the funding, development, and fielding of the Long-Range Stand-Off Weapon? Please explain your answer.

I agree with the statements of both Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks in support of the nuclear triad and the need to modernize it to ensure a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent. I understand that the Long Range Stand Off weapon is a program of record to ensure the long-term viability and effectiveness of the air leg of the triad. If confirmed, I am committed to a deeper understanding of this program and to participating in Secretary Austin's review of nuclear weapons policy, posture, and programs.

The Nuclear Weapons Council has laid out a schedule for modernization of the nuclear weapons stockpile over the next 20 years that involves that involves completion of

ongoing life extension programs and major alterations, as well as newer warhead modernization programs, in addition to maintenance of the existing stockpile systems.

27. Do you support and intend to advocate for all components of this modernization program?

I support both Departments' ongoing efforts to modernize the Nation's nuclear deterrent. As Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks have stated, the nuclear deterrent is the one of the highest priority missions of the Department of Defense, and, if confirmed, I am ready to support this mission. I look forward to receiving in-depth briefings regarding the specifics of the modernization programs if confirmed.

28. Do you agree that programs to modernize and replace the critical infrastructure of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) are national security priorities that should be addressed in a timely manner? Please explain your answer.

The modernization and recapitalization of NNSA design and production infrastructure is necessary and overdue. If confirmed, I would work with my counterparts in NNSA to advance these efforts as one of my priority focus areas.

Major construction efforts are underway at the NNSA laboratories and plants to support the production of plutonium pits at the Los Alamos Technical Area-55 and the repurposing of the Savannah River Site's Mixed Oxide Fuel building, as well as the replacement of building 9212 at the Y-12 Plant to produce uranium components.

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

It is my understanding that NNSA's infrastructure has reached a tipping point, and that if infrastructure investment is not prioritized, the stockpile cannot be modernized before it ages out. If confirmed, I am committed to receiving briefs to fully understand the complexities involved in these construction programs and work to support NNSA as they modernize these critical capabilities.

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

If confirmed, I would work with the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command to understand operational needs and provide my best advice on the sequencing and scoping of nuclear modernization plans.

31. How do you intend to ensure the health of the specialized industrial base needed to produce certain components of the delivery systems currently being modernized?

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in DoD and DOE/NNSA to identify any opportunities for aligning our efforts in a manner that supports a healthy industrial base, and I will support the USD(A&S) in efforts to address this problem in a broader sense across the acquisition and industrial base community.

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

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

I understand that the U.S. and UK Mutual Defense Agreement (MDA), originally signed in 1958, allows the US and United Kingdom to exchange information and transfer equipment related to the use of atomic energy for defense purposes. I further understand that this agreement is vital to the maintenance of close ties with the United Kingdom, and in both nations’ efforts to maintain a strong nuclear deterrent for the future.

33. What are your views on the W93 warhead program?

I understand that the W93 was recently approved by Congress as a new program of record to develop and field the next nuclear warhead for the U.S. Navy. I also understand the W93 supports, via the U.S./UK MDA and in compliance with other treaties and agreements, the separate but parallel Replacement Warhead Programme in the United Kingdom. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this program, how it contributes to U.S. nuclear deterrence, and how it supports the United States’ longstanding commitment to the UK’s Continuous At Sea Deterrent (CASD).

Nuclear Posture Review

The Biden Administration is considering conducting a new Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The last NPR, conducted in 2018 by the Trump Administration, emphasized the importance of modernizing our stockpile, NNSA facilities, and the workforce.

34. If confirmed, what would be your role in the conduct of the Biden Administration’s NPR?

If confirmed, I would work with my counterparts within the Department of Defense to ensure that the Nuclear Weapons Council’s perspectives are incorporated into the NPR. I would also commit to giving my best advice on the broad range of topics under review.

35. If confirmed, what changes to the 2018 NPR would you recommend the Biden Administration consider?

If confirmed, I am committed to a deep understanding of the issues facing our nuclear deterrent and the current modernization efforts underway, and I will provide my best advice accordingly.

36. Should the upcoming NPR recommend enhancements in the U.S. nuclear posture, will you commit, if confirmed, to providing the full and timely support of the Office of the ASD(NCB) to the work required to implement those enhancements?

Yes; if confirmed I will ensure the Office of the ASD(NCB) fully supports and implements all direction provided by the Nuclear Posture Review.

37. Should the upcoming NPR call for the development of additional nuclear capabilities, will you commit, if confirmed, to supporting those additions and ensuring that the Office of the ASD(NCB) fully supports the new requirements?

Yes; if confirmed I will ensure the Office of the ASD(NCB) fully supports and implements all direction provided by the Nuclear Posture Review.

Nuclear Enterprise

The nuclear enterprise functions through collaboration between 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; and the NNSA headquarters, and the NNSA national laboratories and production plants.

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

It is my understanding that the Nuclear Weapons Council, through statutory enhancements recently enacted into law, serves as an important mechanism for balancing and connecting requirements, acquisitions and procurement, technical expertise, and production between the DoD and DOE/NNSA. If confirmed, I will seek ways to strengthen this system further and welcome the input of Congress.

39. Do you have any recommendations for improving the functions of the complex?

If confirmed, I would review the enterprise's functions to ensure that it is operating in the most effective and efficient manner, while remaining aligned with Joint Force requirements.

Stockpile Stewardship Program

40. Do you support the Stockpile Stewardship Program and have you reviewed the elements of this program as conducted by the NNSA? Please explain your answer.

Yes; I support the program as I understand it. Through this program, the DOE/NNSA ensures the Nation maintains a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent in the absence of underground testing. If confirmed, I look forward to more in depth briefings on the Stockpile Stewardship Program, how it has been successful in accomplishing this goal since the end of the Cold War, and how to ensure it remains successful for decades to come.

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

If confirmed, I am committed to a deeper understanding of the Stockpile Stewardship Program and offering my advice—through the NWC—on any potential capabilities to improve the program.

42. As materials and designs age, what is your opinion on whether modeling, simulation, and experimentation will continue to suffice indefinitely in place of underground testing in ensuring the safety and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile?

If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current capabilities and, if appropriate, making recommendations to DOE/NNSA on the adequacy of modeling and simulation capabilities that underpin the certification of the stockpile. Based on my understanding of these capabilities, nuclear explosive testing is not currently needed to certify the safety or reliability of the stockpile. If confirmed, I look forward to the advice of the NNSA national security laboratory directors regarding stockpile stewardship as they fulfill their annual statutory duty to certify the stockpile.

43. 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?

If confirmed, I am committed to working with the NWC and the leaders of the Nuclear Security Enterprise to understand the assessments and conclusions of the annual stockpile certification from the NNSA national security lab directors and, if needed, provide those recommendations along with my own to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Chemical and Biological Defense Matters

Section 138 of title 10, United States Code, states that the ASD(NCB) shall advise the Secretary of Defense on chemical and biological defense in addition to nuclear matters.

44. What is your understanding of your roles and responsibilities with respect to chemical and biological defense matters, if confirmed?

The ASD(NCB) is the principal advisor to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the USD(A&S) for activities to counter current and emerging chemical and biological threats,

including all matters related to the research, development and acquisition of defensive capabilities against these threats.

If confirmed in this capacity, I would provide oversight for the development of acquisition policies, provide advice and recommendations, and be the technical expert for chemical and biological defense to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment. This includes both medical and non-medical defensive capabilities, as well as the safety and security of chemical and biological agents that are used to research medical countermeasure capabilities to protect the force and deliver modernized capabilities.

45. Please explain your understanding of the role of the Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical and Biological Defense Programs, the Research Development, Testing, and Evaluation entities and programs it oversees, and its relationship to the ASD(NCB).

It is my understanding that the research, development, test, and evaluation entities that support the DoD Chemical and Biological Defense program, to include the Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense, are all involved in executing Office of the Secretary of Defense guidance and priorities. This guidance and priorities are implemented through the ASD(NCB) in the development of capabilities that enable the Joint Force to operate and win in chemically or biologically contested environments.

46. How do these roles and responsibilities relate to those of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction?

It is my understanding that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security (ASD((HD&GS))) is the DoD lead for the development of policy and strategy on countering weapons of mass destruction. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (NCB) is the lead for developing and managing the DoD's countering weapons of mass destruction capabilities.

I further understand that the ASD(NCB) works closely with the DASD for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support for Civil Authorities (DASD(HDI&DSCA)) within the ASD (HD&GSA) organization to ensure coordination on homeland defense activities.

Synchronization of policy and capability development requires these offices to coordinate very closely.

If confirmed, in order to facilitate this coordination and synchronization, I would continue to fully engage and fulfill the ASD(NCB) role in the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Unity of Effort Council (CWMD-UoE). I would partner with the ASD(HD&GS)) and the Director of the Joint Staff J5, to review existing CWMD policy guidance, directives, and capabilities with the purpose of streamlining coordination efforts.

47. What do you believe are the principal challenges in chemical and biological defense, and what would be your priorities for the Department Chemical and Biological Defense Program?

The principal challenge in chemical and biological defense is the complex and rapidly evolving threat landscape. The global norms which have previously deterred the use of CB weapons are disappearing while technological and scientific advancements and the ease of proliferation are lowering or eliminating barriers to those who wish to obtain or further develop advanced WMD.

Within the Chemical and Biological Defense Program, it is my understanding that the principal challenge is changing the strategic direction and culture to ensure that DOD can more proactively address future threats, while also meeting the readiness and modernization needs of the Joint Force for the National Defense Strategy. If confirmed, I would seek to create the opportunities for this change to successfully occur.

Interaction with Other Federal Agencies on Chemical and Biological Matters

The Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services play important roles in planning and implementing U.S. policy and programs for protecting the United States against biological and chemical threats, including the development and stockpiling of vaccines and therapeutic products.

48. If confirmed, how would you work with these agencies to ensure the effective coordination and collaboration of efforts to improve U.S. security against biological and chemical threats?

If confirmed, I would leverage existing coordination venues across DoD and the U.S. government to ensure that DOD has continuity of effort against these threats. While the DoD Chemical and Biological Defense Program is focused on the research and development of defensive countermeasures against chemical and biological threats, the stockpiling of vaccines and therapeutics for DoD is the responsibility of the ASD(HA). If confirmed, I would ensure that collective efforts are put in place to mitigate the impacts of these threats to the Warfighter and ensure the security of the Nation.

Chemical Demilitarization

The United States is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and, under the terms of the treaty, was obligated to destroy its chemical weapons stockpile by no later than the extended deadline of April 2012.

49. Do you agree that the Department of Defense and the U.S. Government should be in full compliance with the terms and obligations of the CWC and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), including the deadline for destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile under the CWC?

Yes, I agree that the Department of Defense and the U.S. Government should be in full compliance with the terms and obligations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). If confirmed, I would work to ensure all programs under my purview remain compliant with and meet the obligations of the BWC and of the CWC, including the destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile in the most expeditious manner

while assigning the highest priority to ensuring the safety of the people and protecting the environment.

50. If confirmed, specifically how would you lead the Department in taking steps needed to minimize the time to complete destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile, without sacrificing safety or security?

If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department continues to evaluate options with a goal to accelerate the destruction schedules and to safely complete destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile by the congressionally mandated deadline of December 31, 2023.

51. If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure adequate funding is requested to permit the most expeditious destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile, consistent with the legal requirement to protect public health, safety, and the environment?

I understand that the destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile is a priority within the Department. If confirmed, I would work with the Comptroller and members of Congress to obtain the fiscal resources required to complete the destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile while protecting public health, safety, and the environment.

52. There have been challenges at the Pueblo and Blue Grass chemical demilitarization plants. Please explain your understanding of the challenges at each plant.

I reviewed the various laws and recent reports to Congress pertaining to the Chemical Demilitarization Program – Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, a Major Defense Acquisition Program that is responsible for destroying the remaining U.S. chemical weapons stockpiles located in Colorado and Kentucky. I understand implementing these first-of-a-kind technologies and equipment to destroy a variety of chemical weapons while ensuring compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and the safety of the workers, the environment and the surrounding communities has posed a great challenge at each destruction facility. These challenges have resulted in cost increases and schedule delays due to the technical issues associated with being first-of-a-kind efforts. If confirmed, I would ensure that safety to the workers, the environment, and the citizens in the surrounding communities remains the top priority while endeavoring to overcome the challenges that impact completing the mission successfully.

53. If confirmed, what management actions would you take to address these problems?

If confirmed, I would review the program's status to identify the issues, concerns and/or risks, approve the action and risk mitigation plans to resolve them, and monitor the effectiveness of the actions and risk mitigation efforts to ensure progress as appropriate.

54. Do you see the need for any changes in the structure, organization, or reporting relationships within the chemical demilitarization program?

If confirmed, I would review the program's organization and management structure as well as the reporting requirements and make changes if required.

Cooperative Threat Reduction Programs (Nunn-Lugar Programs)

55. Do you support the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Programs?

Yes, I am supportive of the CTR Program. If confirmed, I would work to ensure the program's efficacy and clear prioritization to address threat reduction objectives, consistent with national and Departmental strategy. I believe that the DoD CTR Program has a 30 year demonstrated record of success in working with partner nations to secure, eliminate, detect, and interdict nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and materials.

56. What is your understanding as to your responsibilities with respect to the CTR Programs, if confirmed?

I understand that The Defense Reduction Agency implements the CTR Program, and that the ASD (NCB) provides acquisition oversight, annual guidance to inform the CTR budget requirements as well as viable metrics to measure WMD threat reduction objectives. government policies.

57. What is your view of the role of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programs in helping foreign nations develop safe and secure high containment facilities and safe operating practices?

I believe that the primary role of CTR's biological threat reduction effort is to facilitate partner nations' ability to peacefully, safely, and securely work with biological pathogens to prevent outbreaks as well as secure pathogens from nefarious actors. If confirmed, in cases where physical infrastructure gaps pose significant hurdles toward this goal, I would provide guidance to the CTR Program consistent with DoD and interagency priorities.

58. If confirmed, what actions would you take to support joint research programs with foreign nations partnered with the United States in the areas of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons threat reduction?

If confirmed, I would support thoughtful joint research programs with foreign nations. Strategically, joint research programs allow U.S. research peers to mentor partner scientists in safe and effective laboratory practices, provides transparency in the partner nation's biological research, and enables insight in the dangerous pathogens that are circulating in the host nation's environment. In addition, teaching our partners to attract grant funding for research develops a funding stream for transparent biological research that also helps sustain the facilities, equipment, and training provided by the CTR Program. If confirmed, I would need to do an assessment to determine if joint research should be expanded or adjusted.

59. What is your understanding of how the Programs partner with other agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and what steps, if any, would you recommend for enhancing those partnerships?

I understand that the CTR program has solid interagency relationships to coordinate partner engagements and efforts, and agencies routinely exchange threat reduction program priority and planning information. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that the CTR Program remains well-coordinated across the government to optimize its effectiveness and efficiency, and to align efforts and resources towards shared threat reduction objectives and consistent with national and Departmental strategies. I would also work to ensure CTR efforts are supportive of our broad Policy-driven Counter WMD strategies and Combatant Commands' plans, and are synchronized with other U.S. departments and agencies, which has different roles, authorities and responsibilities in countering WMD threats.

Consequence Management of CBRNE Incidents

The Department of Defense has a mission of providing support to civil authorities for consequence management of domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) incidents, if directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense. Since 2002, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security and the Commander of U.S. Northern Command have had responsibilities for planning and executing that mission.

60. If confirmed, how would you expect to work with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security and the Commander of U.S. Northern Command on issues related to the Department's capabilities to provide support to civil authorities for CBRNE consequence management, as well their homeland defense missions related to nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons or materials?

If confirmed, I would work closely with both the ASD(HD&GS) and Commander USNORTHCOM as appropriate. The ASD(NCB) serves as Vice Chair of the CWMD Unity of Effort (UoE) Council to address issues that are important to achieving Counter WMD strategic goals. Specifically, the ASD(NCB) co-chairs the Capabilities Subcommittee for the CWMD UoE Council to develop recommendations that mitigate or resolve CWMD capability gaps. Within the office of the ASD(NCB), the DASD(CBD) participates in the quarterly CBRN Response Enterprise (CRE) Senior Steering Group meetings; NCB is providing support to the 10-year CRE Assessment; and the Chemical and Biological Defense Program provides the CBRN defense capabilities used by the CRE warfighters.

Additionally, there are emerging CBRNE challenges in areas such as Pharmaceutical-Based Agents. Fentanyl, for example, has a high toxicity, increasing availability and could be considered attractive to threat actors seeking nonconventional materials for a chemical weapons attack. A shared understanding of these emergent threats, along with understanding of response

posture and available countermeasures will be critical to preparing defense assets to respond to these threats in an operational environment.

The Department of Homeland Security is the lead federal agency for planning, coordinating, and implementing consequence management of CBRNE incidents in the United States, in conjunction with the States and territories.

61. If confirmed, what relationship would you expect to have with the Department of Homeland Security and its component entities?

I understand that the Department has ongoing relationships to enhance efficiencies and would seek to strengthen those relationships. If confirmed, I would focus on improving our ability to share DoD's chemical and biological defense research, development, test, and evaluation activities/results with Interagency partners who can benefit from DoD's significant investments. I understand that DoD participates in the Interagency Modeling and Atmospheric Assessment Center (IMAAC) under a Memorandum of Understanding between DHS/FEMA and six Federal agencies. The Defense Threat Reduction Agency serves as the IMAAC Technical Operations Hub and provides a single point for the coordination and dissemination of Federal dispersion modeling products that represent the Federal position representing atmospheric dispersion during actual or potential chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) incidents.

62. What do you believe to be the appropriate role for the Department of Defense in providing support to civil authorities for CBRNE consequence management?

I understand that there are well-established policies, procedures, and command relationships for DoD support to civilian authorities. DoD routinely trains with civilian agencies through USNORTHCOM and their Service component exercises and deploys requested capabilities in support of high threat events, such as National Special Security Events. If confirmed, I would fully support the efforts of the military components in the Department's support of homeland security. These capabilities provide our national command authority with response flexibility.

In addition, I understand that the Defense Threat Reduction Agency provides 24/7 on-call reach back support to civil authorities through the National Countering-WMD Technical Reach back Enterprise, which coordinates and disseminates modeling and hazard prediction products during actual or potential CBRN incidents. These predictions are used to inform risk management, public information, and operational response decisions at all levels - Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments.

63. If confirmed, what role would you expect to have in regard to the oversight of Department of Defense capabilities related to consequence management of CBRNE incidents?

I understand that the CBRN defense equipment used in a CBRN response is primarily developed and fielded under the DoD Chemical and Biological Defense Program. I further understand that

DoD is reviewing roles and responsibilities related to biodefense and pandemic preparedness and response as directed in the FY21 NDAA. If confirmed, I would execute any responsibilities that the Secretary deems appropriate for the ASD (NCB) office.

If confirmed, I would assess our consequence management posture by asking four questions: (1) do we understand the threat, (2) what options are available to mitigate the threat, (3) are the right policies in place, and (4) are key leaders and units properly trained. If confirmed, I would be able to leverage DTRA's Technical Reach back group's subject matter experts to aid decision-making and post-event analysis that can be provided to CCMDs and partnered nations, OSD, Joint Staff, intelligence community, command elements, other U.S. government agencies and first responders.

Command Climate Survey

64. If confirmed, would you plan to administer a command climate survey to the workforce under your leadership and management?

If confirmed, I would use a broad range of leadership skills, tools and approaches to understand the command climate within the ASD (NCB) organization.

Sexual Harassment

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

65. What is your assessment of the current climate regarding sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the DOD?

I fully support the high priority that Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks have placed on eliminating sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the DOD. Both sexual harassment and gender discrimination are repugnant and have no place in organizations I have led or may lead in the future.

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

I fully support the high priority that Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks have placed on eliminating sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the DOD. Both sexual harassment and gender discrimination are repugnant and have no place in organizations I have led or may lead in the future.

If confirmed, I would take immediate action to ensure that the allegation was appropriately addressed.

Notification of Congress

67. If confirmed, would you commit to promptly notifying Congress of any significant issues in the safety, security, or reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile?

I believe that Congress needs timely and accurate information in order to make effective legislative decisions, especially when those decisions affect the US nuclear deterrent. If confirmed, and once equipped with the necessary facts, I commit to promptly doing so to further Congress' legislative mandate.

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.

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

71. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their

respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes