

Advance Policy Questions for James Stewart
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Department of Defense Reforms

The National Defense Authorization Acts for Fiscal Year 2017 and 2018 included the most sweeping reforms since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

Do you support these reforms?

Yes

What other areas for defense reform do you believe might be appropriate for this Committee to address?

I believe there is still much work to be done to ensure we have flexible and adaptive policies and procedures for both military and civilian personnel management. We must also continue to seek efficiencies and improvements in how we deliver benefits and services in support of our All-Volunteer Force and their families. If confirmed, I will work with the Under Secretary of Defense, the Chief Management Officer, and the leaders of our Military Departments and Services to assess the programs, policies, and services that fall under my purview as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, with a view towards ensuring that our policies and programs are optimized in support of the warfighter.

Duties and Qualifications

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASD(M&RA))?

It is my understanding that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on all issues involving military and civilian personnel programs and policies, Reserve Component affairs and integration, military community and family policy, and Total Force manpower and resources. The ASD(M&RA) also oversees the Department of Defense Education Activity and the Defense Commissary Agency and provides policy oversight of the Defense Travel Management Office, the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, and the Defense Personnel and Family Support Center (comprised of the Transition to Veterans Program Office, the Federal Voting Assistance Program, the Reserve Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Program, and the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program).

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

I grew up the son of a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, who during his 23 year career served a tour in Vietnam. Thus, I am familiar with the many hardships dependents deal with growing up in a military family.

After receiving a commission through the Air Force ROTC program, I served on active duty for 14 years as a Regular Air Force Officer, and 22 years as a Reserve Officer. During this period, I served in many different leadership positions to include: Personnel Officer, Wing Commander, Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) Inspector General, AFRC Chief of Plans and Programs, and Military Executive to the Secretary of Defense's Reserve Forces Policy Board. In these positions, I was exposed to the various challenges facing both our Active and Reserve Component members and leadership.

In 1992, after departing the active Air Force, I was hired into federal civil service as a military technician. I started as a GS-13 and retired as a member of the Senior Executive Service. I am familiar with many of the issues associated with serving in the federal civil service system.

I retired from government service in 2014, but continued my work serving our service members as a member of the North Carolina Military Affairs Commission. As the Economic Development Chairman of the Commission, I worked to ensure North Carolina is the "Most Military Friendly State", by supporting our military families and communities through leadership and change.

If confirmed, I will draw upon the experience gained from the past to serve all of our communities within the Department of Defense family in the future.

Major Challenges and Priorities

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the ASD(M&RA)?

Given the diverse and extensive scope of the Manpower and Reserve Affairs portfolio, it is crucial that each decision made by the Assistant Secretary enhances Secretary Mattis' vision to provide management systems and policies "where leadership can harness opportunities and ensure effective stewardship of taxpayer resources." This position has the awesome responsibility of ensuring our most important asset, our people and their families, are well served, by providing them with the tools and help they need to ensure our national defense, in a budget constrained environment. That is our primary challenge.

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

If confirmed, I will work collaboratively with all appropriate officials across the Department, including the Reserve Components and my Military Department and Service

counterparts, to ensure that, as a Department, we are implementing policies and programs in a manner that enhances the readiness and lethality of our armed forces and promotes the quality of life and resiliency of our Service members and their families.

Relations with Congress

What are your views on the state of the relationship between the ASD(M&RA) and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

Although I cannot speak to the relationship between the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Congress during the last Administration, I believe that a strong, collaborative relationship with the Committee and with Congress is extremely important and must be maintained.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the ASD(M&RA)?

If confirmed, I will strive to be as transparent as possible and maintain open lines of communication between my Office and Congress. To this end, I will proactively communicate with Congress and ensure the Congressional Defense Committees receive timely and informative updates on all major issues and initiatives in my portfolio, were I to be confirmed.

Torture and Enhanced Interrogation Techniques

Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated August 19, 2014, and required by section 1045 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92)?

Yes.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

What is your assessment of the Department of Defense's sexual assault prevention and response program, particularly as it relates to the National Guard and Reserves?

Sexual assault is a serious crime! It has serious implications for good order and discipline in both Active and Reserve Component units. As I remember, the Department's sexual assault prevention and response program already encompasses the National Guard and Reserves. However, having been retired for the last three years, I do

not have enough information to assess the current state of the sexual assault program. If confirmed, I will work directly with the senior official with direct oversight and responsibility for the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) and the Services to ensure proper Reserve Component focus.

What is your view of the provision for restricted and unrestricted reporting of sexual assaults?

As I understand it, based on my prior experience as a Wing Commander in the Air Force, in a restricted reporting case, the victim wishes to permit his or her report to be used solely for the purpose of receiving necessary care and treatment. In the case of an unrestricted report, the victim authorizes his or her report to be used for any appropriate purpose, including a criminal proceeding. In my view, any process that fosters an increase in the reporting of sexual assaults is a step in the right direction. Accordingly, given the Department's commitment to combating sexual assault, I think that it is important to maintain both restricted and unrestricted reporting options.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources the Department has in place to prevent and respond to sexual assaults?

Although I do not know the specifics, it is my understanding that the Department has established and delivers focused training for the prevention of, and response to sexual assault, and has invested considerable time and resources to address this serious problem. That being said, given the importance of this issue, I believe that there is always more that can be done.

What is your view of the adequacy of the Department's oversight of military service implementation of the Department and service policies for the prevention of and response to sexual assaults?

I do not have enough information regarding the Department's current oversight process to provide such an assessment at this time.

What is your assessment of the potential impact, if any, of proposals to remove the disposition authority from military commanders over violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including sexual assaults?

Any proposal to remove from military commanders the disposition authority over violations of the UCMJ must be carefully examined, since such an action would likely have a detrimental impact on command authority.

What is your assessment of the Department's protections against retaliation for reporting sexual assault?

Sexual assault is a crime and retaliation for reporting such crimes must not be permitted. The Department must foster an environment in which a Service member can report such crimes without fear of retaliation.

What is your view of the role of the chain of command in maintaining a command climate where sexual harassment and sexual assaults are not tolerated?

The leaders within the chain of command exercise control over the environment for their organization. For the sake of good order and discipline, a climate of dignity and mutual respect for all members of the team must be established by leadership. In addition, leaders up and down the chain of command must make it clear to all members of the unit that sexual harassment and sexual assault will not be tolerated and must take appropriate action to hold accountable those who engage in harassment or assault.

In your view, do military and civilian leaders in the Department have the tools and resources needed to hold commanders accountable for these issues? If not, what additional authority do they need?

Yes.

Abusive Online Conduct

This Committee has considered testimony on reports that certain members of Marines United, an unofficial Marine Corps Facebook group, posted degrading comments and shared nude photos of female service members. Members of the group included a number of active-duty service members, former military members, and military retirees.

Do you believe that the behaviors typified by these events, and the attitudes and beliefs they represent, are confined to the Marine Corps? Is this an issue in the National Guard and Reserves?

I believe that this type of behavior is prevalent in society as a whole and is not confined to the Marine Corps or to the military in general. I am not familiar with the extent of the problem in the National Guard and Reserves, but if confirmed, I will work closely with the DoD officials with primary responsibility for this issue to ensure that any problems with respect to the Reserve Components are fully addressed.

Do you believe these behaviors need to be addressed?

Yes.

What are the current Department of Defense policies for use of social media by civilian employees and service members? Are there any specific policies for the National Guard and Reserves?

I am not familiar with the specifics regarding current DoD policies, but if confirmed, I will thoroughly review current policies and offer my recommendations for improvement to appropriate officials within the Department.

In your view, are these policies adequate to address abuses such as what occurred in the Marines United incident?

Although I do not have enough information to comment on the adequacy of current policies, it is my understanding that the Department is taking appropriate measures to address such behavior and adjust policies as necessary.

If confirmed, what action would you take to ensure that civilian employees and service members are not subjected to abusive online conduct?

Although it is my understanding that primary oversight of this matter is not within the purview of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, it does have an impact on those I will represent. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness and other DoD officials to take appropriate action to ensure that civilian employees and Service members are not subjected to abusive conduct online.

Sexual Harassment

Department of Defense annual sexual assault reports consistently document that sexual assaults are more common in units where sexual harassment is prevalent.

Do you agree with the premise that units with a command climate that tolerates sexual harassment are more likely to have increased incidents of sexual assault?

Yes. In my view, leaders play a critical role in ensuring command climates that foster dignity and respect. Therefore, we must hold leaders appropriately accountable for maintaining organizations where sexual harassment and sexual assault are not tolerated.

In your view, do National Guard and Reserve commanders have the tools needed to address sexual harassment in National Guard and Reserve units?

Based upon my previous service as a Wing Commander and the Air Force Reserve Command Inspector General, I believe that National Guard and Reserve commanders already have the tools necessary to address complaints of harassment, including the tools required: to foster a command climate of dignity and respect, in which harassment is not tolerated; to respond to the needs of victims of harassment; and to hold offenders

accountable. However, I understand that the USD(P&R) has recently issued an update to the Department's sexual harassment policies. If confirmed, I will review these new policies and collaborate with the appropriate DoD officials to ensure Reserve Component leaders have the necessary tools to address this serious problem.

Transgender Service Members

If confirmed, what would be your role in the implementation of the Administration's policy on the service of transgender individuals in the armed forces?

If confirmed, I would support the USD (P&R)'s implementation of the Department's transgender policy.

In your view, what would be the impact on military readiness of continued service by transgender service members who receive hormone or other therapy?

If confirmed, I would study the information gathered during the ongoing review that has been ordered by the Secretary of Defense, before making an informed statement on this question. Taking action to enhance the readiness and lethality of the force would be one of my preeminent responsibilities.

Do you believe it is important to issue concrete guidance for the services to push out to commanders in the field?

The issuance of clear, concrete Department-level guidance is crucial in order to ensure that the Military Departments and Services develop and promulgate cogent policy guidance for use by their commanders in the field. Such guidance must afford commanders the practical tools necessary to address situations that may arise in the field.

Religious Accommodation

U.S. military personnel routinely deploy to locations around the world where they must engage and work effectively with allies and with host-country nationals whose faiths and beliefs may be different than their own. For many other cultures, religious faith is not a purely personal and private matter; it is the foundation of their culture and society. Learning to respect the different faiths and beliefs of others, and to understand how accommodating different views can contribute to a diverse force is, some would argue, an essential skill to operational effectiveness.

In your view, do policies concerning religious accommodation in the military appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs, including individual expressions of belief, without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief?

Yes. It was my experience, while serving in the Air Force, that DoD policies concerning religious accommodation in the military appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion while avoiding infringement on the practices of those who have different religious beliefs or no religious beliefs at all.

Under current law and policy, are individual expressions of belief accommodated so long as they do not impact unit cohesion and good order and discipline?

It is my understanding that, under current law and policy, individual expressions of belief are to be accommodated in such a way that they do not have an adverse impact on unit cohesion and good order and discipline.

In your view, does a military climate that welcomes and respects open and candid discussions about personal religious faith and beliefs in a garrison environment contribute in a positive way to preparing U.S. forces to be effective in overseas assignments?

Yes. I believe that a military climate that fosters open and candid discussions about personal religious faith and beliefs in a respectful manner enhances the effectiveness of U.S. forces serving in any environment, especially overseas.

Do you believe that allowing service members of certain faiths, such as Sikh, Orthodox Judaism, or Islam, to maintain beards or wear turbans or other religious headwear, while in uniform, would strengthen or weaken the U.S. military's standing in areas of the world where such religions predominate? Would such allowance help or hurt our coordination and engagement with such foreign nations?

Our country's strength is derived from the diversity of our people. The right of all U.S. Service members to freely exercise their religion or to exercise no religion at all, including the ability to request and receive accommodations that do not adversely impact safety or mission accomplishment, strengthens the U.S. military's standing in the world and enhances our coordination and engagement with foreign nations. In specific cases, I would defer to the Military Services to determine whether an accommodation can be granted without adversely impacting safety or mission accomplishment.

Would a policy that discourages open discussions about personal faith and beliefs be more or less effective at preparing service members to work and operate in a pluralistic environment?

In my opinion, any policy that restricts respectful and appropriate discussions about personal faith and beliefs makes Service members less effective in a pluralistic environment. Unit cohesion depends upon trust and openness; policies that discourage Service members from openly and respectfully discussing their personal faith can erode unit cohesion.

In your view, when performing official military duties outside a worship service, should military chaplains be encouraged to express their personal religious beliefs and tenets of their faith freely, or must they avoid making statements based on their religious beliefs?

It is my understanding that DoD policies provide guidance to chaplains on supporting the spiritual well-being and free exercise of religion in a pluralistic military setting. Pursuant to those policies, chaplains have the same right to the free exercise of their religion, including respectfully expressing their beliefs, that all Service members possess.

Do you believe chaplains should be tasked with conducting non-religious training in front of mandatory formations, even if they may be uniquely qualified to speak on the particular topic, such as suicide prevention or substance abuse? If so, do you believe guidance provided to those chaplains on what they should and should not say with respect to their faith is adequate?

The chaplain is the commander's principal staff officer charged with ensuring that each member of the command has access to the free exercise of their religion. The chaplain is also the principal advisor to the commander on the impact of religion on mission accomplishment. In my view, chaplain participation in non-religious training in mandatory formations is best decided at the unit level, after consideration of the specific facts and circumstances at issue, including any special training or expertise that the chaplain may possess. It is my understanding that the guidance provided to chaplains regarding their freedom of speech is adequate.

Personnel System Reforms

The Committee has conducted a series of hearings over the last several years on reforming the Department of Defense. A number of witnesses called for reforms to the Pentagon's personnel management system to ensure we recruit and retain the best and the brightest to work for the nation's defense.

If confirmed, what would be your priorities with regard to military personnel management?

If confirmed, my priorities with regard to military personnel management will align with those of the USD(P&R) and will focus on improving the personnel readiness, lethality, and capability of the force.

Do you believe that the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) and the Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA) need to be updated to better reflect the national security challenges that we face today and will face in the future?

Yes. DOPMA and ROPMA have served the Department well for years. However, as one would expect, there are certainly elements that could benefit from modernization.

One of the explicit goals of DOPMA was to create a perpetually “young and vigorous” officer corps, capable of leading large maneuver units. As warfare has grown increasingly technical, what goals should a modernized officer personnel management system seek to accomplish?

I believe that the armed forces continue to need an officer corps capable of leading large maneuver units and that we do need to retain the ability to create “young and vigorous” officers. At the same time, it is essential that we take action to ensure that our personnel management system allows us to attract, recruit, develop, and retain officers with the technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century.

In your judgement, do the services have adequate flexibility to manage their officer personnel in a manner that best achieves their respective missions?

Overall, I believe the Services manage their officers well, but I also believe greater flexibility will allow them to better manage their officer talent pool in a manner that is best suited to their new missions and respective Service cultures.

What do you believe is the biggest deterrent to young people considering a career in the military today?

From my perspective, there should be no deterrent for qualified young Americans to consider a career in the military. However, times have changed and the lack of knowledge about the military lifestyle and the benefits available for those who serve, along with the demanding physical fitness standards, hinder our ability to entice young people to consider a career in the military today. In addition, a general lack of youth exposure to family and adult leaders who served, together with exaggerated portrayals of military members in the media, also contribute to misperceptions about the reality of military service. The Department has multiple avenues to tell our story to the American public. It is my understanding that Manpower and Reserve Affairs leverages the Reserve Component to connect with local communities with programs like Innovative Readiness Training, which provides military training and readiness while addressing public and civil-society needs. Additionally, the National Guard Youth Challenge, STARBASE, and JROTC programs are instrumental in this endeavor as well. If confirmed, I will evaluate these programs and ensure we maximize their potential in our communities.

Active/Reserve Permeability

Congress chartered the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves “to assess the reserve component of the U.S. military and to recommend changes to ensure that the National Guard and other reserve components are organized, trained, equipped, compensated, and supported to best meet the needs of U.S. national security.” One of their

recommendations stated that the Department of Defense should merge DOPMA and ROPMA into “a single system, modified to base advancement on achievement of competencies.”

Do you believe consolidating DOPMA and ROPMA into an integrated officer personnel management system would be useful to the Department?

Yes.

Would a single officer personnel management system facilitate increased permeability between active and reserve components, thereby allowing officers to repeatedly transition between active and reserve service?

Yes, I believe it would.

What would be the desired outcome of an integrated active and reserve component officer military personnel system?

With an integrated Active and Reserve Component officer military personnel system, greater efficiency could be achieved during transition from one component to another. This added permeability would lead to greater flexibility for both the Service and the officer and would create a continuum of service culture.

Are there other legislative or policy changes that would facilitate the transition of officers between active and reserve service?

I believe both legislative and policy changes will be required to better facilitate the transition of officers between Active and Reserve service. If confirmed, I will consult with the Department’s subject matter experts, along with the Joint Staff, Service Chiefs, and Reserve Component leadership, to determine what additional legislative or policy changes are needed, and will make recommendations to the USD(P&R) and the Secretary of Defense in this regard.

In your view, what are the pros and cons of a single commission for active and reserve service?

I believe it is worth examining to determine if we still need separate Active and Reserve commissions. A single commission could reduce administrative inefficiencies and improve permeability. However, the Reserve Component is an All-Volunteer Force and we want to encourage volunteerism while being mindful that Reservists do not expect to be perpetually called to active duty. Unlike their Active counterparts, Reserve officers have civilian careers with civilian employers, and they have to maintain a balance between military service and civilian responsibilities. If confirmed, I would need to ensure our policies support permeability and encourage volunteerism, without putting undue stresses on the individual guard and reserve member or the Reserve Components as a whole.

Do you believe that the multiple reserve duty statuses need to be consolidated and streamlined?

Yes, I do. While working on the Reserve Forces Policy Board, our organization advocated for and worked with USD(P&R) and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs to reduce the number of duty statuses in order to simplify personnel management for our Reserve Component personnel, and make pay and benefits more equitable in accordance with the nature of the duties being performed.

Military Pay and Allowances

The Department of Defense has traditionally compared Regular Military Compensation against comparable civilian salaries to devise a percentile as a way to assess the relative attractiveness of military pay versus civilian pay.

Do you agree that the primary purpose of a competitive military pay and benefit package is to recruit and retain a military of sufficient size and quality to meet national defense objectives?

Yes. Competitive military pay and benefits enable DoD to meet force management objectives, to include: recruiting and retaining the force, encouraging members to accept challenging and difficult to fill assignments, and motivating personnel to become more highly skilled.

What is your assessment of the adequacy of the current military pay package in achieving this goal?

It is my understanding that the current military compensation package is robust and compares favorably with the private sector.

What is your view on converting the many types of regular military compensation into a single salary system adjusted by location with a cost-of-living allowance?

If I am confirmed, I am open to considering changes to the current system. However, knowing that the current system has supported and sustained the All-Volunteer Force for many years, I would want to ensure any proposed changes are thoroughly analyzed and understood, so as not to jeopardize readiness, or our ability to recruit, retain, and sustain the force we need for the future. I also understand that the President tasked the 13th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) commission to examine a single salary system, and, if confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the commission's report and recommendations.

Does the military pay package adequately compensate individuals for their specialized skills and provide an incentive to recruit science, engineering, and other critical professionals into the military?

I am aware that in addition to the core military pay and benefits package, DoD uses special and incentive pays and bonuses to target specific recruiting and retention concerns and to incentivize the development of specific occupational skills, which would include specializations such as nuclear engineers, medical professionals, pilots, and other highly technical skills. If confirmed, I will evaluate the adequacy of these special pays and bonuses to ensure we are attracting the best talent.

Do you believe the largely “one-size-fits-all” model for military pay is still the best model considering the specialized skills our military needs to defend, fight, and deter modern conflicts?

If confirmed, I am open to considering changes to the current system and will work with the Committee to explore them. However, before proposing changes to this system, which has sustained today’s All-Volunteer Force for more than 40 years, I commit to ensuring that any proposed changes are thoroughly analyzed, so as to ensure that we do not jeopardize readiness or our ability to recruit, retain, and sustain the nation’s All-Volunteer Force.

In your judgement, would awarding a cash bonus based on individual or team performance be a useful incentive to reward top performing military personnel? How would such pay affect the ethos of service that is so important to military life?

I am aware that cash bonuses are used in the private sector to motivate performance. I am unsure how these would be used within the broader military context. If confirmed, I am open to considering bonuses for performance, but I would want to make sure that any proposal we submitted to the Committee was thoroughly studied and that it was fully consistent with the military ethos of service before self.

What changes, if any, would you recommend for the revision of military pay and benefits?

I do not have any recommended changes at this time. However, if I am confirmed, I am open to considering alternatives and will work with the Congress to support and sustain the All-Volunteer Force. I further commit to ensuring that any proposed changes or revisions are thoroughly analyzed. We must ensure that we do not jeopardize readiness or our ability to recruit, retain, and sustain the nation’s All-Volunteer Force.

Basic Allowance for Housing

This Committee has taken great interest in the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) system over the last four years. The BAH system has devolved from its original purpose of providing adequate housing to service members and their families to a system that greatly benefits officers in special circumstances and provides less of a benefit to others who are primarily lower ranking enlisted personnel.

If confirmed, will you commit to submitting a comprehensive report that addresses all elements required in section 604 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 with regard to establishing a single-salary system for members of the armed forces?

Yes. I understand that in September of last year the President tasked the 13th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) to study this issue. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the 13th QRMC has sufficient funding and resources to conduct a thorough analysis and that its report addresses all elements required by section 604.

This report, required in section 604 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, was due March 1, 2017, and still has not been submitted by the Department of Defense. The Department has decided to incorporate this review into its next Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC). The Department did not request this delay in submitting the report through a legislative proposal or communication with this Committee.

If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring the Department is in compliance with the law on matters for which you are responsible as the ASD(M&RA), including the provision of Congressionally-required reports?

Yes, I will.

If confirmed, will you commit to delivering, no later than April 1, 2018, the report required in the Joint Explanatory Statement for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, which requires the Department to deliver, as an interim step, a description of the intended work on this matter, including those elements of compensation that will be included in the review, the full scope of options with respect to the single-payer system that will be considered, the methodology by which the Department will assess the feasibility of such a change, and the expected delivery date of the QRMC?

I understand the 13th QRMC already fulfilled the requirements set forth in the Joint Explanatory Statement.

Policy Changes by the Service Secretaries

What do you believe the role of the ASD(M&RA) is with regard to changes to longstanding service personnel policies?

I believe the role of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, under the direction of the USD(P&R), is to ensure that the Military Services have the right tools to recruit and retain the best and most capable personnel, both military and civilian, to meet our operational mission requirements. In order to increase our lethality, we must pursue measures that allow for greater personnel management flexibility to place the right people in the right jobs, and keep them there in the service of our nation.

How will you balance the sometimes competing demands of the four services, while also being responsive to the Secretary of Defense?

Secretary Mattis has been clear that his priorities are the lethality and readiness of the force—which means that, if confirmed, Total Force management and personnel training will be at the top of my list of priorities. That said, I will consistently remember that each of the Services has its own culture, and that a “one-size-fits-all” solution is not always the correct answer.

What do you believe is the most appropriate role of the ASD(M&RA) in coordinating among the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the assistant service secretaries for manpower and reserve affairs?

If confirmed, I would meet regularly with the Military Department Assistant Secretaries for Manpower and Reserve Affairs to facilitate discussion and solicit advice on all key personnel issues. I would also actively seek their views and input on major policy and program initiatives, and collaborate closely with them on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest, all with a view towards working together for the good of the Department and its personnel.

In your professional opinion, what is the distinction between the role of the ASD(M&RA) and the service M&RAs for policy creation, execution, and guidance issuance?

As I understand it, the role of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs is to support the USD(P&R) by developing and promulgating OSD-level policies and procedures in the domains of Total Force manpower, personnel, and reserve affairs. The role of the Military Department M&RAs is to develop and issue Service-level guidance that is consistent with law, and with DoD regulations and policies, and to execute programs in support of their individual Services and personnel accordingly. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs plays a further role in providing broad oversight of the Services’ execution of such programs.

Recruiting and Retention

The Department of Defense has indicated that approximately 25% of today's youth population is eligible for military service. This number is alarmingly low.

What are the main reasons for a small pool of individuals in the 17-24 years of age population being eligible for service?

It is my understanding that obesity, failure of physical fitness standards, and other medical conditions are the reasons for the small pool of eligible youth candidates.

What impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the armed forces have on the number of individuals eligible for military service? If confirmed, what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for military service without degrading the quality of recruits?

According to information I have read, only 29 percent of today's youth meet the standards for military service without a waiver. I believe the Services periodically review Service enlistment standards, including medical standards, to ensure these standards are still relevant and in the best interest of the Service and future service members. However, if confirmed, I will work with the Services to review and, as appropriate, modify these standards to ensure we recruit a force capable of meeting the Department's current and future missions.

In your view, should the existing medical and other qualifications for enlistment be changed to accommodate certain new specialties, such as cyber or remotely-piloted aircraft pilots?

During my time in the military, enlistment standards were appropriate and allowed the Services to accomplish their missions by recruiting a diverse force drawn from the best youth. However, in today's recruiting environment, considering lateral accessions for critically needed technical fields is an option that should be studied. If confirmed, I will work with USD(P&R), the Military Departments and Services, and the Surgeons General to thoroughly vet the idea of modifying existing medical and other qualifications in order to fill essential new specialties.

What is your view of increasing the number of individuals eligible for service by recruiting individuals who are older than the typical core recruiting demographic?

As I understand it, current authorities allow the Services to enlist individuals between the ages of 17 and 42. If confirmed, I will explore all options in order to expand the pool of qualified, eligible recruits.

Some services have recently relaxed grooming and appearance standards. In your view, how will this impact recruiting and retention?

Responsibility for grooming and appearance standards rests with the Services. I believe that each Service is best positioned to determine what standards are appropriate to ensure its members meet mission and training requirements. Therefore, I am confident that each Service carefully considers any proposed modification of its standards, and the possible implications the modification may have on recruiting and retention, before making a change.

What policies or tools are needed by the Department to increase the propensity to serve of today's youth?

To improve propensity we must change misperceptions of what it means to serve in the military. Fewer Americans have a personal connection to the military than at any time in the past several decades, and the gap between the American people and their military continues to grow wider. This disconnect is compounded by the fact that both the number of youth qualified for military service and the relative propensity for youth to serve are low. We need to reconnect America with what military service really means.

To overcome these hurdles and increase propensity, the Department must maintain a strong, effective, and efficient marketing program. Successful engagement of potential applicants and their influencers can only be achieved through active multimedia campaigns and engagements that bridge knowledge gaps, correct misperceptions, and reinforce a consistent, positive message about military service. In order to ensure these campaigns are successful, we must leverage social media and other technologies to connect with today's youth in new and modern ways that best appeal to a new and modern generation.

Finally, as a product of Junior ROTC and ROTC, I believe that it would be worth researching whether expanding these programs, as well as our Civil Military Programs like Innovative Readiness Training, STARBASE, and National Guard Youth Challenge, would help as well.

What do you believe is the appropriate role of the ASD(M&RA) in overseeing service recruiting policies, budgets, and procedures?

If confirmed, I believe my role would be to provide broad oversight of Service recruiting policies, budgets, and procedures to help ensure recruiting goals and objectives are met.

If confirmed, I will review the Department's recruiting programs to ensure current funding and policies align with the realities of today's youth market, and that the Services have the resources and support they need to continue to successfully man the All-Volunteer Force with a diverse cross-section of the best and brightest of America's youth.

Despite recent legislative efforts to ensure military recruiters have access to high schools, the Committee continues to hear reports of recruiters being denied permission to recruit on high school campuses. What is your assessment of the extent of this problem, and do you have any recommendations to further improve military recruiters' access to high schools?

I am unfamiliar with this problem; therefore, I cannot give you my assessment of the extent of the concern or provide you with recommendations to resolve it. If confirmed, I will commit to investigating the extent of the problem and, if necessary, taking appropriate steps to improve recruiter access.

Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) Program

If confirmed, would you recommend the continuation of the MAVNI program and the acceptance of new applicants? If so, what reforms, if any, would you recommend to ensure that the benefits of the program – recruiting those with critical skills and language/cultural backgrounds – outweigh the costs associated with conducting proper security screening of participants?

MAVNI recruits can bring valuable skills, background, and experiences to the military. We must ensure, however, that we conduct adequate security screening to protect the force and the mission. If confirmed, I will carefully review this program and recommend policies crafted to provide proper guidance and clarity, both to the Department and to those who desire to serve in our country's armed forces.

If confirmed, would you commit to conducting oversight over the services' use of programs like MAVNI to ensure they are conducted in accordance with their intended use under the law?

Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretaries of the Military Departments to ensure that accessions are matched to critical manpower gaps and operational requirements.

If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you take to address the issue of MAVNI recruits' legal status expiring while they await entry into active duty?

If confirmed, I will consult with the General Counsel of the Department of Defense, other DoD and Service leaders, as well as senior leaders and experts in the Departments of State and Homeland Security to address this important issue.

Mobilization and Demobilization of National Guard and Reserves

Over the past 15 years, the National Guard and Reserves have experienced their largest and most sustained employment since World War II. Reserve force management policies and systems have been characterized in the past as “inefficient and rigid” and readiness levels have been adversely affected by equipment stay-behind, cross-leveling, and reset policies.

What is your assessment of advances made in improving reserve component mobilization and demobilization procedures, and in what areas do problems still exist?

From my perspective, the Department has made great strides in improving mobilization and demobilization processes since I served in the Air Force Reserve. I am aware that new legislative authorities have enhanced the Department’s ability to leverage the Reserve Component for domestic emergencies and rotational Combatant Command requirements. In addition, programs like the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and Transition Assistance Program assist the Reserve Component member and their families during all phases of deployment. If confirmed, I will continue the Department’s efforts to improve mobilization and demobilization procedures in support of the Total Force.

What do you consider to be the most significant enduring changes to the administration of the reserve components aimed at ensuring their readiness for future mobilization requirements?

In my role as the Military Executive on the Reserve Forces Policy Board, I wrote and spoke often about the evolution of the Reserve Components from a strategic to an operational force; a force that the Active Component relies on today to accomplish missions ranging from domestic emergencies to major combat operations. Due to the steady demand for combat ready forces from the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom to today, these Reserve Component members are the most combat ready they have ever been. This status is due to the hard work of visionary leaders who worked very hard to identify gaps and improve Reserve Component readiness across all Services. Given the increased dependence and steady state usage of the Guard and Reserve, I believe stable funding and the integration of training with the Active Component are critical, not only to maintain the current levels of interoperability and readiness, but to increase these capabilities to meet future requirements.

What do you consider to be the driving factor in place when National Guard and Reserve units are not ready for mobilization?

From my previous experience, I would say medical readiness (specifically dental readiness) is the primary reason for Reserve Component units not being ready for mobilization. However, if confirmed, I will work closely with the Reserve Component leaders to verify and/or correctly identify all key factors that impact their readiness and ability to rapidly mobilize.

Do you see a need to modify current statutory authorities for the mobilization of members of the National Guard and Reserves?

Yes. There are too many Reserve Component duty status categories. Too many duty status categories lead to pay and benefit inequities, disruption in pay and benefits, and confusion by gaining command personnel, which result in difficult, untimely accessions of Reserve Component members. This problem has been addressed in the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve's 2008 report to Congress, the 2011 report of the 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, and the Reserve Forces Policy Board's 2013 report, Reserve Component Duty Status Reform. I understand that since my time working for the Reserve Forces Policy Board, DoD has been directed to submit detailed legislation to the Congress on implementing Reserve Component Duty Status Reform. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the on-going work of the Department, and ensuring that this legislation is submitted to the Committee in a timely manner.

What is your assessment of the Department of Defense programs to assist members of the National Guard and Reserves as they transition from a mobilized status?

As a former Reserve Wing Commander, I can attest to the value of programs like the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, and the Transition Assistance Program. If confirmed, I will review these programs to ensure they continue to be effective and useful.

In your assessment, do we have an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or a mix of both? Please explain your answer.

We have a reserve force that has been historically strategic in nature, but since 9/11 has evolved into an operational force with capabilities and capacity increasingly relied upon by the Active Component to regularly and predictably meet global requirements. It is my understanding that since 9/11, almost 1 million members of the Guard and Reserve have answered the call and mobilized in support of military operations. With almost 38,000 Service members, from all seven of the Reserve Components, activated and on duty today, I would say that we clearly have a portion of the force that remains operational. However, I must confess that there is a portion of the Reserves that remains, for now, strategic (Individual Ready Reserve, Retired Reserve, etc.) Thus, it could be fairly stated that we have a mix of both strategic and operational reserve forces.

Operationally, the Reserve Component maintains warfighting skills, supports AC/RC permeability, and provides appropriate career development opportunities for Service members. Strategically, the Reserve Component allows the Services to retain cost effective warfighting capabilities, retain talent, and recapture already expended training investments.

Readiness

In your view, what are the most significant challenges to the current readiness of our armed forces?

An absence of reliable and predictable funding to keep our forces properly trained and ready are challenges which immediately come to mind. Readiness is a priority for the Secretary of Defense and the Department as a whole. It is my understanding that each Service has its own unique readiness challenges. If confirmed, I will work to better understand these unique challenges as they relate to the portfolio of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

What is your assessment of the impacts and challenges to the Department of Defense's readiness as a result of the Budget Control Act and repeated continuing resolutions?

In my view, the Budget Control Act and nine years of continuing resolutions have had a detrimental impact on DoD's readiness. I believe that stable, predictable, and adequate funding is required to address the ever-increasing challenges the Department is facing.

What are the most critical objectives to improve readiness reporting and monitoring of the military forces, and, if confirmed, how would you work with the military departments, as well as other Office of the Secretary of Defense offices, to achieve them?

As I understand it, readiness reporting falls under the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness. If confirmed, I will work closely with that office to better understand this process, and to ensure that the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs is participating in, and informing that process, as appropriate.

Military Quality of Life

The Committee remains concerned about the sustainment of key quality of life programs for military families, such as family support, child care, education, employment support, health care, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) services, especially as the Department of Defense's budget declines. The services have, for several years, failed to meet the minimum appropriated funding standard, as required by Department policy, for certain MWR programs.

If confirmed, what military quality of life programs would you consider a priority, and how would you work with the services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress to sustain them while eliminating some programs that may be ineffective?

If confirmed, I will focus on supporting quality of life programs that reinforce strong military families and communities. To that end, my priorities include: sustaining and enhancing prevention-based counseling services; morale, welfare, and recreation programs; and child care programs. I will work collaboratively across the Department of Defense, and with Congress and this Committee, to sustain those programs that have the greatest impact on readiness, retention, and resiliency, while ensuring good stewardship of public funds and appropriate return on investment.

What would you do to ensure that the services meet the Department’s minimum appropriated funding requirements for MWR programs?

There is a continued need to sustain vital quality of life and MWR programs that help reduce stress on Service members, their families, and survivors. Changes in Service member demographics and needs, coupled with on-going budget constraints, may necessitate that the Department periodically review and modify its standards to ensure that they continue to support Department requirements. If confirmed, I will ensure that such reviews are undertaken and enforce the funding standards determined to be appropriate.

Do you believe that the services should support MWR programs in their base budget rather than relying on dividends?

I am supportive of the longstanding symbiotic relationship between the exchanges and MWR programs. The knowledge that exchange dividend payments support MWR programs is an important component of military culture. I do not believe that NAF exchange dividends, which are “Service member dollars,” should be used to offset costs that should be funded by appropriations.

Family Readiness and Support

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for service members and their families?

I firmly believe that family readiness directly supports mission readiness. In my view, the most important family readiness issues are those that impact the readiness and retention of the Service member and as a result, impact the mission. Specifically, I know from past experience that military spouse education and employment, and access to quality child care options, can drive overall satisfaction and retention of Service members and their families and help them to manage the stressors of military life. These programs are critically important because knowing that one’s family is cared for and supported enables a Service member’s full focus on mission accomplishment.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced?

I believe the Department's continued robust emphasis on addressing family readiness issues is essential to maintaining a strong force. If confirmed, I will focus on understanding the needs of our Service members and their families and I will work with stakeholders to sustain programs that best meet those needs, while ensuring good stewardship of public resources.

If confirmed, how would you ensure support is provided to reserve component families related to mobilization, deployment, and family readiness, as well as to active duty families who do not reside near a military installation?

The Department must continue to focus on the Total Force—both Active and Reserve Component members and their families. I believe that a coordinated network of care, encompassing support and services provided by the DoD, in combination with other federal, state, local, non-profit and private entities, can be very effective in reaching and serving geographically dispersed Service members and their families. If confirmed, I will strive to leverage a full spectrum of options to support our immense and geographically dispersed population.

Department of Defense Schools in Continental United States

Some have questioned the continuing need for Defense Department-operated schools for military dependent children within the Continental United States (CONUS).

In light of the Administration's request for additional Base Realignment and Closure authorities and current fiscal constraints, should the Department of Defense establish or update its criteria for the continued operation of Department schools within CONUS?

This is a very complex issue that impacts many stakeholders: DoD (including the Military Services), military families, Congress, the Department of Education, state and local communities, and advocacy and professional groups. If confirmed, I will strive to ensure high quality education options are available for all military children, while balancing cost, and exploring all feasible options and alternatives.

Do you believe there continues to be a necessity for the Department to provide the option of secondary education for dependents of service members in CONUS? If so, why do you believe local education agencies to be inadequate?

I am mindful of the importance of a quality education and the critical role it plays in the success, stability, readiness, and retention of our Service members and their families. If confirmed, I will seek input from all stakeholders in determining the best options for providing secondary education support for military families.

If confirmed, how would you approach the task of eliminating Department-operated schools in CONUS?

I understand that the availability of quality education is a critical quality of life factor for our Service members and their families. If confirmed, I will, in consultation with stakeholders across the DoD, seek input from the military community in determining the best education options for military children. I will also consult with members of Congress and the Congressional Defense Committee, as well as the Department of Education, state and local communities, and advocacy and professional groups.

Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs

If confirmed, how would you ensure that service members with special needs family members relocate to new duty stations where special needs services are available?

If confirmed, I will fully support ongoing efforts within the Department to standardize Family Member Travel Screening procedures across all Services. As I understand it, standardization will reduce the administrative burden on families with special needs and will ensure that families with special needs have the same experience and receive the same level of service, regardless of Service-affiliation or the installation at which they are located.

If confirmed, how would you ensure outreach to those military families with special needs dependents so they are able to obtain the support they need?

If confirmed, supporting families with special needs will be one of my priorities. It is my understanding that the Department is embarking on a new outreach campaign to ensure families with special needs are aware of the many resources available through Military OneSource and at local installations.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

If confirmed, what challenges do you foresee in sustaining MWR programs in the future fiscal environment of the Department?

Based on my experience in uniform and as a dependent, I know that delivering MWR programs to Service members and their families is important. MWR programs foster physical and mental well-being and aid in readiness, recruitment, and retention of military personnel. If confirmed, I will work with stakeholders across the Department to sustain these vital quality of life programs, while ensuring good stewardship of public funds.

Commissary and Military Exchange Systems

What is your view of the need for modernization of business policies and practices in the commissary and exchange systems?

Although I do not have specific details, I am aware that the Department has been examining the commissary and exchange systems with a view to reducing their reliance on appropriated funds. I recognize the importance of the commissary and exchange systems to DoD beneficiaries and, if confirmed, will work steadfastly to preserve the value of these benefits for our Service members and their families, while ensuring good stewardship of public funds.

What are the most promising avenues for change to achieve modernization goals?

It is my understanding that the Department has made great progress in transforming commissary business operations, in a very short period of time. If confirmed, I will study the current structure and explore whether there are better ways to achieve modernization goals.

What should the Department do to make the commissary system more self-sustaining?

Common sense tells me that transforming commissary business operations will be complex and any modifications identified will require time to mature. At this time, I have limited information on this issue. However, if confirmed, I will assess current commissary operations in order to identify opportunities to reduce the commissary's reliance on appropriated funding.

What is your view of proposals to consolidate, eliminate or privatize commissaries and exchanges in certain areas where they are duplicative of services readily available at reasonable cost in the community?

Based on my personal experience, I believe the commissary and exchange programs are essential elements of a Service member's compensation package, contributing to both the quality of life and sense of community for the Service member and his or her family. If confirmed, I will evaluate all options to optimize these benefits.

If confirmed, would you support conducting a pilot program to test the business case for allowing a private company to run a commissary on base?

I understand that the Department remains committed to preserving and optimizing the commissary benefit to preserve the levels of savings and service the commissary affords our Service members and their families. If confirmed, I am open to assessing whether the value afforded by the commissary and the exchanges could be provided in a different way, with the understanding that Service member and family access to the benefit must be preserved.

Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Workforce

As the Department of Defense draws down its management headquarters functions, managers will have to make tough choices on the consolidation of functions and employees.

What is your view of a civilian employee retention system that incentivizes performance above all other factors when considering which employees to retain in a limited headquarters environment?

Although I support efforts to draw down DoD's headquarters and eliminate bureaucracy, I recognize that the majority of our civilian workforce is not headquarters-based. Rather, the DoD civilian workforce is fully engaged in performing critical readiness enabling and warfighter/family support work in locations around the globe. However, that said, performance should be the ultimate measure of success for any individual or organization. It is my understanding that the Department currently uses performance as the primary factor in the retention of civilian employees in a reduction in force. Such a system gives the Department the ability to retain those employees who most contribute to mission accomplishment.

If confirmed, what would be your role in the consolidation and elimination of duplicative and unnecessary positions within the Office of the Secretary of Defense?

I understand that the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs has already consolidated or eliminated a significant number of duplicative and unnecessary positions by reorganizing and delayering. If confirmed, I will make appropriate recommendations for the elimination of any additional duplicative and unnecessary positions.

What additional ideas do you have to more efficiently manage the Department's civilian employees?

I believe the DoD's civilian workforce is a key enabler of operational readiness and warfighting capability. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department has a civilian workforce that is appropriately sized to complement and enable our military capabilities, and provide critical support to the warfighter. I will also work with all appropriate stakeholders to make sure the policies and processes associated with managing our critical civilian workforce are flexible, adaptive, and structured for the 21st Century.

Do you feel the new performance management system will properly address the issue of employee performance reviews and ratings?

Although I currently do not have enough information about the Department's performance management system to make an assessment, if confirmed, I will ensure that the Department's performance management system furthers the development of an efficient and effective civilian workforce, with a view to enhancing the readiness and lethality of our military.

What, if anything, would you improve about the performance management system?

I do not have enough information about the Department's performance management system at this time to make an assessment, but if confirmed, I will review the system to determine what, if any, improvements should be made.

Do managers have adequate tools to incentivize employee performance?

I do not have enough information about all of the incentive tools available to Department of Defense managers to make an assessment at this time. If confirmed, I will review the tools currently in place and, as necessary, work with DoD leadership and Congress to support more effective tools and flexibilities.

What is your opinion of a renewable term appointment system for new employees rather than the current tenure system?

If confirmed, I would consider alternative civilian personnel systems that help make the civilian personnel system more flexible and adaptive, and would work with the Congress and this Committee to support any efforts to improve management of the civilian workforce.

What workforce flexibilities would you like to have at your disposal?

I do not have enough information about the Department's existing workforce flexibilities to respond properly at this time. However, if confirmed, I will review the usage and effectiveness of all workforce flexibilities, determine what, if any, additional flexibilities would be necessary or helpful to increase force readiness and lethality, and make appropriate recommendations to pursue them, either in policy or by working with Congress.

Acquisition Workforce

The Department of Defense acquisition workforce has been the subject of a large quantity of reports and legislation.

In what ways can we better train military personnel to be acquisition professionals?

I believe that an adequately trained acquisition workforce, both military and civilian, is crucial in order to meet current and future needs in support of our warfighters. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts in the Office of the Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment and the Office of the Under Secretary for Research and Engineering, to ensure the Department has a robust, trained, balanced, and professional corps of acquisition professionals. I will also work with Service stakeholders to make sure that career development and training pipelines, and professional development opportunities for acquisition professionals are appropriately considered.

How can acquisition workforce management policies be modified to make leaders accountable for cost overruns on procurement contracts?

I believe proactive and prudent steps need to be taken to minimize cost overruns, and hold individuals appropriately accountable. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts across the Department to determine how policies and procedures governing the performance of the acquisition workforce might factor in appropriate accountability for cost overruns.

In your judgement, how should program offices decide which tasks are best accomplished by government employees, military personnel, and support contractors?

I believe that optimal workforce mixes are as diverse as our challenges; the “right” Total Force mix is something that has to be achieved at the individual manager/command level. DoD has policies that govern workforce mix and the alignment of work between military personnel, government civilians, and contract support. If confirmed, I will work with the appropriate stakeholders across the Department to review such policies and ensure that they are implemented to promote the readiness and lethality of the force in the most appropriate and cost-effective way.

GI Bill Benefits

Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act in 2008 (“Post-9/11 GI Bill”) that provides generous educational benefits for service members who have served at least 90 days on active duty since 9/11.

What is your assessment of the impact of the Post-9/11 GI Bill on recruiting and retention, including the provision of transferability for continued service?

I do not have access to the information needed to provide you with an informed answer. However, from my personal experience, I have used the provision of transferability for my family. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department has conducted an appropriate analysis of the impacts of Post-9/11 GI Bill transferability on recruiting and retention.

Would you recommend that the Department of Defense use transferability more sparingly as a retention incentive?

I do not presently have enough information to determine the extent to which Post-9/11 GI Bill transferability affects recruiting or retention. That said, I am committed to ensuring the Department is vigilant in guarding against options that might compromise elements of this important program. If confirmed, I will actively engage with experts and stakeholders inside and outside the Department to ensure that any issues with regard to the use of this benefit are properly addressed.

Personnel Policy Implementation

What is your understanding of your responsibility, if confirmed, to inform and consult with this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress on the implementation of policies directed by law?

It will be my responsibility, if confirmed, to inform and consult with this Committee and other appropriate Committees of Congress, on a regular basis, on the Department's implementation and oversight of policies directed by law.

What is your understanding of the Department of Defense's obligation and authority to implement personnel policies to improve efficiency within the Department?

Implementing personnel policies that improve efficiency within the Department is extremely important from both a legal and moral perspective, and if I am confirmed, this will be one of my top priorities.

What is your understanding on the timeframe in which personnel policies directed by law must be implemented by the Department?

I understand that there are specific timeframes prescribed by Congress in law within which various policies must be implemented. If confirmed, implementing all policies within the timeframes directed by law and updating this Committee and other appropriate Congressional Committees on the implementation status of such policies will be a key focus area for me.

Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF)

For nearly ten years, the DAWDF has been used by the Navy to support hiring and training of acquisition professionals. This is a work-around to traditional budgeting processes which leads to issues with respect to appropriations and transparent budgeting for the costs. Recent acquisition reform activities have attempted to give more responsibility to the services for their acquisition programs and efforts, including their workforces, while holding them accountable for their decision, priorities, and outcomes.

Do you think that the Navy should be held responsible to budget for costs for the hiring and training of acquisition professionals as part of the traditional Navy budget development and request process, rather than using the DAWDF authority?

I do not have enough information about this matter to provide an informed response at this time. If confirmed, I will work with appropriate officials across the Department to address any concerns in this area.

What would be the advantages and disadvantages of applying a more traditional budgeting approach for the acquisition workforce in terms of the Navy's visibility into costs and its ability to plan for the future of its acquisition workforce?

I am not familiar enough with these matters to provide an informed opinion at this time. However, if confirmed, I will work with appropriate officials across the Department to address any concerns in this area and support changes that may be required by policies/procedures under the purview of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Laboratory, Science and Technology, and Test Range STEM Personnel

Congress has authorized Navy laboratories, test ranges, and some research agencies (such as the Office of Naval Research) to execute personnel systems that provide them with greater flexibility in hiring, pay setting, promotions, and other matters. These have been used successfully to help the Department of Defense compete with the private sector for a very limited supply of clearable STEM talent. The Committee has expressed concern over the years that the Office of the Secretary of Defense and other service personnel management offices have not been supportive of efforts to make maximum use of these flexibilities, or to permit their execution by local lab, test range, or agency directors.

If confirmed, will you commit to support the maximum use of personnel flexibilities that are provided by Congress to improve the quality of the Department of Defense's STEM workforce?

If confirmed, I will work with all stakeholders to ensure that all available personnel flexibilities are used, as needed and appropriate, to recruit, engage, and retain the Department's STEM workforce.

If confirmed, will you consider authorizing local officials to use these flexibilities, so they can be exercised with the speed necessary to compete with private sector hiring practices and without unnecessary delay and additional cost?

If confirmed, I will work with all stakeholders to ensure that the use of personnel flexibilities is delegated, as necessary, to the most appropriate level in any organization so they can be used in the most expeditious and efficient manner possible.

STEM Educational Opportunities for Military Dependents

Military children face greater challenges than many of their peers due to frequent relocations, parental deployments, and school quality. Improving the quality of STEM educational opportunities for children of service members will probably help improve retention rates among uniformed personnel, serve to address the needs of military

dependents, and improve the STEM education and technical skills of this population of children, who are more likely to serve in the armed forces than their non-military peers.

What role do you think the services should play in supporting STEM educational opportunities for military children?

I understand the importance of providing academic opportunities for military children to study in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. I agree that our military children are more likely to serve in the armed forces of tomorrow and that we should do all in our power to ensure that they are ready to deliver the innovative solutions that will be necessary to counter future defense challenges. To that end, I believe that the Services, in partnership with the Department of Defense, should continue to encourage the pursuit of high quality STEM education for all military children.

How will you work with the Department of Defense research and development organizations to increase STEM educational opportunities for children of military personnel?

If confirmed, I will bring together and consult with all appropriate Department of Defense organizations to foster efforts to work together to provide high quality STEM educational opportunities for the children of military personnel.

Congressional Oversight

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

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress?

Yes

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the ASD(M&RA)?

Yes

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate committees in a timely manner?

Yes

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

Yes

Do you agree to answer letters and requests for information from individual Senators who are members of this Committee?

Yes

If confirmed, do you agree to provide to this Committee relevant information within the jurisdictional oversight of the Committee when requested by the Committee, even in the absence of the formality of a letter from the Chairman?

Yes