

Advance Policy Questions for Robert P. Kadlec
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs

Duties & Qualifications

Section 138 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs (ASD(NDCB)) shall be the principal civilian adviser to the Secretary of Defense on nuclear deterrence policies, operations, and associated programs within the senior management of the Department of Defense, and shall supervise Department of Defense nuclear deterrence policy, resources, and activities.

1. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the ASD(ND-CBD)?

The ASW(ND-CBD) is responsible for advising and assisting the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretary of War for Policy, and the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment on all matters relating to the sustainment, operation, and modernization of U.S. nuclear forces as defined by section 499c of title 10 of U.S. Code. This responsibility includes the development and supervision of policy, program planning and execution, and allocation and use of resources on such matters, and the oversight of portfolio management of the nuclear forces portfolio.

The ASW(ND-CBD) also serves as the Staff Director of the Nuclear Weapons Council, the principal interface between the Department of War and Department of Energy on issues relating to nuclear fuels, and an advisor to the Secretary of War on nuclear energy matters.

In addition to nuclear deterrence policy and programs, the ASW(ND-CBD) advises and assists the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretary of War for Policy, and the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment on all matters relating to the defense against chemical and biological weapons and countering weapons of mass destruction.

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

I have a total of 41 years of U.S. military, congressional and federal executive service serving in leadership roles. The overwhelming majority of this time was devoted to medical, operational and policy issues posed by the threat of Chemical, Biological, Radiological & Nuclear (CBRN) weapons. I have served with frontline U.S. Air Force and joint special operations units, have 5 combat deployments and participated in numerous special operation exercises and real-world missions. I served with the clandestine service of the U.S. Intelligence Community and on the Senate Select Intelligence Committee. I have held leadership positions in the U.S. Senate as a subcommittee staff director and full committee deputy staff director. I have served at the White House twice. First as a Director for Biodefense Response on the Homeland Security Council and then as the Senior Director and Special Assistant for Chemical and Biodefense for President

Bush following the 2001 9/11 terrorist and anthrax attacks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I led the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and U.S. interagency medical response and co-conceived OPERATION WAR SPEED to develop life-saving vaccines and therapeutics.

I began my military career in 1975 at the height of the Cold War and was indoctrinated in the strategic theories of deterrence through Mutually Assured Destruction, Flexible Response, countervalue and counterforce targeting. After graduating from the Air Force Academy, I attended the military medical school at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Upon graduation, I began general surgery training but deferred residency training to serve as a flight surgeon. I volunteered for an assignment with the 1st Special Operations Wing. My 4-year assignment was heavily influenced by the failed Iran DESERT ONE raid, the Holloway Commission Report and integration of special operations into general war planning against the Soviet Union. In 1985 the Defense Science Board (DSB) visited the Wing to evaluate the unit's ability to fly fight and win in a CBRN environment. As a consequence of the DSB visit, I was designated by the Wing operational commander as the medical lead an effort to advance the Wing's CBRN readiness posture. I attended a variety of CBRN military and medical courses to become expert in the medical, physical and operational effects of CBRN use.

This experience would define my future professional path and medical training. I completed a residency in Military Preventive Medicine at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research with a focus on tropical disease. I earned a Master's in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, I am board certified in Aerospace and Preventive Medicine and Public Health.

My assignment after my residency was to an Air Force Special Tactics Squadron at Pope AFB. I reported to duty the day before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Because of the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the commanding general detailed me and another Army special operator to the Pentagon to participate in an interagency intelligence working group. This group assessed Iraq's CBRN threat and assisted in the military planning to deter, defend and defeat Iraq's CBRN capabilities. The success of these collective efforts was recognized by the Director of CIA with a Meritorious Unit Award. I deployed during OPERATION DESERT STORM in support of counter-SCUD operations. I participated in the first SOCOM WMD cell, supported joint special operations intelligence as a subject matter expert and led CBRN medical preparedness in addition to my unit surgeon responsibilities.

My follow-on assignment was to the Office of Secretary of Defense's (OSD) first Counterproliferation Policy Office under Assistant Secretary for International Policy Ash Carter. In addition to being a Pentagon staff policy officer, I served as the OSD representative to the Biological Weapons Convention and United Nations Special Commission Weapons Inspector conducting biological, nuclear and advanced weapon (UAV) inspections in 1994, 1996, and 1998 respectively.

From OSD, I was assigned as one of the first USSOCOM detailees to the CIA. I served three years in the Counterproliferation Division supporting intelligence activities.

Following my assignment at Langley, I taught Homeland Security and WMD policy (including deterrence theory) to future U.S. military flag officers and civilian senior executive service

officials at the National War College. When the 911 attacks occurred, I was detailed to the White House Homeland Security Council as a Director for Biodefense Preparedness and Response from January 2002 to March 2005. I led interagency adaptive medical and public health planning for CBRN terrorist threats including the detonation of an improvised nuclear device. During my time at the White House, I also deployed 4 times to Iraq in support of the search of WMD specifically the smallpox virus. I co-drafted President Bush's national and homeland security directive on biodefense (NSPD-33/HSPD-33).

After my military retirement, I served as the staff director for the Senate HELP subcommittee on Bioterrorism and Public Health Preparedness. In that capacity I assisted in the passage of the 2005 Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PL-109-148) and drafted the Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PL109-217). Both became law in 2005 and 2006 respectively. I would later return to the Senate as the deputy staff director for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence before being nominated by President Trump in his first term as the HHS Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

During my tenure as ASPR, we responded to several major Hurricanes including HARVEY, IRMA and MARIA. I participated in adaptive planning with Department of State and DoW (INDOPACOM) for possible noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO) and nuclear preparedness and response in Hawaii. In 2019 as part of comprehensive review and update the HHS pandemic plan oversaw the evaluation of the Strategic National Stockpile, the Centers for Innovation, Advanced Development and Manufacturing (CIADM) and conducted the largest interagency pandemic influenza exercise (CRIMSON CONTAGION). This functional exercise involved 12 states, all of HHS and the federal interagency and was conducted over 8 months ending with a national exercise in August 2019.

I led the HHS and interagency medical response to the COVID-19 pandemic. My specific responsibilities included leading the interagency effort for National Response Plan Emergency Support Function #8 (Medical and Public Health), oversight and management of the Strategic National Stockpile and oversight and management of advanced development, manufacture and procurement of vaccines and therapeutics against COVID-19. I managed a total budget of approximately \$250 B of which \$26 B was for OPERATION WARP SPEED other significant monies were devoted to major procurement activities and industrial base expansion and modernization. WARP SPEED that was modeled after the World War II's Manhattan Project to accelerate the development and delivery of a nuclear weapon. WARP SPEED successfully accelerated the development, production and distribution of safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics in an unprecedented timeframe.

After I completed my tenure at HHS, I returned to the Senate as a HELP Committee professional staff and conducted a bipartisan unclassified investigation of the origins of the COVID virus and pandemic. I managed an 8-person staff and conducted an 18-month study showing that a preponderance of evidence supported a research related incident.

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

U.S. Air Force and Joint Special operations flight surgeon: Supervised and trained U.S. Air Force medical technicians, pararescuemen combat controllers in basic and advanced medical lifesaving techniques for traumatic and CBRN related injuries in CBRN environments. Supported and participated in selection of military personnel for assignment to elite special operations units. Provided direct medical care to spouses and children of unit personnel.

Staff Director Senate HELP Subcommittee: managed 6 person staff responsible for conducting member hearings, briefings, roundtables and exercises devoted to all-hazard medical and preparedness. Drafted legislation and negotiated provisions with congressional staffs and members. Worked with outside interest groups and non-governmental entities to review and solicit inputs to draft legislative proposals.

Senior Director and Special Assistant to the President: Managed 7-person professional White House staff and department detailees. Responsible for conducting interagency policy coordinating committee meetings with Office of Management and Budget, National and Homeland Security Councils, Council of Economic Advisors, Office of Science and Technology Policy and 14 federal departments and agencies. Briefed Congress on a variety of issues representing pandemic, all-hazards and CBRN threats. Briefed and advised the President on issues relating to biodefense of CBRN and pandemic threats.

Deputy Staff Director SSCI: Supervised 35 professional staff members overseeing 17 US intelligence agencies and managed, scheduled and conducted member briefings, roundtables and hearings for a portfolio of functional and regional threat topics. Functional topics included but not limited to threats from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, cyber warfare, UAVs, and missiles, space based and emerging technologies. Regional topics included the threats posed by Russia, China, North Korea and Iran.

HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness & Response: pre-COVID pandemic managed 800-person response organization with an approximate \$3 B annual budget overseeing portfolio of innovation, advanced research and development programs with an approximate annual value of \$2 B. Responded to major domestic and international public health emergencies (e.g. ebolavirus outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo). Conducted adaptive interagency planning with Departments of State and War, the U.S. Intelligence Community and international partners (Japan and South Korea)

During the COVID-19, pandemic managed 1200-person organization, executed approximately \$250 B budget, and coordinated the federal medical response of a portfolio of activities supporting state and local authorities. These activities included creating a national situational awareness analytical data base (HHS Protect), providing direct medical care, advanced development, manufacturing and distribution of diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines, supply chain management and industrial base expansion.

4. Are there any actions you would take to enhance your ability to perform the duties and exercise the powers of the ASD(NDCB) prior to confirmation?

In preparation of my confirmation hearing, I received formal briefings from the Department of War on specific roles, responsibilities and programs that would fall under my prevue.

In addition to these activities and supporting my personal preparation for my confirmation hearing, I ceased all outside for-profit consulting activities beginning in March 2025. My intent was to update my understanding of the current national security threat landscape and refresh my fund of knowledge in CBRN related current and historic policy, doctrine, programs and science focusing on the specific topics directly related to the role and responsibilities of this new position. The intent was to have a current understanding of the salient issues to be knowledgeable and conversant with the expanded portfolio of issues mandated by Congress in a confirmation hearing setting.

I dedicated a 100% of my available time to conduct a broad research-based review of the major nuclear, chemical and biological issues with particular focus on the findings and recommendations of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States and Commission on the National Defense Strategy. I performed a historical review of U.S. nuclear policy dating back to the Eisenhower Administration to the present to include recent 2018 and 2022 Nuclear Posture Reviews and National Defense Strategies. A particular emphasis was given to understand the role of the Secretaries of Defense in the Reagan and Bush Administrations. Conducted a review of relevant Congressional Research Service publications on major nuclear and WMD topics including arms control, nuclear weapons programs, the nuclear enterprise. I review recent GAO reports on relevant CBRN topics. I arranged informal conversations with former NSC, DOE, NNSA, DoW, NCB officials to glean insights and perspectives into historic and current CBRN policies and interagency coordination and integration between Departments of War and Energy. I reviewed historic reviews of Russian, Chinese, Iranian and North Korean nuclear doctrine and programs and other WMD capabilities.

The output of this effort was to create an initial prioritized strategy, should I be confirmed, to employ in my first 60 days to guide my indoctrination and in-briefs.

1. Maintain and sustain the current nuclear Triad,
2. Modernize our nuclear command and control (NC3).
3. Accelerate the development and deployment of the Sentinel ICBM, B-21 bomber, Columbia class submarine, and other critical nuclear deterrent capabilities, as well as supporting modernization of NNSA's nuclear enterprise.
4. Deploy credible capabilities to deter adversary biological weapons use.

5. If confirmed, what additional duties and responsibilities, if any, do you expect that the Secretary of Defense would prescribe for you?

If confirmed, I will be prepared to execute any additional duties and responsibilities that the Secretary may prescribe. However, I am not currently aware of any such additional duties and responsibilities.

If confirmed, you will be the first individual to hold this position and will need to navigate a unique role within the Office of the Secretary of Defense that integrates a major

mission of the Department of Defense across multiple functional and regional offices.

6. What is your understanding of the structure of the Office of the ASD(ND-CBD) and how this differs from other Assistant Secretaries?

In accordance with section 138(b)(4) of title 10, U.S. Code, the ASW(ND-CBD) uniquely has oversight of both policy and programs for nuclear deterrence and chemical and biological defense. I understand the ASW(ND-CBD) has a dual-reporting structure to both the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment and the Under Secretary of War for Policy. The ASW(ND-CBD) will report to the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment for matters pertaining to the sustainment and modernization of the United States nuclear forces and programs to develop defenses against chemical and biological weapons, and to the Under Secretary of War for Policy for matters related to the development of strategic policy guidance on nuclear weapons employment.

The Office of the ASW(ND-CBD) also has component offices that reside in both the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment and the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Policy.

If confirmed, I look forward to leveraging the unique structure of the Office of the ASW(ND-CBD) to effectively integrate policy and programs for nuclear deterrence and chemical and biological defense and ensure these issues have strong representation in both the Policy and Acquisition and Sustainment communities.

7. If confirmed, how will you balance the unique responsibilities and priorities of the Offices of the Under Secretaries of Defense for Policy and Acquisition & Sustainment, as pertains to the responsibilities assigned to the ASD(ND-CBD)?

If confirmed, I believe the need to balance the unique responsibilities and priorities of each Under Secretary will provide a valuable opportunity to integrate nuclear deterrence and chemical and biological defense across policy and programs and ensure both Under Secretaries are closely aligned on these issues. While I expect that directly reporting to two Under Secretaries may initially present some logistical challenges, I believe having a single, unified voice on nuclear deterrence and chemical and biological defense issues on both the Policy and Acquisition and Sustainment sides will help appropriately elevate and prioritize critical issues and ensure strong representation of the nuclear deterrence and chemical and biological defense missions across the Department.

8. What is your understanding of the relationship between the ASD(NDCB) and:

a. The Secretary of Defense

I understand that if confirmed, I will report to the Secretary of War through both the Under Secretary of War for Policy and the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, but in accordance with section 138(b)(4)(A)(ii) of title 10, U.S. Code, I may communicate issues directly to the Secretary without approval or concurrence of any other official within the DoW.

b. The Deputy Secretary of Defense

I understand that if confirmed, I will report to the Deputy Secretary of War through both the Under Secretary of War for Policy and the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, but in accordance with section 138(b)(4)(A)(ii) of title 10, U.S. Code, I may communicate issues directly to the Deputy Secretary without approval or concurrence of any other official within the DoW.

c. The Secretaries of the Military Departments

While the Secretaries of the Military Departments are not in my chain of command, I understand the importance of developing working relationships with Secretaries, who manage the development of the nuclear and CBRN defense programs that I oversee.

d. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition & Sustainment

I understand that if confirmed, I will report to the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment for matters pertaining to the sustainment and modernization of U.S. nuclear forces, programs to develop defenses against chemical and biological weapons, and other acquisition and sustainment matters related to nuclear deterrence, chemical and biological defense, and countering weapons of mass destruction.

e. The Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering

While the Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering (USW(R&E)) is not in my chain of command, I understand if confirmed, I will work with the USW(R&E) in his capacity as a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council and the Biodefense Council, and on other matters pertaining to research and engineering of issues under my purview, particularly matters of new technological research and development.

f. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

I understand that if confirmed, I will report to the Under Secretary of War for Policy for matters related to the development of strategic policy guidance on nuclear weapons employment, in addition to other policy matters related to nuclear deterrence, chemical and biological defense, and countering weapons of mass destruction.

g. The Under Secretary of Energy / Administrator for Nuclear Security

I understand if confirmed, I will work closely with the Under Secretary of Energy / Administrator for Nuclear Security in his capacity as a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council on all matters related to the nuclear stockpile.

h. The Director of the Office of Cost Assessment & Program Evaluation

The Director of the Office of the Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) advises the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on resource discussions, oversees strategic portfolio reviews, and conducts independent cost estimates. In accordance with my statutory responsibility to advise and assist the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, and the Under Secretary of War for Policy on the allocation and use of resources for DoW activities on all matters relating to the sustainment, operation, and modernization of U.S. nuclear forces, if confirmed, I expect to work closely with the Director of CAPE on all matters relating to resourcing the nuclear deterrent, as well as chemical and biological defense programs.

i. The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

I understand that if confirmed, I will work closely with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in his capacity as a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council and the Biodefense Council, on matters pertaining to his oversight of joint military requirements for nuclear deterrence and chemical and biological defense, on budgeting support for programs that I oversee, and on all other matters relating to the Vice Chairman's duties specific to nuclear deterrence and chemical and biological defense.

j. The Commander of U.S. Strategic Command

I understand that the ASW(ND-CBD) maintains a critical partnership with the Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) across the nuclear enterprise. If confirmed, I will provide strategic guidance and oversight for the capabilities upon which the Commander, USSTRATCOM relies to execute the U.S. nuclear deterrence mission. This relationship requires continuous coordination to ensure that acquisition, modernization, and sustainment programs support the operational requirements. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander through regular engagements on nuclear posture reviews, strategy and policy, capability assessments, and acquisition priorities to address sustaining and modernizing capabilities while maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent. I will also work closely with the Commander in his capacity as a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council.

k. The Commander of U.S. European Command

I understand that the ASW(ND-CBD)'s relationship with the Commander of the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) focuses on ensuring theater-specific nuclear and CBRN defense requirements are supported through policy frameworks and capability development. This partnership is particularly important given EUCOM's role in NATO nuclear sharing and extended deterrence commitments to European allies. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander, USEUCOM, to understand the unique threat environment in the European theater and ensure that our chemical and biological defense programs provide adequate protection for forces operating in the region. Regular coordination on threat assessments, capability requirements, and alliance policies will be essential to maintaining both operational readiness and cohesion in addressing nuclear, chemical, and biological challenges.

l. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition

The Assistant Secretary of War for Acquisition (ASW(A)) is the principal advisor to the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment on matters relating to acquisition program management; the DoW Acquisition System; and the development of strategic, space, intelligence, tactical warfare, command and control, and business systems, which includes several nuclear forces programs as defined by section 499c of title 10 of the U.S. Code. If confirmed, my close collaboration with the ASW(A) will be critical for executing my statutory responsibility for portfolio management of nuclear forces.

m. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, & Capabilities

The Assistant Secretary of War for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities (ASW(SPC)), now the Assistant Secretary of War for Strategy, Plans, and Forces (ASW(SPF)) is the principal advisor on national security issues and defense strategy, and the capabilities, forces and contingency plans necessary to implement the defense strategy. The ASW(SPC) oversees development the National Defense Strategy, Defense Planning Guidance, and Guidance for Employment of the Force. As nuclear deterrence underwrites all U.S. military operations, if confirmed, close collaboration with the ASW(SPC) will be critical to ensuring DoW's strategic guidance, plans, and forces prioritize the need to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent.

n. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Policy

The Assistant Secretary of War for Industrial Base Policy (ASW(IBP)) is the principal advisor to the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment for developing DoW policies for the maintenance of the U.S. defense industrial base. If confirmed, my collaboration with the ASW(IBP) will be critical to ensuring the defense industrial base supports nuclear modernization and sustainment, including the need to field modern nuclear capabilities as quickly as possible.

o. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment

The Assistant Secretary of War for Energy, Installations, and Environment provides management and oversight of military installations worldwide and manages environmental, safety, and occupational health programs for DoW, including the implementation and oversight of DoW Operational Energy Policy. If confirmed, I understand I will work closely with the ASW(EI&E) to execute my statutory responsibilities to serve as the principal interface with the Department of Energy on issues relating to nuclear fuels and to advise the Secretary of War on nuclear energy matters.

9. If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs?

If confirmed, I will prescribe duties to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological War Policy and Programs (PDASW(ND-CBD))

that align with his or her expertise. I would also rely on the PDASW for daily administrative oversight of the organization. I believe close partnership and coordination with the PDASW(ND-CBD) is critical to maintain effective oversight of the significant breadth of the ND-CBD portfolio in addition to managing the dual-report structure of the ASW(ND-CBD).

Reporting Chain

Section 138 of title 10, United States Code, states that the ASD(NDCB) 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.

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

It is my understanding that this direct access is required by law to allow the ASW(ND-CBD) to advise the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on urgent or technical matters related to the nuclear deterrent.

11. What is your understanding of how this process has functioned in the past?

I understand that the former ASW(NCB) had this statutory authority to communicate directly to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, and that this authority was exercised only as circumstances necessitated.

12. 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?

Conflicts of Interest

Federal ethics laws, to include 18 U.S.C. §208, prohibit government employees from participating in matters where they, or certain family members or organizations with which they have certain relationships, have a financial interest.

13. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including investments, business ties, family relationships, or other connections that could be perceived as influencing your decision making?

I agree to comply with all conflicts of interest disclosure requirements set forth in the Ethics in Government Act and implementing regulations.

14. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, that if a conflict of interest arises, you will recuse yourself from participating in any relevant decisions regarding that specific matter?

I agree to comply with all recusal requirements under 18 U.S.C. § 208 and implementing regulations.

15. Do you commit, without qualification, if confirmed, to decision-making on the merits and exclusively in the public interest, without regard to private gain or personal benefit?

I commit to deciding matters on the merits based on the public interest, without regard to any private gain or personal benefit.

Major Challenges and Priorities

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

The most significant challenge will be to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of currently fielded nuclear forces as the United States completes its modernization of the nuclear triad. Another significant challenge will be addressing the rapidly evolving biothreat landscape, which is complicated by the dual-use nature of biotechnology and rapid advancements in artificial intelligence and high-performance computing. These challenges are compounded by the need to remain responsive to an increasingly challenging security environment. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the other stakeholders in the Department to address these challenges.

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

I am committed to the President's America First and Peace Through Strength agenda. I believe Secretary Hegseth's focus on the challenge posed by China and securing our Homeland's territorial integrity are the right priorities for the Department. At the same time, the United States must continue to support our NATO and Indo-Pacific allies through extended nuclear deterrence while denying Iran access to a nuclear weapon.

18. 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, my priority will be to work with my team and across the Department to review all nuclear modernization and countering WMD programs to identify opportunities to accelerate, streamline, or otherwise improve our ability to deliver key systems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Second, I will work with the Under Secretary of War for Policy and across the Policy organization to align ND-CBD efforts with the forthcoming National Security and National Defense Strategies, especially to focus on addressing the deterrence challenges created by

China's emergence as a major nuclear power.

Third, in my capacity as Staff Director of the Nuclear Weapons Council, I will work to ensure alignment between DoW requirements and DOE/NNSA's warhead programs and infrastructure projects, and to instill a strong sense of urgency to delivering capabilities as quickly as possible to address the emerging security environment.

Finally, I will prioritize working to ensure the ND-CBD organization is postured to advise the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on delivery of effective nuclear deterrence and defense against chemical and biological weapons on behalf of the President, the Secretary, and the American people.

Nuclear Policy

United States nuclear forces are the bedrock of our nation's defense, underpin our most critical alliances, and have deterred nuclear aggression and great power conflict for more than 70 years. Unfortunately, long deferred investments have left us with systems nearing the end of their useful lives. These capabilities must be updated to maintain a viable nuclear deterrent.

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

I agree that nuclear deterrence is a top priority for the Department. U.S. nuclear forces underpin our entire deterrence and defense posture. It is critical that the DoW fields a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent to enable the Department to deter and defeat aggression against our vital interests.

20. What is your understanding of how Russia, China, and North Korea have expanded and/or modernized their nuclear force capabilities? In your view, do these capabilities pose an increasing threat to the United States and its allies?

China, Russia, and North Korea have expanded and modernized their nuclear capabilities. These improvements, which include advances in warheads, delivery systems, and command and control systems, pose an increasingly severe threat to the United States and its allies and partners. My understanding is that the pace of China's nuclear force growth has exceeded U.S. expectations.

21. What are the strategic implications of the rapid modernization of Chinese nuclear weapons that are set to potentially triple by 2030, and what approach should the United States take to address those implications, in your view?

I am closely watching China's emergence as a major nuclear power, alongside China's

massive conventional military buildup. China's nuclear forces are a crucial part of its strategy to become the leading power in the Western Pacific. China's opaque and rapid nuclear build up requires that the United States think differently about how it deters and defeats aggression against our vital interests in the Indo-Pacific. The Department must ensure that U.S. nuclear forces are postured to deter China from nuclear escalation and provide the President with a range of credible options, while simultaneously deterring strategic attacks from other nuclear threat actors, including Russia and North Korea. If confirmed, I will review the Department's work thus far to grapple with this challenge and identify any necessary adjustments to our nuclear strategy or posture, aligned with the forthcoming National Defense Strategy.

22. Do you believe the United States needs to adopt a counterforce strategy that allows it to hold at risk both Russia and China's nuclear forces simultaneously?

Deterrence depends upon holding at risk what the adversary values and I understand the capability to hold at risk adversary nuclear forces has been a key element of U.S. strategy for many years. While I believe there continues to be a role for targeting adversary nuclear forces within the United States's nuclear strategy, I am not yet in a position to assess the specific strategy the United States should pursue. If confirmed, I will review the Department's extant approach to nuclear employment planning and, in tandem with the White House, Joint Staff, U.S. Strategic Command, the Intelligence Community, and other stakeholders, identify whether the Department's approach requires adjustment.

Each administration typically conducts a review of defense policies and strategy in the process of developing a new National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy. Given how fundamental nuclear deterrence has been to U.S. defense strategy since the advent of the technology, examinations of nuclear policies are typically a crucial aspect of these efforts.

23. If confirmed, what do you believe would be your role in the development of an updated National Defense Strategy?

My understanding is that the ASW(ND-CBD) is the principal civilian adviser to the Secretary and the Under Secretaries of War for Policy and Acquisition and Sustainment on nuclear deterrence policies, operations, and associated programs. As such, I expect to play an important role in advising the Under Secretaries and Secretary on the development and implementation of the NDS with respect to nuclear deterrence as well as chemical and biological defense matters. If confirmed, I will advise the Secretary and Under Secretary of War for Policy on how to address nuclear deterrence and countering WMD priorities in the NDS to ensure it comprehensively addresses the threats that the United States faces.

24. If confirmed, what do you believe would be your role in the conduct of a new Nuclear Posture Review?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that any review of nuclear policy and posture adequately addresses the threats the United States faces, is aligned with the NSS and NDS, and reflects a pragmatic, America First approach to fielding a modern, safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent.

25. Do you believe our current deterrence policy and force structure effectively accounts for two near peer nuclear competitors? If not, do you believe the U.S. will require additional capabilities, a numerically larger force than exists today, or a combination of both?

I believe that our strategic forces must be able to deter strategic attacks simultaneously from multiple nuclear-armed powers, especially the two most capable ones. If confirmed, determining what that requires and what changes that entails from our current strategy, modernization plans, and posture would be top priorities.

26. What deterrence and/or employment policy changes, if any, do you believe are required to adapt to the changing strategic threat environment?

If confirmed, I will review the Department's extant approach to nuclear employment planning and, in tandem with the White House, Joint Staff, U.S. Strategic Command, the Intelligence Community, and other stakeholders, identify whether changes to U.S. nuclear strategy or employment policy are necessary to sustain effective deterrence of strategic attack and provide the President with credible response options.

27. What is your assessment of our regional and extended deterrent capabilities in Europe and Asia and our allies views on them?

I believe our nuclear deterrent remains highly credible to both adversaries and allies. However, I also believe that the United States needs to have credible nuclear response options for a theater conflict below the strategic-level. Both China and Russia are fielding highly capable arsenals of theater-range nuclear capabilities that threaten U.S. forces, allies, and other vital interests in Europe and Asia. My understanding is that our capabilities in this area have atrophied since the end of the Cold War. If confirmed, I would seek to understand what capabilities are available for regional deterrence and what more may be required.

28. What are your views on the value of U.S. nuclear extended deterrence assurances as a component of our nonproliferation efforts, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region?

U.S. extended nuclear deterrence has long been critical to deterring aggression against allies and partners, protecting U.S. interests abroad, and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world. Credible extended deterrence continues to be an important and effective tool for our security and for preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

29. Do you believe the U.S. should work to further deepen cooperation on nuclear operations and policy with allies in the Indo-Pacific region to offset increased dangers from China's, Russia's, and North Korea's rapidly expanding arsenals and increasingly aggressive behaviors?

I believe the United States should strengthen cooperation with our Indo-Pacific allies to address the unprecedented challenges in the region and have frank and open conversations about how to address these threats through appropriate burden sharing.

30. Do you believe the U.S. should consider stationing nuclear forces in the Asia-Pacific?

U.S. nuclear forces anchor our ability to deter strategic attacks and contribute to our overall defense posture and that of allies. If confirmed, I would confer with relevant Department stakeholders and allies on whether U.S. nuclear force posture in the Indo-Pacific requires adjustment to sustain deterrence.

31. Are there nuclear signals short of the forward deployment of weapons that can be undertaken to strengthen extended deterrence and assurance of U.S. allies in Asia?

My understanding is that the United States regularly conducts extended deterrence dialogues and consultations with our allies in Asia to enhance cooperation to address nuclear threats and demonstrate a commitment to addressing shared nuclear risks. If confirmed, I will review our efforts in this area and determine if additional measures are necessary to sustain the credibility of our extended deterrence. At the same time, it is vitally important that our Asian allies invest more in their own conventional deterrent and defense capabilities.

32. Do you believe the U.S. should allow allies to participate in a nuclear sharing role akin to what NATO allies? Why or why not?

I believe the strength of our alliance system is unmatched and the mix of capabilities depends on unique circumstances of each alliance. If confirmed, I would look at the full range of options to deter nuclear conflict and ensure U.S. allies strengthen their capabilities to complement U.S. extended deterrence.

In December 2020, NATO reaffirmed the Allies' longstanding position that, "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance."

33. Do you believe this principle requires the United States to continue to deploy nuclear weapons in NATO countries?

As Secretary Hegseth has stated, “the United States remains committed to the NATO alliance and to the defense partnership with Europe, full stop.” While Europeans step up and take primary responsibility for their conventional security, the United States will continue to provide critical but more limited support, including our extended nuclear deterrent. U.S. forward deployed nuclear weapons in Europe play a critical role in U.S. security by underpinning extended deterrence as the supreme guarantor of Alliance security.

34. Do you believe additional NATO allies should be allowed to participate in the nuclear sharing role?

If confirmed, I will work with NATO Allies to ensure NATO’s nuclear deterrent mission remains credible and effective with the broadest possible participation, within U.S. treaty obligations. While the United States is committed to providing extended deterrence to NATO, burden sharing in the nuclear mission is an important signal of Alliance resolve.

35. Do you believe the existing NATO nuclear force posture should be reexamined given Russia’s reported deployment of tactical weapons into Belarus?

I am not aware of the intelligence, if any, surrounding Russia’s reported deployment of tactical nuclear weapons into Belarus. If confirmed, I will review this issue and work closely with all relevant allies to ensure a strong nuclear deterrence posture in NATO commensurate with the evolving nuclear threat from Russia.

Successive Nuclear Posture Reviews have rejected the adoption of either a “sole-purpose” or a nuclear “No First Use” (NFU) policy by the United States.

36. Do you believe either a sole-purpose or a NFU policy would be appropriate for the United States, and what do you believe would be the implications of such a policy on the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence commitments to our allies?

I do not believe a sole purpose or NFU policy would be advisable, and would advocate against one, if confirmed.

37. Do you believe the U.S. has the necessary capability to destroy adversary command and control facilities, in particular hardened and deeply buried targets?

If confirmed, I will work with Department leadership to immediately review the Department's nuclear programs and capabilities to ensure the Department is taking all necessary steps to hold adversaries at risk.

A core tenet of U.S. nuclear strategy since the Cold War has been that only the President of the United States can authorize or terminate the use of U.S. nuclear weapons. This principle is based on preserving civilian control of military forces and ensuring that the United States maintains the ability to respond in a timely manner to strategic attacks. However, there have been periodic calls to revise this policy in order to constrain presidential authority to direct the employment of nuclear weapons.

38. Do you believe the president should be the sole authority for authorizing and terminating the use of U.S. nuclear weapons?

Yes.

Force Sustainment and Modernization

The 2023 Strategic Posture Commission (SPC) concluded that the U.S. should expedite its ongoing nuclear force modernization activities, modify its strategic nuclear force structure to account for the rapid growth of China's nuclear forces and the unprecedented need to deter two nuclear-armed peer adversaries, and urgently develop additional theater range nuclear options.

39. Do you agree with the recommendations of the SPC regarding U.S. nuclear forces?

The United States faces the real potential of multi-front aggression. The United States must prepare for such conflicts to present our adversaries with a credible deterrent. This includes our nuclear forces, which must deter nuclear and other strategic attacks from all nuclear adversaries. I agree with the SPC that we must have credible response options across the spectrum of conflict, and that we must do more to address the risks that deterrence might fail at the regional level.

40. Do you agree that a triad of land, air, and sea based nuclear delivery platforms is consistent with an effective deterrent posture in an era of great power competition with Russia and China?

I do.

The overwhelming majority of U.S. nuclear forces have been extended decades beyond their intended design lives and are nearing the end of their utility. These capabilities must be updated over the next 20 years if the United States is to maintain a viable nuclear deterrent.

41. What is your understanding of the condition of existing Department of Defense nuclear forces?

I have absolute confidence that the U.S. nuclear deterrent is safe, secure, and effective today. However, our nuclear forces are operating well beyond their intended service lives. Modernizing our strategic nuclear deterrent capabilities across the triad, its supporting infrastructure, and production capabilities is critical to maintaining our strategic deterrent against future threats. During this transition from legacy to modern nuclear forces, the United States will also need to identify, assess, and mitigate risks to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of its currently fielded nuclear forces until the modernization of the U.S. nuclear deterrent is complete. If confirmed, I will immediately review the condition of U.S. nuclear forces, the plans and process to sustain those systems and ensure their continued viability, as well as emerging sustainment challenges and risks. I would then welcome an opportunity for further engagement with Congress on this topic.

42. What is your understanding of the state of the nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) system?

Our NC3 systems must provide the President with uninterrupted command and control of U.S. nuclear forces under all circumstances, including during and following an adversary's nuclear or non-nuclear strategic attack. The Department must continue modernizing legacy systems through planned programs aimed at retaining required resiliency and redundancy. If confirmed, I will review the NC3 modernization programs to ensure we are developing the future architectures to provide the Nation with resilient NC3 and preserve the President's decision space in crisis conditions.

43. If confirmed, do you commit to support full funding for efforts to comprehensively modernize the nation's nuclear deterrence forces, including restoring previously-fielded supplemental capabilities like the sea-launched cruise missile, and accelerating such programs wherever possible?

I commit to advocating, if confirmed, for fully funding efforts to modernize our nuclear forces while also meeting the other top priorities for the Department.

44. In your view, are there other nuclear capabilities or posture adjustments that should be considered to enhance the deterrence of Russia, China, and North Korea, particularly given the pace of expansion in their respective nuclear arsenals?

I agree with Secretary Hegseth's assessment that China, Russia, and North Korea have significantly expanded and modernized their nuclear capabilities. These improvements, which include advances in warheads, delivery systems, and command and control systems, pose an increasingly severe threat to the United States and its allies and partners. If confirmed, I would

confer with other Department stakeholders on what additional nuclear posture adjustments would enhance deterrence.

Multiple independent commissions, including congressional commissions on the National Defense Strategy and the Strategic Posture of the United States have highlighted that U.S. defense investments are inadequate for addressing the international security threats facing the United States. These conclusions have been echoed by many members of Congress. In its July 2024 report, the Commission on the National Defense Strategy recommended that Congress provide real growth for defense spending, at an annual average rate of three to five percent above inflation.

45. Do you agree that sustained real growth in the defense budget of at least 3 to 5 percent is necessary to meet global security challenges without incurring significant additional risk?

I support robust defense spending that allows us to meet our National Defense Strategy (NDS). If confirmed, I will advocate for the robust defense spending needed to implement the NDS that Secretary Hegseth approves.

The Department of Defense projected in 2019 that over the planned period of modernization, the sustainment, operations, and modernization of U.S. nuclear forces will account for approximately 6-7 percent of the defense budget.

46. Do you believe this is an appropriate level of spending for this mission considering the rapidly expanding arsenals of China, Russia, and North Korea and their increasing military collaboration?

If confirmed, I would prioritize assessing the required resources to meet the President's strategic goals, especially defending the homeland and deterring China.

47. If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of the defense budget as pertaining to the sustainment, operations, and modernization of the U.S. nuclear deterrent?

Managing nuclear modernization transition risks would be one of my top priorities as the ASW(ND-CBD). If confirmed, I will take immediate action to work with Department leadership to ensure our nuclear deterrent is resourced to provide the capabilities we need while appropriately balancing risk across the U.S. nuclear enterprise.

Nuclear Weapons Council

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

48. What is your understanding of this role?

My understanding of the role of the Nuclear Weapons Council Staff Director is to ensure the NWC fulfills its statutory responsibilities as prescribed in section 179 of title 10, U.S. Code. The NWC Staff Director also serves 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.

49. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that the Nuclear Weapons Council duties are effectively executed?

If confirmed, I commit to addressing issues facing our nuclear enterprise with the urgency they require, including by ensuring NWC decisions are grounded in accurate data and robust analysis. I will collaborate closely with my counterparts across the nuclear enterprise to foster collaboration, coordination, and communication on critical issues facing our deterrent.

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

If confirmed, as the Staff Director, I will review the operations of the NWC and make recommendations for appropriate changes as needed.

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

The planned modernization of almost every element of the nuclear enterprise—while also ensuring there are no gaps in capabilities during the transition—will be the primary challenge for the NWC. In particular, the Council must ensure close coordination between DoW and DOE/NNSA to balance risk across each Department's nuclear enterprise in a careful and deliberate manner.

52. In your view, has the Nuclear Weapons Council served to effectively coordinate budget and program development between DOD components and the National Nuclear Security Administration? If not, how do you believe this coordination could be improved?

I understand the NWC has a statutory responsibility to annually review the plans and budget of DOE/NNSA and to determine if the plans and budget are adequate to implement the objectives of the DoW with respect to nuclear weapons. If confirmed, as the Staff Director, I will review the operations of the NWC and make recommendations for appropriate changes as needed.

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

If confirmed, I will review the operations of the NWC and ongoing efforts to support acquisition reform to ensure the system adequately connects military requirements to budgeting, acquisitions and procurement, and to technical expertise and production. If confirmed, as the Staff Director, I will make recommendations to the Council as needed.

54. Do you have any recommendations for improving the functions of this enterprise?

If confirmed, I look forward to diving deeper into the processes, policies, and procedures across the nuclear security enterprise, and working with members of the NWC to make recommendations for appropriate changes as needed.

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

55. What is your understanding of the importance of this agreement and its effects on DOD policies and programs?

The U.S./UK Mutual Defense Agreement of 1958 allows for both the United States and the United Kingdom to share atomic information for defense purposes – a fruitful and beneficial partnership that illustrates the strength of our alliance. Our enduring partnership with the UK under the latest amendment to the U.S./UK Mutual Defense Agreement enables both nations to leverage our respective strengths and capabilities in support of our sovereign nuclear deterrents. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing this close collaboration and partnership with the UK, and to explore additional opportunities for mutual support.

56. What is your understanding of how this agreement relates to the Polaris Sales Agreement between the U.S. and the UK?

The U.S./UK Mutual Defense Agreement of 1958 allows for the transmission of atomic information for mutual defense purposes, allowing for instance, U.S. and UK personnel to work in collaboration on experiments, trials, and research for nuclear materials. The Polaris Sales Agreement of 1963, originally for the sale of Polaris missiles to the UK and amended in 1980 for

the Trident program, is a separate Agreement, that has narrow parameters between the U.S. Navy's Strategic Systems Programs and the United Kingdom.

National Nuclear Security Administration

The NNSA is responsible for maintaining the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile and meeting military requirements for nuclear weapons, which are established through the interagency NWC. NNSA's principal challenge over the next 20 years is to rebuild the Cold War-era U.S. nuclear weapons infrastructure into a responsive and resilient enterprise.

57. What is your understanding of the condition of NNSA's existing nuclear weapons development, sustainment, and manufacturing capabilities and the associated infrastructure?

As I understand, NNSA's capabilities and infrastructure are sufficient to sustain today's nuclear weapon stockpile. However, there are many key infrastructure shortfalls for meeting Program of Record plans for stockpile modernization. While NNSA is making progress in re-establishing critical processes for producing weapons, increasing production capacity, and reducing risks from infrastructure failures, much work remains to be done. Successful execution of their infrastructure modernization programs will require continuing, long-term funding and support.

58. Do you support the recapitalization of the NNSA's capabilities to design, manufacture, and sustain an effective nuclear weapons stockpile?

Yes, delivering modern infrastructure with the capabilities and capacity necessary to support the stockpile is a critical national security priority. If confirmed, as the NWC Staff Director, I will work with my colleagues to ensure resources are aligned with current and projected requirements for the nuclear deterrent.

Specifically, what are your views on:

59. The Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility at the Savannah River Site;

It is my understanding that, when the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF) comes online, it will serve a critical role in the two-site strategy to achieve full rate production of plutonium pits. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring the NWC does its part to ensure SRPPF's success.

60. Plutonium Facility 4 at Los Alamos National Laboratory;

I understand PF4 reached a first production unit for a war reserve plutonium pit, which is a pivotal first step in restoring the Nation's ability to produce plutonium pits at the quantities

needed to support military requirements. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring the NWC does its part to ensure the success of producing plutonium pits at rate.

61. The Uranium Processing and Lithium Processing Facilities and modernization of depleted uranium component manufacturing at the Y-12 National Security Complex;

It is my understanding that current facilities for uranium and lithium processing, among others, are from the Manhattan Project and Cold War era and are operating well past their design lives. The processing capabilities for uranium and lithium are critical elements of weapon production and must continue to be prioritized. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting NNSA through the NWC, as it modernizes these critical capabilities.

62. The KCNext Project at the Kansas City National Security Campus;

It is my understanding that the KCNext Project is critical to expanding capacity for producing non-nuclear components. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting NNSA as it modernizes critical capabilities.

63. The various recapitalization projects, including establishment of a high explosives manufacturing capability, at the Pantex Plant; and

It is my understanding that NNSA is currently working on two major construction projects that will support high explosives capabilities. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting NNSA as it modernizes critical capabilities.

64. The reestablishment of an unobligated domestic uranium enrichment capability?

I understand this capability is critical to future DoW weapon components and material production. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting NNSA as it reestablishes critical capabilities.

65. 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 am committed to working across the Department and through the NWC to ensure that the health of the industrial base is adequate to support the Department's ability to continue to field a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent.

66. Do you support continued collaboration with the United Kingdom in the maintenance of its independent nuclear deterrent?

The United Kingdom is a critical ally that is also working to modernize its nuclear forces, and with whom the United States has benefited from close technical collaboration through the U.S./UK Mutual Defense Agreement. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing this enduring partnership with the UK to ensure the success of its separate but parallel modernization program.

The Nuclear Weapons Council has outlined out a schedule for modernization of the nuclear weapons stockpile over the next 15 years 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.

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

I fully support both Departments' efforts to modernize the Nation's nuclear deterrent and, if confirmed, will advocate for the capabilities the Department needs to ensure we continue to field safe, secure, and effective nuclear forces.

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

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, through the Nuclear Weapons Council, to understand the linkages between challenges facing the scope and schedule of the modernization programs and how those challenges translate to operational risk.

69. At current levels, do you believe the NNSA is appropriately staffed and resourced to deliver the capabilities required to meet DOD military and presidentially established deterrence requirements?

It is my understanding that the Nuclear Weapons Council has a statutory obligation to annually review the plans and budget of the NNSA and assess whether such plans and budget meet the current and projected requirements relating to nuclear weapons. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring these assessments are conducted thoroughly so the Council can make fully informed decisions and recommendations.

70. If not, what are your views on how the use of DOD authorities and access to the Defense Industrial Base might assist NNSA in the execution of its missions?

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in DoW and DOE/NNSA to identify any opportunities for aligning our efforts in a manner that supports a healthy defense industrial base,

and I will support the USW(A&S) in efforts to address this problem in a broader sense across the acquisition and industrial base community.

71. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure the NWC and the interagency robustly support annual budgets that prioritize the modernization and sustainment of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile?

It is my understanding that the Nuclear Weapons Council has a statutory obligation to annually review the plans and budget of the NNSA and assess whether such plans and budget meet the current and projected requirements relating to nuclear weapons. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring these assessments are conducted thoroughly so the Council can make fully informed decisions and recommendations.

72. Have you reviewed the elements of the Stockpile Stewardship Program, and do you support it?

Yes, I support the program as I understand it. If confirmed, I look forward to more in depth briefings on the Stockpile Stewardship Program and how we can use it to ensure a credible nuclear deterrent for decades to come.

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

If confirmed, I look forward to more in depth briefings on the Stockpile Stewardship Program and how we can use it to ensure a credible nuclear deterrent for decades to come.

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

Confidence in the safety, security, and reliability of our stockpile is essential to ensure a credible nuclear deterrent. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the NWC and leaders from across the nuclear security enterprise to understand the conclusions of the annual stockpile assessments from each of NNSA's nuclear security laboratories and, if needed, provide those recommendations along with my own to the Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of War and Energy.

75. 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?

Confidence in the safety, security, and reliability of our stockpile is essential to ensure a credible nuclear deterrent. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the NWC and leaders from across the nuclear security enterprise to understand the conclusions of the annual stockpile assessments from each of NNSA's nuclear security laboratories and, if needed, provide those recommendations along with my own to the Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of War and Energy.

Notification of Congress

76. If confirmed, would you commit, without qualification, to promptly notifying Congress generally, and the committees of jurisdiction specifically, of any significant issues in the safety, security, or reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile?

Yes. Congress needs timely and accurate information to make effective legislative decisions, especially when those decisions affect our strategic deterrent. If confirmed, and once equipped with the necessary facts, I commit to promptly doing so to further Congress' legislative mandate.

Arms Control

Arms control, when effective and verifiable, has been a valuable tool for managing competition and international security concerns. In contrast, unverifiable arms control regimes observed by only one party can generate instability.

77. Do you believe that further reductions should be taken only within the context of a formal, verifiable arms control agreement with Russia, China and other nuclear-armed powers?

I support President Trump's efforts to seek a way forward with Russia on strategic arms control and to bring China to the table. I believe that, in general, the United States should pursue arms control when it is in the U.S. national security interest to do so. Specifically, DoW should only support arms control agreements that enhance U.S. security, are stabilizing, and are effectively verifiable. Decisions on the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal need to account for multiple factors, which I look forward to exploring, if confirmed.

78. Do you believe the security interests of the United States can be advanced by a bilateral arms control treaty with Russia only?

I believe engaging in meaningful dialogue and reciprocal, pragmatic measures can help reduce the risks of nuclear war. I would support any such measures that enhance U.S. security and advance U.S. national interests. I support President Trump's efforts to seek a way forward with Russia on strategic arms control and to bring China to the table.

79. What are your views on the military significance of Russian tactical and theater nuclear forces not covered by the New START Treaty and whether arms control measures can adequately address them?

My understanding is that Russia fields a large and diverse arsenal of theater-range nuclear forces that are not covered by New START, which directly threaten our allies and U.S. forces forward. These capabilities add complexity to our ability to defend U.S. interests in Europe and elsewhere. I believe we should be investigating ways to bring these weapons into a verifiable arms control treaty with Russia. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in the Departments of War and State to identify options for arms control for Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons.

The first Trump administration considered an overall cap on the number of nuclear warheads between the U.S. and Russia rather than platform specific limitations.

80. Do you believe that future arms control agreements should include all types of delivery systems – tactical, theater, and strategic?

I believe that we should be pursuing pragmatic, effectively verifiable arms control for all kinds of nuclear weapons. I am not yet in a position to assess the prospects for an agreement that covers all delivery systems in the near future. I also do not support limits on delivery systems that could hinder our ability to field combat credible conventional forces in support of our defense strategy.

81. Do you believe that future arms control agreements should include both Russia and China?

I support President Trump's efforts to find a way forward on arms control with Russia and to bring China to the table. I believe the United States should be open to arms control with Russia and China *if* such measures genuinely promote U.S. interests and security and those of our allies. I am not in a position at this stage to assess the likelihood of such measures with Russia and/or China.

82. Should future arms control agreements include the French and United Kingdom?

If confirmed, I would discuss this idea further with my French and UK counterparts to assess if their participation in such agreements is in their national interests and if such agreements support U.S. national interests at this time. I would also weigh potential impacts to other NATO Allies.

83. How should North Korea, Pakistan and India factor into future arms control agreements?

The Administration has been clear about the importance of mitigating the risks of nuclear conflicts. Arms control and nuclear risk reduction measures can serve as critical and pragmatic

tools to help us advance our collective interest in keeping our countries safer from a potential nuclear conflict. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my DoW and interagency colleagues to advise on arms control-related decisions.

84. What are your views on this approach? How does China's nuclear expansion affect this approach?

China's continued refusal to participate in any nuclear risk reduction measures, coupled with its rapid and opaque nuclear expansion, is destabilizing. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my DoW and interagency colleagues to advise on arms control and risk reduction-related decisions.

85. What is your current assessment of the New START Treaty and the likelihood of any follow-on nuclear arms control treaties with either Russia or China?

My understanding is that both sides have ceased implementation of the New START Treaty's verification mechanisms, and the United States is unable to confirm that Russia is abiding by all of the Treaty's limits. I believe the United States should be open to arms control with Russia and China *if* such measures genuinely promote U.S. interests and security and those of our allies. I am not in a position at this stage to assess the likelihood of such measures with Moscow and/or Beijing. I support President Trump's efforts to find a way forward with Russia and China on nuclear arms control and risk reduction.

86. Do you believe that the United States should consider accepting limitations on its missile defense, cyber, space, or conventional power projection capabilities to obtain an agreement with Russia or China on nuclear weapons reductions?

While I believe it is prudent to prepare for all possibilities in negotiations, I am skeptical about such potential constraints on U.S. forces, particularly given the current security environment. If confirmed, I would discuss these options with other relevant DoW colleagues.

Defense Threat Reduction Agency

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

I understand that the Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) is under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment through the ASW(ND-CBD). As such, the ASW(ND-CBD) provides day-to-day oversight of DTRA programming and budgeting to ensure their alignment with Department and Administration priorities.

88. If confirmed, what would your expectations be for DTRA?

If confirmed, I would expect DTRA to continue to align its programming and budgeting to Department and Administration priorities. I would also expect DTRA to continue to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars by efficiently executing its CWMD missions while continuing to support the Combatant Commands as needed.

Chemical and Biological Defense Matters

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

89. What is your understanding of your roles and responsibilities with respect to chemical and biological defense matters?

My understanding of my roles and responsibilities regarding chemical and biological defense matters centers on serving as a key advisor and operational overseer within the Department of War. In this capacity, I would be responsible for providing comprehensive counsel to the Secretary and Under Secretaries of War for Policy and Acquisition and Sustainment on all matters relating to defense against chemical and biological weapons threats.

A central component of these responsibilities involves oversight of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), ensuring this critical organization operates effectively in support of the Department's mission. Additionally, I would be tasked with ensuring the Department successfully implements the current administration's initiatives related to chemical and biological defense, translating policy directives into operational reality.

Perhaps most importantly, these responsibilities encompass preparing the Department to address the rapidly evolving chemical and biological threats that characterize the modern security environment. This involves ensuring our warfighters possess the necessary capabilities, training, and equipment to operate effectively in chemically and biologically contaminated environments, thereby maintaining operational readiness regardless of the threat conditions they may encounter in the 21st century battlefield.

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

Aligned with the establishment of the Office of the ASW(ND-CBD), as directed by the Deputy Secretary of War and in accordance with section 138(b)(4) of title 10, U.S. Code, I would oversee and direct the DASW for Nuclear Deterrence and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction in carrying out its duties, while elevating matters to the Under Secretaries of War for Policy and Acquisition and Sustainment, as necessary.

91. What is your assessment of the threat posed by chemical and biological agents to the security interests of the United States and our partners? Where are these threats most acute?

Based on my experience, I believe chemical and biological agents pose an ongoing security threat to the United States and our partners. This threat is the result of compounding advances in science and technology, in addition to our adversaries' actions. Advances in technology have contributed to a rapidly evolving threat landscape. I am deeply concerned by potential ramifications to the Homeland and our allies and partners stemming from the United States' public assessment that multiple countries are in non-compliance with existing treaty obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. If confirmed, I look forward to receiving an intelligence briefing on the threat and taking appropriate actions to address this threat.

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

I believe the DoW Chemical and Biological Defense Program's principal challenge is further accelerating innovative defensive capability delivery to the Joint Force at speed and scale. If confirmed, I will work with the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment and others in the Department to modernize and streamline the defense acquisition system, strengthen the industrial base, and increase resiliency across the Program's federated organizations to deliver the defensive capabilities the Joint Force needs to deter our adversaries' use of chemical and biological weapons or ensure the Joint Force prevails in the face of such reprehensible weapons. Additionally, I understand that the complex and rapidly evolving threat landscape presents a significant challenge. Technological and scientific advancements are lowering or eliminating barriers to those who wish to obtain or further develop advanced chemical or biological weapons. If confirmed, I would seek to create the opportunities to address these threats.

93. If confirmed, how would you work with other agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services, 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 the DoW and U.S. government to ensure that DoW has continuity of effort against these threats. This coordination is an important step in the appropriate stewardship of the taxpayer dollars provided to answer these threats. In this case, there is significant opportunity to share portfolio efforts with these agencies to ensure the best use of funds, reduce duplication where warranted, and drive improvement in U.S. CB security. While the DoW Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP) is responsible for the research, development, and acquisition of defensive countermeasures against chemical and biological threats to the Joint Force, DHS and HHS span of concern is broader than this mandate. If confirmed, I would ensure that collective efforts are put in place to mitigate the impacts of CB threats to the Warfighter and collaborate with our interagency partners to ensure the security of the Nation.

The 2023 Biodefense Posture Review addressed a long-standing issue within the Department regarding biodefense governance with the creation of a Biodefense Council.

94. Do you support this effort?

Yes. The Biodefense Posture Review outlined the Department's needs and opportunities to strengthen biodefense to ensure our Warfighters can deter or prevail against emerging biothreats. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment on how best to continue this work and provide the necessary support and advice to the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and other DoW leadership on issues and challenges related to biodefense

95. How would you modify or refine it to make it more effective?

As Secretary Hegseth and the President have made clear, all the DoW's processes must be thoroughly reviewed and improved, where necessary. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment to continue to review and improve biodefense governance structures and processes.

96. What are your views of the 2023 Biodefense Posture Review – please be specific.

It is my understanding that the 2023 Biodefense Posture Review provided important recommendations for reforms to the DoW regarding biodefense. Some of these included enhancing early warning and understanding to counter biothreats, improving the preparedness and resilience of the Total Force, and increasing response to mitigate the impact on DoW missions and the Total Force. I mention these reforms as they are crucial to the success of the Joint Force operating in a CB-contested environments. The Biodefense Posture Review also clearly outlined the Department's role within the broader national biodefense enterprise, asserting our priority role to address deliberate biothreats. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment to continue building on these recommendations as well as reviewing the Department's biodefense posture in accordance with the Secretary's and President's priorities

Pandemic Preparedness

97. What is the appropriate role of the Department of Defense in preparing for and responding to a pandemic?

It is my understanding that the CBDP is responsible for delivering capabilities to the Joint Force to ensure it can deter or prevail against adversarial use of chemical and biological weapons. CBDP is not responsible for preparing for or responding to a naturally occurring pandemic, which falls to other parts of DoW and the U.S. Government, namely the Department of Health

and Human Services. If confirmed, I will ensure that the CBDP remains focused on adversarial chemical and biological weapons while remaining ready to assist the Nation in other ways, if directed.

98. Do you assess that the Department of Defense is appropriately organized and resourced to effectively fulfill this role? What changes, if any, would you recommend?

It is my understanding that the DoW, as mandated by Congress, has recently examined how the Department is organized and resourced for the biodefense mission. If confirmed, I will review how the CBDP is currently organized and resourced and recommend any changes necessary to meet the President's and Secretary Hegseth's priorities and deliver defensive capabilities to the Joint Force at speed and scale.

99. What is your understanding of the Department of Defense's role in relation to the other departments and agencies of the federal government involved in preparing for and responding to a pandemic?

It is my understanding that the DoW's role would be to protect the Joint Force and limit operational impacts during a pandemic, as well as play a supporting role to other departments and agencies of the federal government. If confirmed, I would work closely with the ASW for Health Affairs to ensure the Department is appropriately prioritizing Warfighter chemical-biological defense and force health protection needs.

100. If confirmed, how will you ensure the Department of Defense is appropriately postured to address biological threats to the United States and our partners?

If confirmed, I look forward to meeting with our partners, in accordance with the President's and Secretary's priorities, to assess their needs regarding biological threat defense. I plan to drive interoperability across our partners and commit to burden-sharing, which will drive capability development and delivery. In addition, I aim to continue efforts to implement capability portfolio management, a tool to align, prioritize, and deliver necessary CB defense capabilities. These activities together posture the Department for the future fight.

Cooperative Threat Reduction

101. What is your understanding as to your responsibilities with respect to the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program?

If confirmed, I understand that I would provide policy guidance and program implementation oversight for the CTR Program. I would also be responsible for engaging with U.S. interagency and international counterparts on nonproliferation and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat reduction strategies, activities, and opportunities to respond to the evolving WMD threat

landscape and safeguard our nation. I understand that the Defense Threat Reduction Agency is responsible for executing CTR Program activities.

102. If confirmed, what would be your priority regions and programs for Cooperative Threat Reduction?

The CTR Program must ensure it is oriented to effectively support Department and Administration priorities. CTR's efforts should be aimed at protecting the warfighter and the Homeland from WMD proliferation threats, with a particular focus on deterring WMD proliferation and employment in the Indo-Pacific region. CTR should also examine what role it could play in preventing the proliferation of WMD into the Western Hemisphere, particularly ways that could threaten the southern U.S. border. The CTR Program needs to emphasize greater burden-sharing with allies and partners in other regions such as Europe, to include leveraging its authority to receive funds from partner governments to execute CWMD projects of mutual national interest.

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 Hemispheric Affairs and the Commander of U.S. Northern Command have been responsible for planning and executing that mission.

103. If confirmed, how would you expect to work with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs 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 expect to leverage and strengthen current relationships with these critical members for homeland defense. As the lead for CBRN defense policy, I would work with the Commander, U.S. Northern Command and ASW HD&HA to provide subject matter expertise in countering weapons of mass destruction policy. I understand that these homeland defense missions have similar capability requirements as do Forces deployed outside of the United States, however, I recognize the special conditions of the homeland and necessity of speed and relevancy of such capabilities for consequence management. As a part of the acquisition arm to deliver supporting capabilities, I look forward to working with the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment to ensure clear and open collaboration regarding the CB defense capability needs of this community while balancing the core needs of the Services.

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.

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

It is my understanding that the Department of Homeland Security is currently reviewing how it is organized and postured to address consequence management of CBRNE incidents in the United States. If confirmed, I would review these changes in greater detail and work with colleagues at DHS to avoid duplication and ensure we maximize our nation's planning, coordinating, and implementing consequence management of CBRNE incidents in the United States.

105. What do you believe is 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 DoW support to civilian authorities. DoW 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.

106. If confirmed, what role would you expect to have regarding the oversight of Department of Defense capabilities related to CBRNE incident consequence management?

I understand that the CBRND equipment used in CBRNE consequence management response is primarily developed and fielded by the CBDP. Therefore, I would ensure the delivery of CBRND capabilities at speed and scale, bound by valid Service requirements. If confirmed, I would work with Policy and Joint Staff colleagues to assess our consequence management CBRN defense capability posture and ensure the Department is delivering the necessary capabilities, consistent with the Secretary's priorities.

Relations with Congress

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

Maintaining a positive working relationship with Congress, and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, is critical to ensuring the nuclear deterrence and chemical and biological defense missions receive the policy and funding support they need to succeed. I am aware of the strong support that the Senate Armed Services Committee has consistently provided to this office's mission. I also understand the importance of responding to congressional requests and direction in a timely manner. If confirmed, I look forward to meeting with the Senate Armed Services Committee and developing a positive and productive working relationship.

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

To sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the Office of the ASW(ND-CBD), if confirmed, I will meet with the appropriate Members of Congress and their staffs, ensure my office is responsive to congressional requests in a timely manner, and operate under the principle of transparency—sharing information with Congress when appropriate. I believe sustaining a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with Congress is necessary to achieve alignment and support for the nuclear and chemical and biological defense missions.

Congressional Oversight

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.

109. 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.

110. 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 without delay? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

- 111. 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.

- 112. 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.

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

Yes.

- 114. 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.

- 115. 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.