

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Maurice Todd
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) for Readiness

Duties

Section 138 of Title 10, United States Code, provides that an Assistant Secretary of Defense shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of Defense may prescribe.

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

The ASW(R) is the principal advisor to the Secretary of War and the USW(P&R) on all matters related to the readiness of the Total Force. The primary duties and functions of the ASW(R) are to:

- Shape and support the decision space of the Secretary of War and the military services through strategic readiness data and assessments to inform critical decisions on force and resource allocations;
- Develop policies, plans, and recommendations for Total Force Readiness programs, reporting, and assessments of readiness to execute the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance, as well as operating and refining the Defense Readiness Reporting System-Strategic;
- Provide department wide guidance and oversight of all military training and education, to include Professional Military Education, to ensure alignment with strategic guidance; and,
- Support the highest levels of occupational health and safety throughout the Total Force.

Qualifications

2. What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you to perform the duties and functions of this position?

I have more than 40 years of experience in international security affairs within the Department and across the interagency and international arena. I have served from the tactical to the strategic level as United States Army Officer and Department of War Civilian across every United States Geographic Combatant Command, to include three active war zones and numerous post-conflict areas.

I also have extensive education and training in areas relevant to national security such as United States Army military qualifications and professional military education, as well as considerable civilian education, to include:

- Ph.D. in International Relations, University of St. Andrews
- M.A. in Military Art & Science, U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies
- M.S. in Foreign Service, Georgetown University
- B.S. in General Engineering & Mideast Studies, U.S. Military Academy

I believe this education and experience provides me with unique insights on the importance and impact of readiness throughout the force and will enable me to make significant contributions to the organization by leading and improving our ability to identify, assess, and improve the readiness of our military to deter our adversaries and, if called upon, to prevail against the most dangerous threats to American interests.

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

I have an extensive range of leadership and management experience across the Department, interagency, and international arena as well as experience in the private and non-profit sectors spanning more than 40 years from the tactical to the strategic level:

I recently served as the Deputy Director of the Joint Intelligence and Security Directorate (J2) for U.S. Joint Interagency Task Force South in support of U.S. and partner Counter Narcotics and Counter Transnational Organized Crime missions throughout the Western Hemisphere. In that role, I was responsible for the daily leadership and management of the J2 consisting of more than 150 joint U.S. military, DoW civilian personnel, and intelligence community personnel organized across six divisions to include more than 40 Tactical Analysis Team members and Liaison Officers stationed in embassies and consulates throughout South and Central America and with U.S. Law Enforcement Agency partner operations centers and strike forces and the execution of a multi-million dollar budget.

Prior to that, I served as the Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Strategy, Plans, and Engagement Directorate (J5) for U.S. Special Operations Command Africa responsible leading a team of special operations professionals to plan, implement, and manage United States special operations and sensitive activities throughout the continent of Africa.

I also served as Special Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense responsible for assisting the Under Secretary manage the extensive Policy Office in the development and implementation of DoD-wide policies and initiatives.

I served as the Deputy Chief of Staff and Director for Intelligence Plans, Architecture, and Resources for the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence for NATO Operation Resolute Support Headquarters (RSHQ) and U.S. Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Kabul, Afghanistan. Responsible for serving as a senior intelligence staff officer in a dynamic and diverse office setting with a span of control over 15 intelligence support functions that required professionally interfacing with General Officers and foreign partners in a Joint and Coalition work environment across a wide range of intelligence support functions to include the overall supervision of more than 400 intelligence personnel and 2,600 interpreters across the intelligence enterprise throughout Afghanistan and the Southwest Asia Region and the management of a \$500+ million budget.

While in Afghanistan, I also served as Senior Advisor to the Commander, NATO

Special Operations Component Command and U.S. Special Operations Joint Task Force – Afghanistan responsible for providing advice and counsel on the conduct of NATO and U.S. Special Operations Forces intelligence and combat operations and objectives, as well as other roles.

More broadly, I have served in senior leadership, management, and advisor roles with a wide range of organizations to include as a Senior Intelligence and Counterterrorism Advisor to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Army Staff, U.S. Department of State, and the New York City Police Department (NYPD) Counterterrorism Bureau. I also served as Senior Policy, Plans, and Training Officer with the United Nations (U.N.) Department of Peacekeeping Operations responsible for assisting with establishing and supporting U.N. missions around the world. I was seconded by the U.S. Department of State as Deputy Head of Mission and Chairman of the Media Experts Commission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina where I led a country-wide team responsible for ensuring free and responsible media in support of elections and democratization programs and deterring, countering, and stopping media disinformation and incitement to violence throughout the country. I also served as the Deputy Director of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Joint Military Command Office (JMC) for the U.S. Department of State program to establish a unified defense organization and army for the newly formed Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I also served in an extensive range of leadership and management positions as a U.S. Army Officer to include Flight Platoon leader and Adjutant in a Combat Aviation Battalion and Brigade, Political-Military Officer on the U.S. Army Staff, Intelligence Officer on the Joint Staff, Intelligence Officer on the U.S. CENTCOM Forward Staff for the First Gulf War, Deputy Defense Intelligence Officer for the Middle East, South Asia and Terrorism, and Chief of Intelligence Plans for the U.S. Army 1st Armored Division, among others.

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

If confirmed, I would first work to ensure solid working relationships with my fellow ASWs to identify areas of opportunity for increased collaboration and communication across the P&R portfolio. I would concurrently look internally to analyze and assess the current organization, roles, and manning of the ASW(R) office to identify ways of solving issues and meeting challenges, coordinating any recommended changes throughout the Department and with all stakeholders.

5. If confirmed, what other duties would you recommend the Secretary of Defense or the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) assign to you, particularly in light of the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance?

I would first assess the areas currently addressed by the ASW(R) Office and then recommend possible additions which could be added within resource constraints. I would work to identify any areas of opportunity as it relates to the Administration's strategic priorities, such as the readiness of the U.S. Defense Industrial Base, the allied

and partner Defense Industrial Bases, or the ability of U.S. allies and partners to support U.S. operations and activities.

Major Challenges

6. In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next ASD(Readiness)?

It is my view that the major challenges for the next ASD(Readiness) are ensuring that readiness data is valid and relevant to critical requirements and assessments; identifying and applying advanced technological capabilities to data validation and analytics to improve the accuracy and timeliness of assessments; ensuring strategic readiness assessments are integrated with Department-wide planning and resourcing efforts; and ensuring oversight and management of Department-wide military education and training are aligned with strategic guidance and focused on critical missions.

7. If confirmed, what actions and timelines would you have for addressing each of these challenges?

The challenges confronting the Readiness position are large in scale and scope, and I look forward to tackling them on day one, if confirmed, and am committed to ensuring timely and transparent action on these challenges and to continue the President and Secretary's initiatives in rebuilding the readiness of the Total Force.

Readiness Responsibilities

Section 136 of title 10, United States Code, assigns to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) certain responsibilities for military readiness. The Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Joint Staff, and other Under Secretaries of Defense (e.g., the Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment exercises purview over logistics, sustainment, and materiel readiness), each have important responsibilities in the readiness domain.

8. What is your understanding of the role of the USD(P&R) in the domain of readiness? What is the role of the ASD(Readiness)? How do the roles of the USD(P&R) and the ASD(Readiness) network with the roles of the Military Department Secretaries, the Joint Staff, and the other Under Secretaries in the domain of readiness?

It is my understanding that the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness has the statutory responsibility under Title 10 to provide the Department's overarching leadership and policy direction for readiness, recognizing that readiness is not just about equipment or materiel but about people—their training, health, resilience, and ability to deploy as a Total Force.

The Assistant Secretary of War for Readiness carries that mandate forward by translating policy into execution and oversight, ensuring that readiness reporting is accurate and comparable across the Military Services, and leading on Total Force

Fitness, safety, and occupational health, which directly affect our ability to put forces forward.

Together, the USW(P&R) and ASW(R) uniquely synchronize the efforts of the Military Departments, the Joint Staff, and other Under Secretaries—bringing their distinct responsibilities into a coherent readiness posture that keeps people, training, and resilience at the center of our ability to deter, fight, and win.

9. What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the ASD(Readiness) in developing and promulgating policies and in exercising oversight of the implementation of materiel readiness policies and programs?

The Assistant Secretary of War for Readiness plays a critical role in shaping and overseeing policies that ensure the materiel readiness of the Joint Force. This includes developing and promulgating guidance that supports commanders in assessing unit readiness across personnel, training, supply, and equipment dimensions—particularly the condition and availability of materiel. The Assistant Secretary of War for Readiness collaborates with the Assistant Secretary of War for Sustainment to ensure that the interconnected readiness issues between personnel and materiel readiness are well integrated. If confirmed, I would prioritize ensuring that effective policies and oversight mechanisms are in place, and that comprehensive, timely data on equipment and supply are accessible to support accurate monitoring and informed decision-making across the force.

10. What role does the ASD(Readiness) play in ensuring that the personnel and health programs under the auspices of the USD(P&R) promote the readiness requirements of the Military Departments?

Personnel, health, and safety programs are not just compliance activities but true force multipliers that preserve combat power. ASW(R) ensures that safety and occupational health, operational risk management, and warfighter performance optimization function as a unified system of readiness. These programs prevent mishaps, protect the health of the force, and sustain the Joint Force's ability to fight tonight and endure tomorrow - connecting force protection to force projection.

If confirmed, I would work collaboratively across the Department and Military Departments to develop a policy to identify and address any gaps or inefficiencies in current systems, implement metrics to measure the impact of warfighter performance optimization on readiness, and advocate for funding and staffing to have the right resources readily available to the force.

11. Given that responsibility for reserve affairs also resides under the USD(P&R), what role does the ASD(Readiness) play in matters of Reserve Component readiness?

The Assistant Secretary of War for Readiness plays a vital role in ensuring Reserve Component readiness as part of the broader Total Force. This includes collaborating

with the Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower & Reserve Affairs on mobilization policy, guiding Reserve Component participation in the global force management process, and conducting readiness assessments that address Total Force preparedness to execute strategic and operational requirements. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department continues to effectively access and employ the Reserve Component in accordance with established policies, while also strengthening ongoing initiatives that support the readiness of the entire force.

12. Given that responsibility for health affairs also resides under the USD(P&R), what role does the ASD(Readiness) play in matters related to the medical readiness of military forces—both Active and Reserve Components?

ASW(R) establishes and oversees policies and standards that directly affect medical readiness, in coordination with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Health Affairs (OASW(HA)), the Defense Health Agency (DHA), and the Military Departments. ASW(R) focuses on the prevention of injuries and illnesses that undermine readiness, integrating proactive safety and occupational health with holistic Total Force Fitness, and ensuring the warfighters' health and safety during day-to-day operations. By identifying hazards early, applying targeted risk management, and leveraging data on mishaps, exposures, and leading indicators, the ASW(R) enables better-informed risk management decisions. This approach not only prevents avoidable losses but also sustains a healthy, resilient, and lethal Joint Force.

13. Do you believe that the position of the ASD(Readiness) would be better aligned under a different Undersecretary of Defense? Why or why not?

No. I do not believe the Assistant Secretary of War for Readiness would be better aligned under a different Under Secretary. President Trump established the Assistant Secretary of War for Readiness during his first term in 2019, showcasing the importance of Readiness to serve at the highest echelons of the Department. Readiness's value within the Personnel and Readiness portfolio cannot be understated, as the reciprocal nature of personnel and readiness is necessary in recruitment, retention, strength, resiliency, training, and the overall readiness of the force. Severing those links could create unnecessary risk to the Department's mission.

14. What do you perceive to be the most critical duties and functions that should be assigned to the ASD(Readiness) for execution? Does the ASD(Readiness) have purview over these duties and functions today? If not, what specific steps would you take, if confirmed, to bring these critical duties and functions under the authority, direction, and control of the ASD(Readiness)?

Secretary Hegseth has consistently emphasized his objectives of restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding our military, and reestablishing deterrence. The most critical duties and functions of the ASW(R) directly support these objectives by ensuring a ready

and lethal Total Force, aligning with the Secretary's focus on lethality, meritocracy, accountability, and standards. ASW(R) exercises purview over these duties and functions through its three components: Strategic Readiness, Readiness Analytics, and Safety and Occupational Health. If confirmed, my priority would be to advocate for these components to be effectively integrated to maximize their contributions to building, maintaining, and balancing warfighting capabilities and competitive advantages to ensure the Department can achieve strategic objectives across threats and time horizons.

Currently, the ASD (Readiness) exercises authority, direction, and control over a number of disparate offices with no clear relationship to producing combat readiness.

15. In your assessment, should the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Education and Training aligned under the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness? Why or why not?

Education and training are essential foundations to building force readiness by enhancing the physical, mental, and technical skills of military personnel, preparing individuals and units to execute their assigned missions, and fostering adaptability for evolving threats. Directly connecting the force development activities of education and training with the assessment of strategic readiness supports an integrated approach by not just measuring readiness, but by driving better readiness outcomes.

Relationship with the Military Departments

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness has implemented a Readiness Recovery Framework that includes working with the Military Departments to establish a defined readiness-rebuilding plan, to include developing comprehensive goals and metrics to evaluate the extent to which identified goals are achieving intended outcomes.

16. Is the Readiness Recovery framework fully institutionalized across all components of the DOD?

It is my understanding that the Department continues to focus on the readiness of the most stressed force elements to ensure they are resourced properly. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure all levers are used to reduce risk and enhance readiness of the most critical forces for our operational and strategic requirements.

17. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to continue the rebuild of full spectrum readiness across the department.

If confirmed, I will work with the Department to continue building Joint Force readiness and take concrete steps to improve budget stability, modernize equipment, enhance sustainment, and support the warfighters. This requires balancing current needs and future modernization, informed by rapid and robust readiness analysis leveraging artificial intelligence to inform and refine our assessments. If confirmed, I would prioritize joint exercises and training focused on preparing our warfighters for

the most challenging threat environments they could face, so that if called to action, they are fully prepared to meet the challenge.

- 18. In your view, what are the metrics that should be used to track readiness-rebuilding progress? Are these metrics being tracked today? Which components of DOD currently track these metrics? How should these metrics be employed to affect decision making in the domain of readiness? Are these metrics currently being employed in the fashion you suggest?**

In my view, rebuilding total force readiness requires metrics that are grounded in rigorous analysis and derived from authoritative, high-quality data sources. These metrics should reflect operational realities and actual force employment. If confirmed, I will focus on advancing data-rich readiness initiatives that incorporate standardized metrics supported by robust analytical frameworks and cutting-edge tools.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure these metrics are aligned with the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance and employed in a way that delivers valuable insights to inform decisions at all levels.

- 19. In your view, what additional investments or departmental reforms are needed to ensure the Military Services are addressing readiness recovery?**

The Department must prioritize targeted investments in advanced technologies that enhance our ability to analyze readiness and inform strategic decision-making. Accelerating the adoption of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and other data-driven tools will improve our capacity to assess force posture, identify gaps, and provide solutions to the challenges identified in the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance. These innovations will enable more precise resource allocation for an optimally prepared force.

- 20. Do you believe the ASD(Readiness) has the necessary authorities to engender and oversee meaningful readiness improvements? If not, what additional authorities does the ASD(Readiness) need?**

Yes, I believe ASW(R) has the necessary authority to oversee the Department's progress toward the Secretary's readiness goals and provide the Services with the guidance and tools to build and sustain readiness. If confirmed, I will work hand-in-hand with the Military Departments, the Joint Staff, and Department of War leadership to ensure the most pressing readiness issues are identified and addressed.

- 21. Does OUSD(P&R) have the analytic tools and expertise to assist you in evaluating DOD personnel and training readiness across the spectrum of challenges presented by the current strategic environment—from low intensity, gray-zone**

conflicts to protracted, high-intensity fights with major-power rivals? Please explain your answer.

I believe it is critical that the Department continue to integrate machine learning and AI-enabled tools to produce higher-fidelity predictive analytics across the full spectrum of military operations. If confirmed, I will continue to evaluate and improve Readiness' analytic capabilities and improve collaboration and data sharing, including leveraging forums and working groups. Making better decisions faster is paramount to informing the Secretary and the Department in time to have real impact on readiness decision making.

Readiness Monitoring

Section 117 of title 10, U.S. Code, directed the Department of Defense (DOD) to “establish a comprehensive readiness reporting system for the Department of Defense.” This led to the creation of the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS). Initially, each Military Department established its own service-specific DRRS. But the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) prohibited any further expenditure of funds for the development of service-specific systems, and required transition to single system—DRRS-Strategic—by 2020.

22. In your view, does the current readiness reporting system accurately and reliably collect and display the information necessary to establish that our forces are not only “ready” but “Ready for What?”?

Yes. The Department's readiness reporting system collects an extensive amount of data and assesses both the resources and capabilities of forces from small units to Combatant Commands to perform their assigned missions. These missions span the range of military operations from humanitarian aid and disaster relief to major combat operations against a peer competitor. If confirmed, I will ensure we are continually improving the reliability, sustainability, and timeliness of the readiness reporting system to remain current with the evolving character of warfare.

23. What is your understanding of the responsibility you will have, if confirmed, for the operation and evolution of DRRS?

The ASW(R) oversees the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS) to ensure this mission critical system remains relevant and effective, in accordance with the statutory requirements of section 117 of title 10 U.S. Code. If confirmed, I will prioritize close collaboration with Combatant Commands, Joint Staff, and Military Services through existing governance structures and working groups, ensuring the system is responsive to the rapidly evolving operational environment. Additionally, I will pursue efforts to keep pace with technology advancements and the changing character of war.

24. How satisfied are you with the current utility and usage of DRRS in informing the development of the NDS? Please explain your answer.

If confirmed, I will continue supporting the current utility, usage, and contribution of DRRS in informing the Secretary of War's development of the National Defense Strategy.

25. How satisfied are you with the current utility and usage of DRRS in informing the Secretary of Defense's development of the defense planning guidance pursuant to section 113(g) of title 10?

If confirmed, I will continue supporting the current utility, usage, and contribution of DRRS in informing the Secretary of War's development of the Defense Planning Guidance pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 113(g).

26. How satisfied are you with the current utility and usage of DRRS in informing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's development of the National Military Strategy?

If confirmed, I will continue supporting the current utility, usage, and contribution of DRRS in informing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's development of the National Military Strategy.

27. How satisfied are you with the current utility and usage of DRRS in informing the development and review of Combatant Commanders' operational plans and acceptance of risk?

If confirmed, I will continue supporting the current utility, usage, and contribution of DRRS in informing the development and review of Combatant Commanders' operational plans and acceptance of risk.

28. How satisfied are you with the current utility and usage of DRRS in informing DOD Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution systems to address readiness gaps?

If confirmed, I will continue supporting the current utility, usage, and contribution of DRRS in informing DoW Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution systems to address readiness gaps.

29. Will you commit, if confirmed, to conducting a review of the utility and usage of DRRS—across all domains—and reporting your findings and recommendations back to this Committee within 120 days of your appointment?

If confirmed, I will provide a report to this committee to provide better insight on the utility and usage of DRRS.

Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress

- 30. In your view, does the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress provide the elements of information required to clearly inform Congress of the readiness of the joint force, including near-term risks and areas where congressional action may be needed?**

I understand that the Semi-annual Readiness Report to Congress has evolved to better highlight key issues and trends and underscore the most significant challenges to support congressional oversight and action, where necessary. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the Report to ensure it effectively meets the informational needs of Members and professional staff. I will work to provide any additional data or insights requested to support informed oversight and decision-making.

- 31. Are you aware of readiness information that is currently in use within DOD, but that is not currently shared with Congress and that would be useful for the exercise of congressional oversight? Please explain your answer.**

If confirmed, I am committed to working with Congress to ensure Congress has the information necessary to conduct oversight and provision resourcing to support the readiness of the armed forces.

Overall Readiness of the Armed Forces

- 32. What is your assessment of the current readiness of the Armed Forces?**

The U.S. armed forces are the most lethal fighting force in the world. The President and Secretary have been clear on the importance of readiness to deliver Peace through Strength. We must remain focused on continuing to prepare our forces for the constantly evolving threat environment by modernizing our weapons, leveraging cutting-edge tools to maximize the performance of our people and systems, and providing the training and education that will contribute to success on the battlefield of tomorrow.

- 33. If confirmed, what would be your roles and responsibilities for monitoring the Military Department and Service progress toward goals for reset and reconstitution of combat forces and equipment?**

ASW(Readiness) develops policies and plans, provides advice, and makes recommendations for readiness programs, reporting, and assessments to execute the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance. If confirmed, I will work to equip leaders with data-driven decision superiority for the current and future force. I will collaborate with stakeholders across the Department to identify key challenges and take purposeful steps to more effectively allocate resources in support of a ready and lethal Total Force.

34. What is your understanding of the timeline on which the Department will restore readiness, and the specific shortfalls that will require the longest investment of time and money? If confirmed, how would you plan to restore full spectrum readiness and on what timelines?

If confirmed, I will prioritize the identification of shortfalls, work with Department stakeholders to ensure our resources are appropriately aligned, and lead Readiness in providing information to senior leaders to maximize tradeoffs and drive down risk.

In recent years, the term “readiness” has come to mean many things to different stakeholders, in a variety of contexts.

35. What is your definition of “readiness”?

Readiness is the ability of the Total Force to outpace our adversaries, meeting both the known challenges of today and the unknown challenges of tomorrow. It is core to our mission and a cornerstone of deterrence. At the most basic level, readiness encompasses all elements (tactical, operational, and strategic) that enable the Total Force to meet our objectives and achieve the mission today and in the future.

36. In your view, would there be value in establishing a standardized DOD-wide definition of “readiness”? Please explain your answer.

It is my understanding that the Department already possesses a standardized definition of “readiness”. DoDI 3000.18, “Strategic Readiness,” provides a clear definition of strategic readiness. This definition aligns with that found in the DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms and in DoDD 7730.65, “Defense Readiness Reporting System,” which further defines both strategic and tactical readiness.

37. What is your understanding of the degree to which units are completing all Military Department and Combatant Commander-mandated training before deploying?

It is my understanding that there is clear Office of the Secretary of War policy on the certification of Military Department and Combatant Commander mandated pre-deployment training and theater entry requirements, and additional DoW-wide pre-deployment training requirements for topics such as operations security and the code of conduct during isolation or capture.

These requirements serve as a critical means to prepare Service members to be effective in theater. If confirmed, I would ensure the Department maintains oversight of, and collaborates with, the Military Services to ensure there is a common understanding of requirements in this area and that there is compliance with it. This is an essential aspect of their role as force providers.

Monitoring Deployments

Current DOD policy is to set rotational deployment goals for both active and reserve component service members. However, some service force elements are deploying more frequently than DOD policy intends.

- 38. If confirmed, what mitigation efforts would you propose to deal with the high pace of operations, particularly for high-demand, low-density force elements that deploy more frequently?**

The Department must strike a balance between sustaining current readiness and modernizing the Joint Force to ensure future responsiveness. If confirmed, I would prioritize mitigation strategies that address the operational strain on high-demand, low-density force elements, which are essential to defending the Homeland and deterring China. To achieve this, I would closely monitor and assess the readiness impacts on these critical units to prevent degradation in their ability to respond to future crises. I would also collaborate across the Department to explore and implement mitigation efforts such as expanding capacity across the total force, accelerating modernization initiatives, and identifying opportunities to minimize deployment impacts.

- 39. What steps would you take, if confirmed as the ASD(Readiness) to ensure that the Military Departments deploy service members in accordance with established rotational goals, or to adjust deployment and dwell policy, as appropriate? Please address both the active and reserve components in your response.**

If confirmed, I would take deliberate steps to ensure that the Military Departments adhere to established rotational goals for both the active and reserve components, and ensure these goals are supporting and maintaining force readiness. As the Department continues to develop and refine Global Force Management policy, I would ensure that any exceptions to these rotational standards are justified with robust, data-driven rationale. In rare cases where the Services must request the Secretary's approval to exceed these limits, I would require thorough analysis and validation that all other sourcing options have been exhausted. This approach will help preserve the health and readiness of the force while maintaining operational effectiveness.

- 40. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to collect and analyze reliable data to measure service member "time away," consistent with Comptroller General recommendations in the report "Military Readiness: Clear Policy and Reliable Data Would Help DOD Better Manage Service Members' Time Away from Home" (GAO-18-253)?**

If confirmed, I would fully support taking concrete steps to establish a consistent and reliable Department-wide system for tracking personnel tempo. This includes providing the necessary information, coordination, and oversight to implement a standardized approach to measuring service member "time away." I would also consider whether it is necessary to revise existing policies to create a uniform set of

definitions and data standards across the Department in order to enable more accurate analysis and reporting to inform readiness decisions and improve force management.

Force Safety and Occupational Health

The ASD(Readiness) is the DOD Designated Agency Safety and Health Official and oversees DOD Occupational Safety and Occupational Health (OSHA) policies. The calendar year 2019 DOD Occupational Safety & Health Reports states, “DOD has some of the lowest civilian employee injury and lost time case rates among all federal agencies.” But despite a lower overall case rate, a higher percentage of DOD OSHA cases were “lost time” cases compared to the Federal government overall. These lost time cases are more significant and disruptive. Although DOD comprises 26 percent of the total Federal civilian workforce, it accounted for 31 percent of OSHA fatalities.

41. Specifically, what is the value added provided by the ASD(Readiness) in the domain operational safety and occupational health?

ASW(Readiness) serves as the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official, ensuring that operational safety and occupational health are treated as force enablers, not compliance exercises. If confirmed, I would work to integrate safety and occupational health into operations, providing oversight and accountability across the Department. I would also utilize data on mishaps, exposures, and leading indicators to give leaders the decision space to act early. This approach prevents avoidable losses, reduces the severity of mishaps, and preserves the health, resilience, and lethality of the Joint Force.

42. If confirmed, how would you use the forum provided by the Defense Safety Oversight Council to address safety challenges that present across the force? What are the most critical issues you would you identify for the Council to tackle?

ASW(R) serves as the Executive Secretary of the Defense Safety Oversight Council (DSOC) which is the Department’s senior safety forum. If confirmed, I would leverage the ongoing work of the DSOC to identify cross-cutting issues, define risk mitigation actions, and oversee progress to achieve tangible outcomes. I would also review current safety trends, engage with stakeholders to solicit their views on critical enterprise safety challenges, and make recommendations on DSOC agendas that compel data-informed decisions and results.

43. If confirmed, what specific steps would you plan to take to reduce DOD’s lost time rates and workplace fatalities?

If confirmed, I would seek to reduce lost-time rates and fatalities by driving a prevention-first culture that embeds safety and occupational health into daily operations. This means strengthening hazard identification and targeted risk management, expanding the use of data analytics to pinpoint high-risk activities, and

ensuring leaders have the decision space to act early. I would also emphasize sharing best practices across the Services, aligning resources to the most pressing risks, and reviewing every fatality for systemic lessons learned. These steps will prevent avoidable losses, protect the workforce, and preserve the Joint Force's readiness and lethality.

44. What are the most common causes of DOD workplace fatalities?

If confirmed, I will work with the Military Services to use data informed analysis to understand the primary causes of workplace fatalities across the Total Force and I will seek to ensure these preventable mishaps are effectively mitigated through clear communication and hazard abatement.

Voluntary Education Programs

45. Do you believe DOD's Voluntary Education Programs contribute to military recruiting and retention, and to military readiness? By what metrics does DOD assess and evaluate the contribution of such programs to recruiting, retention, and readiness? Do you believe such metrics adequate to discern a causal relationship between these programs and desired recruiting and retention outcomes?

As ASW (M&RA) has the primary responsibility for this portfolio, I am committed to working with my M&RA counterpart to ensure that tuition assistance is an integral component of the Services' recruiting, in-Service development, promotion, retention and transition strategies. I believe tuition assistance, along with our credentialing programs, improve force readiness by helping recruiters advocate for Service careers and improve advancement opportunities and help motivate our best Service members to stay in service. Should I be confirmed, I look forward to learning more about assessing the value of these programs.

46. Should military service obligations incurred through participation in the Tuition Assistance Program run consecutively or concurrently with other incurred service obligations, in your view? Does DOD receive an adequate return on its investment in Tuition Assistance?

As ASW (M&RA) has the primary responsibility for this portfolio, I am committed to working with my M&RA counterpart to ensure that the Department continues to see improved job performance, promotion potential, self-development, and personal quality of life from those Service members who use tuition assistance funds. Should I be confirmed, I look forward to learning more about assessing the value of these programs.

47. What is your view of the adequacy of the Department's mechanisms and processes for protecting service members seeking to make use of Tuition Assistance Program funding from marketing by educational institutions that offer academic programs of dubious rigor and applicability?

As ASW (M&RA) has the primary responsibility for this portfolio, I am committed to working with my M&RA counterpart to ensure that the Department takes all complaints about educational institutions seriously when suspected violations of DoW agreements and policies occur and will ensure DoW takes appropriate action to address aggressive or misleading marketing actions by educational institutions.

48. What progress has the Department made in identifying and leveraging credentialing programs, both to enhance a service member's ability to perform his/her official duties, and to qualify the member for meaningful civilian employment on separation from the military?

As ASW (M&RA) has the primary responsibility for this portfolio, I am committed to working with my M&RA counterpart to ensure DoW's credentialing programs continue to provide the means for Service members to learn about and obtain civilian credentials that are closely aligned with their military occupations that are mapped to civilian occupations, identify the gaps that they need to close, and provide resources to pay for credentialing exams and maintenance fees.

Training Ranges

DOD is fielding Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in greater numbers, which has created a strong demand for access to national airspace to conduct training and for other purposes. The demand has quickly exceeded the current airspace available for military operations.

49. What is your understanding and assessment of the DOD's efforts to develop a comprehensive training strategy for the Department's UAS, to include identifying any shortfalls associated with current policies, education, stationing plans, and simulator technologies?

The Secretary of War recently published a memorandum that directs the Department to unleash U.S. military drone dominance. If confirmed, I would ensure we are empowering our warfighters and encouraging innovation by rescinding restrictive policies that hindered UAS production, testing, and training, incorporating UAS in our training events, and scaling UAS capabilities across the Joint Force.

50. In your view, what infrastructure improvements must be made to ensure that DOD training ranges are constructed and equipped to provide meaningful training for fifth generation aircraft?

Ranges, both live and virtual, are critical enablers of Joint Force training. The Joint

Force must modernize its live training range infrastructure with relevant systems that replicate the latest threats of our peer adversaries. Without these range enhancements, meaningful training for fifth generation aircraft and their operators suffers. If confirmed, I would ensure our live training ranges are properly equipped with the latest threat emitters consistent with the needs of fifth generation aircraft training requirements.

Furthermore, it is increasingly necessary to train to the highest level of adversary threat capabilities free from observation and collection by our competitors. This underscores the importance of virtual ranges. If confirmed, I would fully support growing the capability and scope of our virtual range ecosystem by streamlining acquisition processes, removing hurdles to virtual training range development and construction, and encouraging accelerated onboarding of engineers and programmers necessary to design, sustain, and operate our virtual ranges.

Relations with Congress

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

I believe the Congressional Defense Committees, and the House and Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, should be seen as trusted partners. Often the fastest and most effective way to solve a particular problem is when the Department and the Congress work together. If confirmed, I commit to collaborating with the members and staff of these Committees frequently to address issues as they arise.

52. If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with Congress?

I understand that, if confirmed, it will be my responsibility to ensure the Department informs and consults with this Committee, and other appropriate congressional committees, regarding the implementation of all statutorily directed policies. I look forward to continuing a collaborative dialogue with Congress.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes.

54. 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, reports, records – including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

55. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, and 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.

56. 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.

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

Yes.

58. 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 a simple yes or no.

Yes.

59. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military members, 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.