

Advance Questions for Dr. Delores M. Etter
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and the chain of command by clearly delineating the combatant commanders' responsibilities and authorities and the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. These reforms have also vastly improved cooperation between the services and the combatant commanders in the strategic planning process, in the development of requirements, in joint training and education, and in the execution of military operations.

Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions based on your experience in the Department of Defense?

Answer: I do not. The Civilian and military roles defined in the Goldwater-Nichols Act produce a healthy tension that balances warfighting needs with taxpayer interests. There is, however, always a benefit to periodic reviews. This is especially true given the dynamic nature of world events.

If so, what areas do you believe might be appropriate to address in these modifications?

Answer: I do not believe that modifications are necessary. I would however, recommend that any periodic review examine processes within the acquisition system to consider any forms of modification within that system.

Duties

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASN (RDA))?

Answer: It is my understanding that, at the present time, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) serves as the Navy Acquisition Executive and has the authority, responsibility, and accountability for all acquisition functions and programs within the Department of the Navy.

What background and experience do you possess that you believe qualifies you to perform these duties?

Answer: The systems and platforms in the acquisition process today contain new technologies that will give our warfighters a critical edge in accomplishing their missions. I have a strong technical background that includes digital signal processing, communications, and software engineering; this background will support technical judgments that I will need to make, if confirmed. In addition, I was a member of the Naval Research Advisory Committee (NRAC) for seven years, and chaired the committee for two of those years. During that time, I had opportunities see most of the Navy's platforms first-hand, and to talk to the men and women responsible for the weapon systems. I have visited SYSCOMS, Warfare Centers, shipyards, and research centers; I have visited foreign Navy programs to understand the differences between their acquisition processes and our process. I participated in a number of NRAC studies that looked at various acquisition components. For example, I was a member of a study that made recommendations on how to reduce manning on ships, and I chaired a study that evaluated ways in which modeling and simulation could help the acquisition process. My previous experience as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for S&T and my work for Dr. Gansler, the Under Secretary of Defense for ATL, gave me further insight into the acquisition process. I have also been on the Defense Science Board for the past four years, and have stayed current with the broad range of issues challenging OSD and the Services.

Do you believe that there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the ASN (RDA)?

Answer: I am professionally and technically prepared to assume the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition). If confirmed, I expect to have a close working relationship with the Secretary of the Navy and the Under Secretary of the Navy. I would be aided in my duties with the expertise resident in the strong acquisition management team that currently exists within the Department. However, where opportunities exist for strengthening the team; I would seek to do so with members of the career workforce as well as individuals from industry and academia.

Assuming you are confirmed, what duties and functions do you expect that the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy would prescribe for you?

Answer: At this time, I am not aware of any other additional duties and responsibilities other than those noted in existing Department of Defense and Department of the Navy instructions.

Relationships

In carrying out your duties, how will you work with the following:

- A. The Secretary of the Navy**
- B. The Under Secretary of the Navy**
- C. The Chief of Naval Operations**
- D. The Commandant of the Marine Corps**
- E. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics**
- F. The Assistant Secretaries of the Army and Air Force for Acquisition**
- G. The General Counsel of the Navy**

Answer: If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), I plan to establish and maintain close relationships with each of those identified above to execute the best possible acquisition program for the Department.

The Secretary of the Navy/Under Secretary of the Navy

The Secretary of the Navy has explicit authority to assign such of his powers, functions, and duties, as he considers appropriate to the Under Secretary of the Navy and to the Assistant Secretaries. It is my understanding that the Secretary of the Navy has made the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) responsible to establish policy, procedures as well as manage all research, development and acquisition with the Navy. Additionally, ASN (RDA) serves as the Navy's Service Acquisition Executive and Senior Procurement Executive. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary and Under Secretary in furtherance of these assignments and duties.

The Chief of Naval Operations/Commandant of the Marine Corps

If confirmed, I plan to establish close working relationships with the operational side of the Navy and Marine Corps Team, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, to provide Sailors and Marines with the required systems and platforms that are effective, reliable and affordable.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics

If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), I would represent the Department of the Navy to the Under Secretary of Defense on all matters relating to Navy acquisition policy and programs. In addition, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), as the Service

Acquisition Executive, provides recommendations on all Navy ACAT ID programs to the Under Secretary of Defense.

The Assistant Secretaries of the Army and Air Force for Acquisition

If confirmed, I plan to establish close working relationships with my counterparts in the Army and the Air Force to ensure coordination on key acquisition issues.

The General Counsel of the Navy.

If confirmed, I expect to seek advice and counsel from the Navy's Chief Legal Officer on all relevant matters.

Major Challenges and Problems

In your view, what are the major challenges that you would confront, if confirmed as ASN (RDA)?

Answer: I believe the most important challenge facing the Department of the Navy today is how to maintain our nation's Naval forces in view of the Global War on Terror, the diverse and evolving threats, and today's fiscal realities. If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), my challenge will be to integrate the research, development and acquisition functions in the context of this complex equation. These critical challenges include maintaining our technical advantage over all adversaries, developing affordable systems and platforms, and maintaining a viable technological and industrial base.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will be an active participant in the acquisition reform and streamlining initiatives being undertaken by the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy. Only through comprehensive actions can the barriers between the defense and commercial sectors of the economy be reduced or eliminated. Better integration of the defense and commercial sectors will leverage our nation's technology base and reduce overhead costs. Additionally, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps Team establish an appropriate balance between resources and requirements. Once this balance is achieved, it will be important to properly fund the development and production efforts and avoid the funding disruptions that add serious inefficiency to fielding new capabilities. In addition, I will work to continue efforts to measure the value delivered for each investment and procurement dollar.

What do you consider to be the most serious problems in the performance of the functions of the ASN (RDA)?

Answer: At this time, I am unaware of any serious problems in the performance of the functions of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition).

If confirmed, what management actions and time lines would you establish to address these problems?

Answer: If problems were to arise, I would do my best to resolve problems as expeditiously as possible to maintain the integrity of the acquisition process.

Priorities

What broad priorities would you establish, if confirmed, in terms of issues, which must be addressed by the ASN (RDA)?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work hard to address the priorities determined by the Secretary of the Navy.

Acquisition Issues

In recent months, a number of DOD officials have acknowledged that the Department may have gone too far in reducing its acquisition work force with the result of undermining its ability to provide needed oversight in the acquisition process.

Do you agree with this assessment?

Answer: I understand that the Department of the Navy acquisition workforce has been reduced by over half since 1989. I am personally very concerned about both the size and the composition of the workforce. If confirmed, I plan to review the size and skill mix of those required to effectively manage programs, and work to improve the Department's acquisition workforce.

If so, what steps do you believe the Department of the Navy should take to address this problem?

Answer: I believe the Navy must continue efforts to improve the process we use to identify acquisition position requirements, and to ensure incumbents are fully prepared and qualified to deliver warfighting capability effectively and efficiently. If confirmed, a top priority will be to assure that the Department acquisition workforce is properly oriented to efficiently and effectively execute acquisition programs.

Major defense acquisition programs in the Department of the Navy and the other military departments continue to be subject to funding and requirements instability.

Do you believe that instability in funding and requirements drives up program costs and leads to delays in the fielding of major weapon systems?

Answer: Yes, funding and requirement changes are a primary cause of most program cost increases and schedule delays.

What steps, if any, do you believe the Department of the Navy should take to address funding and requirements instability?

Answer: I believe the Department of the Navy needs to plan out-year requirements to realistic budget limits and make the hard decisions up front. For example, it is my understanding that the Chief of Naval Operations has reinstated the Naval Characteristics Board. I believe that this, along with effective utilization of the change control processes, is an excellent first step toward establishing requirement stability. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to insure a high degree of synergy among the requirements, acquisition, and programming communities.

The Comptroller General testified earlier this year that DOD programs often move forward with unrealistic program cost and schedule estimates, lack clearly defined and stable requirements, include immature technologies that unnecessarily raise program costs and delay development and production, and fail to solidify design and manufacturing processes at appropriate junctures in the development process.

Do you agree with the Comptroller General's assessment?

Answer: Based on my limited contact with recent program performance, this unfortunately appears to be the case.

If so, what steps do you believe the Navy should take to address these problems?

Answer: I believe that before committing large expenditures, the Department must ensure that requirements have matured, design alternatives have been fully examined, and realistic cost schedule and risk assessments have been prepared. As such, collaboration between the requirements, budgeting, and acquisition communities needs to be stressed early in the program formulation stage to ensure there is a realistic balance. Furthermore, development programs must incorporate risk reduction efforts commensurate with the technology maturity levels in evidence. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to insure a high degree of synergy among these communities.

Contract Management

By some estimates, the Department of Defense now spends more money every year for the acquisition of services than it does for the acquisition of products, including major weapon systems. Yet, the Department places far less emphasis on staffing, training, and managing the acquisition of services than it does on the acquisition of products.

What steps, if any, do you believe the Navy and Marine Corps should take to improve the staffing, training and management of its acquisition of services?

Answer: I understand the Department of the Navy has already taken significant steps to improve the management of services. If confirmed, I intend to better understand these activities and to continue to ensure that service acquisition receives the appropriate level of management attention.

Do you agree that the Navy and Marine Corps should develop processes and systems to provide managers with access to information needed to conduct comprehensive spending analyses of services contracts on an ongoing basis?

Answer: Yes.

The last decade has seen a proliferation of new types of government-wide contracts and multi-agency contracts. The Department of Defense is by far the largest ordering agency under these contracts, accounting for 85 percent of the dollars awarded under one of the largest programs. The DOD Inspector General and others have identified a long series of problems with interagency contracts, including lack of acquisition planning, inadequate competition, excessive use of time and materials contracts, improper use of expired funds, inappropriate expenditures, and failure to monitor contractor performance.

What steps, if any, do you believe the Department of the Navy should take to ensure that its use of interagency contracts complies with applicable DOD requirements and is in the best interests of the Department?

Answer: Based on recent events, I understand the Department of the Navy has issued specific procedures to ensure that the use of interagency contracts is in the best interests of the Department. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department's use of interagency contracts complies with applicable DoD requirements and is in the best interest of the Department of the Navy

DOD Investment in Science and Technology

As a former member of the Defense Science Board and Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Science and Technology (S&T), you have been a strong proponent for the goal of investing three percent of the annual DOD budget in S&T. You have noted that falling below three percent means not as many new technologies will be available 5, 10, or 15 years in the future and that investing more than three percent in better economic times will not pick up the slack because advancements require time.

What are your current views regarding the importance and viability of annual three percent DOD spending for S&T?

Answer: I believe that a balanced and robust Science and Technology program within the Department of Defense remains critical. The funding of a Science and Technology program as measured as a percentage of spending is only one of many factors necessary from which to evaluate the efficacy of a Science and Technology program. If confirmed, I will endeavor to accomplish the Secretary of the Navy's priorities as they relate to the Navy and Marine Corps Science and Technology program, and will coordinate closely with the DDR&E on Navy's role in overall DoD spending for Science and Technology efforts.

Navy Science and Technology

For fiscal year 2006, the Department of the Navy plans to dedicate approximately \$1.8 billion to S&T programs, which amounts to 1.4 percent of the Department's total budget, and \$448 million to basic defense research, 0.36 percent of the total Department of the Navy budget.

Do you believe that the current balance between short- and long-term research is appropriate to meet current and future Navy and Marine Corps needs?

Answer: At present, it appears the Department of the Navy has adequately balanced its short- and long-term research. However, I believe this balance needs to be re-assessed periodically.

If confirmed, what direction would you provide regarding the importance of innovative defense science in meeting Navy and Marine Corps missions?

Answer: Innovative research is a critical element of the Department's Science and Technology program. If confirmed, I will work closely with my fellow members of the Department's Science and Technology Corporate Board (VCNO, ACMC and ASN(RD&A)) to ensure we challenge our Science and Technology enterprise to provide for the best possible solution for our warfighters.

If confirmed, what role would you play in ensuring research priorities that would meet the needs of the Department in 2020?

Answer: If confirmed, I will take an active role in ensuring the Department has a balanced and responsive program in basic research, applied research and advanced development that addresses the needs of today's Navy, tomorrow's Navy and the Navy after next. I will work with the Science and Technology Corporate Board to provide appropriate guidance to direct and shape its balance.

If confirmed, how would you work to ensure that appropriate S&T plans are utilized by the Navy and Marine Corps during the budget, planning, and programming process?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with the Science and Technology Corporate Board to ensure that approved Science and Technology plans are considered during the planning, programming and budgeting process while concurrently ensuring that Science and Technology plans adapt to Department priorities.

Technology Transition

The Department's efforts to quickly transition technologies to the warfighter have yielded important results in the last few years. Challenges remain in institutionalizing the transition of new technologies into existing programs of record and major weapons systems and platforms.

What challenges to transition do you see within the Department of the Navy?

Answer: Clearly, successful transition requires an appropriately mature technology that addresses a warfighter need, a user demand, an insertion window in the program of record and budgeted resources for implementation. This alignment is hard to achieve and maintain. The Department of the Navy uses the Future Naval Capabilities program, ACTDs, Rapid Technology Transition, SBIR and various OSD technology transition programs to bridge the gap between Science and Technology and acquisition. I believe the Department of the Navy has used those tools effectively in recent years.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that technologies rapidly transition from the laboratory into the hands of the warfighter?

Answer: If confirmed, I would ensure the Science and Technology portfolio includes transition-oriented investments and processes that bring the key stakeholders into alignment with a transition agreement. I believe the Navy's Future Naval Capabilities program is designed to do this.

What steps would you take to enhance the effectiveness of technology transition efforts?

Answer: Technology transition depends on many variables, including warfighter need that can be met by a technology solution, an acquisition program of record that can inject the appropriate technology solution into its program and resources to fund the technology insertion. The Department's technology transition programs appear to take these variables into account. If confirmed, I will examine the Department's transition programs and technology transition metrics with the goal of continued process improvement.

Technical Workforce

What is your current assessment of the quality and sustainability of the DOD S&T workforce and the management of DOD's laboratory infrastructure?

Answer: I have not had the opportunity to assess the current state of the quality and sustainability of the DoD Science and Technology workforce and the management of DoD's laboratory infrastructure. However, if confirmed, I will review this critical aspect of the Department's future warfighting capabilities.

If confirmed, what plans would you pursue to ensure an adequate supply of Navy and Marine Corps experts in critical disciplines in the Department's research and development commands?

Answer: If confirmed, I will examine alternatives for attracting and retaining an adequate supply science, technology, engineering and management professionals necessary to the Department of the Navy.

National Shipbuilding Research Program - Advanced Shipbuilding Enterprise

The Advanced Shipbuilding Enterprise of the National Shipbuilding Research Program (NSRP-ASE) is a collaborative effort between the Navy and shipbuilding industry to improve processes with the objective of reducing the costs to build ships. Modest funding from both partners is projected to more than pay for itself. With the current criticism of increasing costs for Navy ships, it does not seem prudent for the Navy to cease supporting this program, but funding for the program was not requested in the fiscal year 2006 budget request.

If confirmed, what steps would you propose in working with the shipyards to reduce the costs of Navy shipbuilding?

Answer: If confirmed, I would investigate methodologies where industry and Navy could collaborate on understanding the issues that are driving cost growth on our Navy shipbuilding programs.

Do you believe that a collaborative, co-funded effort such as the NSRP-ASE between the Navy and the industrial base is of intrinsic value in lowering the spiraling costs of Navy ships?

Answer: I understand the major goal of the NSRP-ASE is to reduce the cost of shipbuilding and repair. However, I have not received briefings on this effort. If confirmed, I intend to review this as one of the alternatives to lowering the spiraling costs of Navy ships.

Shipbuilding

The fiscal year 2006 budget request included a funding request for only four ships, two funded by the Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy account, and two funded by the National Defense Sealift Fund. In testimony before the Seapower Subcommittee in support of the budget request, Navy and industry leadership testified that stability in the shipbuilding program is essential if costs are to be controlled. The Navy, however, has changed the acquisition profiles and strategies for shipbuilding programs numerous times in recent years.

Do you agree that stability of acquisition profiles and strategies are essential to shipbuilding cost control?

Answer: Yes, stability in requirements is a key step to a viable shipbuilding industrial base.

If confirmed, how would you attempt to ensure this stability?

Answer: If confirmed, I would work closely with the Chief of Naval Operations, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of Management and Budget, and Congress to maintain a long-range shipbuilding plan that industry could use to plan for infrastructure investment. Also, I would challenge industry to maintain the efficiency required to compete in the commercial sector by transitioning as many shipbuilding contracts as possible away from cost-reimbursable type contracts to fixed price type contracts.

Alternative Funding for shipbuilding

On numerous occasions, Navy leaders have testified that identifying an acceptable alternative to the full funding policy for shipbuilding is necessary to avoid increases in the Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy account brought about by the purchase of large ships. Methods such as split funding and incremental funding have been used on certain ships. Another method that has been discussed is advance appropriations.

In your opinion, what is the best way to fund Navy ships?

Answer: Procuring Navy ships is very different from other Department of Defense acquisition programs in terms of the scope of the design and construction effort, the extended timeframe required to design and build ships, and the low production rate that ships are generally procured. The fundamental process of integrating a four to eight year design and build cycle for Navy ships with an annual budget process that must respond to significant short term situations, creates many opportunities to affect change and cause instability across the Navy shipbuilding accounts. If confirmed, I will investigate available shipbuilding financing alternatives.

If confirmed, what alternative methods, if any, for shipbuilding funding, that would still allow Congressional oversight, would you recommend?

Answer: I will work with OSD, OMB and the Congress to implement the statutory authority necessary to provide the Navy with the ability to most efficiently and affordably fund complex shipbuilding programs, while at the same time ensuring appropriate oversight to monitor ship acquisition costs.

What is your view of the long-term impact of split funding or incremental funding on the availability of funds for Navy shipbuilding accounts?

Answer: I have not had the opportunity to assess the long-term impact of split funding or incremental funding on the availability of funds for Navy shipbuilding accounts. However, if confirmed, I will review this issue.

Surface Combatant Construction

During your previous service as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for S&T you testified before the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities about the Navy's DD21 program. You stated that significant program reform initiatives "have included an acquisition approach that leverages industry competition and innovation. Breaking up the so-called 'dream team' of Bath Iron Works, Ingalls, and Lockheed Martin and, instead, requiring competition in the initial concept phase of the program, between teams of shipbuilders and system integrators, assures us the best of weapon system ideas at the lowest future production and support costs --the award criteria."

The Navy has recently proposed different acquisition strategies for the new class of surface combatants, the DD(X). One proposal put forward included a "winner take all" strategy that could very well reduce the surface combatant industrial base to just one shipyard.

What is your opinion on having only one shipyard capable of building surface combatants?

Answer: At a Cold War build rate of 4-5 major surface combatants a year, a single shipyard could not provide all the required ships. Multiple shipyards capable of building large surface combatants also have allowed for some competitive pressure on costs. However, as long as the requirement for major surface combatants is at a rate of two or fewer ships per year, maintaining excess industrial capacity for surface combatants may not be cost effective. Despite this fact, having more than one shipyard available, properly protects the Navy from potential man-made or natural disasters. If confirmed, I intend to review available options in light of the best interest of our nation's security.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure a viable surface combatant industrial base?

Answer: Stability in requirements is a key first step to ensure a viable shipbuilding industrial base. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Chief of Naval Operations, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of Management and Budget, and Congress to maintain a long-range shipbuilding plan that industry could use to plan for infrastructure investment. I would challenge industry to maintain the efficiency required to compete in the commercial sector by transitioning as many shipbuilding contracts as possible away from cost-reimbursable type contracts to fixed price type contracts.

Tactical Aviation Programs

As Navy and the Marine Corps F/A-18 and Marine Corps AV-8B aircraft continue to age, the need for a timely Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) replacement becomes more and more pressing.

What are your views regarding the current risk to the JSF program schedule during its System Development and Demonstration phase?

Answer: I have not been in a position to review this particular program. However, if confirmed, I will review the program in depth.

If the JSF program were to slip again, what course of action would you recommend to maintain sufficient strike assets within our Carrier Strike Groups?

Answer: I have not been in a position to review this particular program. However, if confirmed, I will review the program and identify appropriate recommendations.

Naval aviation's EA-6B is a key enabler for traditional naval strike missions and performs a critical role in today's Global War on Terror. Efforts are ongoing to improve its Airborne Electronic Attack (AEA) capabilities through the Improved Capabilities (ICAP) III upgrade. Many of the ICAP III technologies developed for the EA-6B will also be incorporated into the follow-on AEA platform, the EA-18G.

What is your assessment of EA-18G program performance during its System Development and Demonstration phase?

Answer: I have not been in a position to review this particular program. However, if confirmed, I will review the program and determine the appropriate course of action.

The E-2 Hawkeye provides Carrier Strike Groups with an over-the-horizon airborne radar and tactical data platform capability. The E-2 Advanced Hawkeye will replace all earlier E-2 configurations, and incorporate an advanced radar and sensor suite to support Theater Air and Missile Defense as well as enhance Carrier Strike Group operations and survivability in the littorals.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend making to the Advanced Hawkeye program?

Answer: I have not been in a position to review this particular program. If confirmed, I will review the program and determine the appropriate course of action.

For many years, Navy and Marine Corps tactical aircraft have been limited to single point refueling from KC-135 and KC-10 aerial refueling aircraft. Only recently have a limited number of these aerial refueling aircraft been converted to provide a multi-point air refueling capability.

As part of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System for recapitalization of the KC-135 tanker fleet, what requirements, if any, has the Department inserted into the Capability Development Document process to accommodate Navy and Marine Corps needs?

Answer: I have not been in a position to review this particular program. If confirmed, I will review the program and determine the appropriate course of action.

United States tactical air forces currently fly with several different Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) targeting systems. Price and performance varies greatly between the systems.

What are your views regarding tactical FLIR systems and which system(s) is/are best suited for the Navy and the Marine Corps?

Answer: I have not been in a position to review this particular program. If confirmed, I will review the program and determine the appropriate course of action.

Heavy Lift Rotorcraft

The Army and the Marine Corps both have a need for a future heavy lift transport helicopter to replace existing heavy lift rotorcraft. The Marine Corps has embarked on a Heavy Lift Replacement (HLR) to acquire a new helicopter to replace the aging CH-53 helicopter. At the same time, the Army is exploring a Joint Heavy Lift (JHL) rotorcraft program, however, the "joint" aspects of this program have not been demonstrated.

Please describe the Marine Corps' HLR program and explain why this program should or should not be merged with the Army's JHL program?

Answer: I have not been in a position to review these particular programs. However, if confirmed, I will review the pros and cons of such an action.

Army and Marine Corps Capabilities And Acquisition Programs

Although the Army and Marine Corps have different missions and capabilities, their equipment, should have some degree of commonality. Throughout Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the Army and Marine Corps have worked together on acquiring equipment for Army and Marine Corps forces. However, for equipment such as helicopters and heavy wheeled vehicles, the Army and the Marine Corps have divergent acquisition paths.

What are your views regarding the joint development and acquisition of Army and Marine Corps equipment?

Answer: I am supportive of the concept of joint development and procurement of systems. However, before reaching any conclusions about joint development in this case, it would be important to analyze the individual needs and requirements of the Services, as well as discuss the programs with senior leaders of both the Marine Corps and the Army.

What role should the ASN (RDA) and the Secretary of the Navy play in synchronizing Army and Marine Corps requirements and synchronizing service programs?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy to ensure that the CNO, Commandant and Navy's acquisition community work closely with the Army, Air Force, the Coast Guard and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to set joint requirements wherever feasible.

Should the Marine Corps heavy lift replacement program be delayed until the Army and Marine Corps can agree on a single joint requirement for heavy lift rotorcraft?

If not, why not?

Answer: I have not had the opportunity to be fully briefed, nor have I been in a position to review these particular programs. As such, I am not in a position to comment on any changes to this program.

Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS)

The Department of the Navy has provided program management of this complex acquisition program on behalf of the U. S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM). The program has been plagued by technical challenges, cost growth, and schedule slippage.

What is your understanding of the current status of this program?

Answer: I understand the ASDS Program is approaching a Milestone C decision planned for December 2005.

What is the appropriate role of the ASN (RDA) in oversight of this SOCOM program?

Answer: I understand the role of ASN (RDA) is to provide guidance to the Navy Program Manager who executes all duties and responsibilities for the Program such as contracting, cost/schedule/performance monitoring, technical issue resolution, configuration control and logistics support.

Joint Programs

In the last few years, the Navy and the Air Force have both withdrawn from joint weapons programs. The Air Force has withdrawn from the Joint Standoff Weapon system, and the Navy has withdrawn from the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile system.

In your opinion, what are the key reasons that joint programs are initiated, but one or more of the partners withdraws?

Answer: I believe joint programs are important to enhancing warfighting capability and reducing overall program cost. Jointness provides the opportunity for enhanced warfighter capabilities via developing systems with common requirements, interoperability, and a shared logistics base. Jointness also make sense from a business case perspective, as budgetary benefits may include: lower non-recurring costs via cost sharing, lower unit costs from economies of scale, and lower program life-cycle costs. Withdrawal from a joint program by a participant often is the result of competing fiscal priorities coupled with the sustainment of a particular capability with legacy systems. The opportunity cost of continuing to meet operational commitments with existing platforms and weapons is often the withdrawal from pursuing an improved capability.

If confirmed, how would you recommend changing the system so that the Navy and Marine Corps would participate in only those programs in which it would follow through?

Answer: Jointness works most effectively when the Services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and the Joint Staff share the same perspective about warfighting requirements and the technical and cost benefits/risks. I believe that Service Leadership coordination must begin early in the process and be maintained to ensure success. If confirmed, I will examine other methods to improve joint program participation.

United States Naval Academy Professors

As a member of the U. S. Naval Academy electrical engineering faculty you have had a unique opportunity to evaluate the Academy's ability to perform its academic mission. Last year, the Naval Academy's Academic Dean, William C. Miller, said that a shortage of qualified professors, both military and civilian, threatens the Academy's ability to provide a first-rate military education. Additionally, he indicated that the desired 50-50 ratio of civilian to military instructors has lessened with civilian instructors outnumbering military officers 292 to 226.

Answer: I understand the Dean's concerns, having witnessed a number of vacant officer-instructors in my home department of electrical engineering. The Naval Academy has actually been quite close to a 50-50 ratio (plus/minus 5%) over the past forty years. Only recently, in the past ten-twelve years, has the growing number of vacant military billets become a challenge, threatening this historical balance and forcing the hiring of adjunct civilian faculty in lieu of officer-instructors or career civilian educators. As you may know, the Navy and the Naval Academy, working together, have developed, a number of initiatives including the Permanent Military Professor program, the Graduate Education + Teaching program, and the recall of reservists with advanced, postgraduate education in the subjects taught at USNA. I am confident that those remedies will be increasingly effective in reversing the unfortunate trend of vacant officer-instructor billets.

What is your current assessment of the Naval Academy's supply of qualified civilian and military professors?

Answer: I have been impressed with the quality of both the officer and civilian faculty at the Academy. Departments carefully scrutinize the officers nominated to teach in their respective departments, and the Naval Academy conducts successful national searches for all of its career civilian faculty positions. The resulting faculty is first rate, and provides an outstanding undergraduate education to our future Navy and Marine officers.

What is your view of the Permanent Military Professor Program initiative and the pace of implementation and manning, and what recommendations, if any, for this Program do you have?

Answer: There are three Permanent Military Professors in my home department of Electrical Engineering. All have extensive operational Navy experience in addition to an earned doctorate in electrical engineering. One of these officers, a Navy captain, is our department chair. Another I have had the opportunity to collaborate with in my research. I understand plans are underway to expand the Permanent Military Professor program to a total of fifty. I heartily endorse both the program and the expansion.

If confirmed as ASN (RDA), what role, if any, would you expect to play with respect to oversight of the U. S. Naval Academy?

Answer: If confirmed, I will supervise the research of the Naval Academy and the Office of Naval Research. Both organizations have a long-standing relationship dating back through multiple USNA superintendents, academic deans, and ONR commanders. I expect that that relationship will continue, to the mutual benefit of both institutions.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition?

Yes.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Yes.