

Advance Questions for the Honorable Raymond E. Mabus, Jr.
Nominee for Secretary of the Navy

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 with the Department of Defense?

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will closely examine Goldwater-Nichols and make recommendations for changes to the Secretary of Defense if I deem change to be advisable. However, at this time I am not aware of any needed modifications.

Do you believe that the role of the service secretaries under the Goldwater-Nichols legislation is appropriate and the policies and processes in existence allow that role to be fulfilled?

Answer. Yes.

Do you see a need for any change in those roles, with regard to the resource allocation process or otherwise?

Answer: I am not aware of any need for changes to the roles of the service secretaries at this time.

Duties

Section 5013 of title 10, United States Code, establishes the responsibilities and authority of the Secretary of the Navy.

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Secretary of the Navy?

ANSWER: If confirmed as Secretary of the Navy, I will be responsible for the responsibilities and authorities in Section 5013 of Title 10 for both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps.

Assuming you are confirmed, what duties do you expect that Secretary Gates would prescribe for you?

ANSWER: If confirmed, I believe that Secretary Gates would expect me to implement the President's national security objectives throughout the Department of the Navy.

What duties and responsibilities would you plan to assign to the Under Secretary of the Navy?

ANSWER: If confirmed, the Under Secretary would be designated as deputy and principal assistant to me, and per NDAA 2009 the Chief Management Officer of the Navy.

Do you believe that there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Secretary of the Navy?

ANSWER: My accumulated professional experience which includes being the Governor of Mississippi, Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and senior leadership and management positions in the private sector provides me with the tools necessary to lead large and complex organizations. I approach the Secretary of the Navy's duties and responsibilities with an open mind and a dedication to serve. If confirmed, I will seek to rapidly assemble a strong team composed of dedicated, experienced, and talented people.

Relationships

Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Secretary of the Navy to the following officials:

A. The Secretary of Defense.

ANSWER: The Secretary of the Navy reports directly to the Secretary of Defense and ensures that his priorities are implemented in the Department of the Navy.

B. The Deputy Secretary of Defense.

ANSWER: The Secretary of the Navy works closely with the Deputy Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Secretary of Defense's priorities are implemented in the Department of the Navy.

C. The Under Secretaries of Defense.

ANSWER: If confirmed, I, the Under Secretary of the Navy, and the Assistant Secretaries of the Navy will coordinate and work closely with the Under Secretaries of Defense to ensure the Department of the Navy's actions complements the priorities set forth by the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

D. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

ANSWER: The Secretary of the Navy coordinates with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to ensure that he has all the information and support necessary from the Department of Navy to perform the duties of principal military advisor to the President, National Security Council, and Secretary of Defense.

E. The other Service Secretaries.

ANSWER: The Secretary of the Navy should maintain close and positive relationships with the other Service Secretaries to ensure that a cohesive and fully equipped and trained joint force is prepared to execute operations in support of our national interests.

F. The Chief of Naval Operations.

ANSWER: The Chief of Naval Operations performs his duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of the Navy and is directly responsible to the Secretary according to Title 10.

G. The Commandant of the Marine Corps.

ANSWER: The Commandant of the Marine Corps performs his duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of the Navy and is directly responsible to the Secretary according to Title 10.

H. The Combatant Commanders

ANSWER: The Secretary of the Navy supports the Combatant Commanders' operational and war-fighting requirements.

I. The Under Secretary of the Navy.

ANSWER: The Under Secretary of the Navy is the principal assistant to the Secretary of the Navy. He acts with full authority of the Secretary in the management of the Department and performs any duties given him by Secretary of the Navy.

J. The Assistant Secretaries of the Navy

ANSWER: The Assistant Secretaries perform specific oversight roles delegated to them by the Secretary of the Navy.

K. The General Counsel of the Navy.

ANSWER: The General Counsel (GC) is the senior civilian legal advisor to Secretary of the Navy. The GC also serves as the Secretary of the Navy's chief ethics official.

L. The Judge Advocate General of the Navy.

ANSWER: The Judge Advocate General of the Navy and the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps are the Secretary of the Navy's senior uniformed legal advisors.

Major Challenges and Problems

In your view, what are the major challenges that will confront the next Secretary of the Navy?

Answer: If confirmed, my challenges will include: providing for the health and welfare of our Sailors, Marines, and their families; supporting Overseas Contingency Operations and maintaining readiness; maintaining fiscal and budget discipline and establishing and maintaining long-term shipbuilding and aviation procurement programs that are achievable affordable, and responsive to the needs of the nation.

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

Answer: I plan to work closely with Congress, the President, the Secretary of Defense, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, as well as other people and institutions to address manpower costs while continuing to support our Sailors, Marines and their families; execute affordable and effective shipbuilding and aviation plans; and address budget issues.

What do you consider to be the most serious problems in the performance of the functions of the Secretary of the Navy?

Answer: I am not aware of any serious problems in the performance of the functions of the Secretary of the Navy.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary of Defense and the Service Chiefs to develop plans to address any areas requiring attention.

Priorities

If confirmed, what broad priorities will you establish?

The broad priorities of the Department of the Navy will be aligned with those established by the Secretary of Defense. These include commitment to and support for maintaining the All-Volunteer Force; balancing programs to fight the wars we are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan; ensuring we are prepared for other operations and contingencies; and reforming acquisition, procurement, and contracting.

Transformation

If confirmed as the Secretary of the Navy, you would play an important role in the ongoing process of transforming the Navy and Marine Corps to meet new and emerging threats.

If confirmed, what would your goals be for Navy and Marine Corps transformation?

Answer: The Navy and Marine Corps continuously assess new and emerging threats to ensure that their personnel are trained and equipped to meet and defeat them.

In your opinion, does the Department of the Navy's projected budget have adequate resources identified to implement your transformation goals?

Answer: I have not had the opportunity to study in depth the Department's budget requests.

Tactical Aviation

Several years ago, the Navy and Marine Corps began to integrate their tactical aviation units.

What is your assessment of this initiative?

Answer: My initial assessment based upon limited information is that integration of tactical aviation between the Navy and Marine Corps allows the Department of the Navy to best meet the needs of the nation.

The Department of the Navy is facing a potential shortfall of strike fighter aircraft in the next decade even if the Navy continues to buy F/A-18E/F aircraft and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft at the rate projected in last year's budget.

What is your assessment of this situation and what actions should the Department of the Navy take to address this potential shortfall?

Answer: If confirmed, I will review current and projected procurement of strike fighter aircraft, a top priority for Naval Aviation, and determine the actions and strategies necessary to mitigate or prevent any potential shortfall.

What is your understanding of whether the Navy will continue to operate the 10 carrier air wings that supported the fleet of 11 aircraft carriers, or whether the air wing force structure will be modified to reflect a planned reduction to a permanent level of 10 aircraft carriers?

Answer: I am not aware of plans to reduce air wing force structure, although this issue, like all force structure issues, will be reviewed in the Quadrennial Defense Review. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Defense to ensure the QDR reflects the best balance of capabilities and risk for the nation.

What is your assessment of the current risk to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Program schedule during its system development and demonstration phase?

Answer: I am not aware of the status of risk to the JSF program, although I know the Navy and Marine Corps are fully committed to the Joint Strike Fighter program.

Alternatives for maintaining sufficient strike assets if there are new schedule difficulties with the JSF program are limited. It appears that the Department of the Navy's options for extending the service life of existing F/A-18 aircraft are limited and procurement of additional F/A-18 aircraft beyond those planned last year may be more difficult with the Secretary of

Defense's recent announcement of a reduction of nine F/A-18 aircraft from the number originally planned for the FY2010 program.

What other potential alternatives do you see for maintaining sufficient strike assets if there were any additional slippage in the initial operating capability date for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter?

Answer: If confirmed, I will fully review strike asset requirements, taking into account all naval systems--airborne, surface and subsurface, manned and unmanned--capable of delivering striking power. It is essential that we maintain an effective naval strike capability to support the Joint Force.

Shipbuilding Plan

The Navy annually submits a thirty-year shipbuilding plan. The last shipbuilding plan included very optimistic assumptions about unit costs of ships and excluded any funding for a replacement for the current fleet of Trident ballistic missile submarines.

Do you agree that the 30-year shipbuilding plan should, in fact, reflect realistic cost estimates and include all important shipbuilding efforts for that document to be useful for decision makers?

Answer: In order to effectively plan and achieve cost efficiencies it is important to have realistic cost estimates; this is especially true for a shipbuilding program.

What level of funding do you think the Navy will need to execute this plan, and considering competing priorities, do you believe this level of funding is realistic?

Answer: I have not yet examined in detail the level of funding that Navy will need to execute the 30 year shipbuilding plan. If confirmed, I am committed to being a responsible steward of the taxpayers' dollars while ensuring development of the most efficient and effective ship building plan.

Cost growth continues to be a prevalent problem in Navy shipbuilding programs, particularly for the first ships in new classes. Some experts have taken the position that DOD could improve the performance of its acquisition plans by adopting commercial practices, such as: retiring all major risk prior to signing a procurement contract; fixing the cost and delivery date at contract signing; competing all basic and functional design prior to starting construction; and having a disciplined construction process that delivers ships on cost and on schedule.

To what extent should such commercial shipbuilding best practices, and any others you may be aware of, be incorporated into Navy shipbuilding programs?

Answer: There are significant differences between commercial shipbuilding and Navy shipbuilding. The best practices from each should be used to determine the most efficient and cost effective way to procure the ships the Navy requires for the defense of our country.

Aircraft Carriers

The Navy decommissioned the U.S.S. *John F. Kennedy* in Fiscal Year 2006. This decreased the number of aircraft carriers to 11. Additionally, in the Fiscal Year 2006 budget request, the Navy slipped the delivery of CVN-78 (USS *Gerald R. Ford*) to 2015, creating a two-year gap between the scheduled decommissioning of the USS *Enterprise* and the availability of a new aircraft carrier. During this period, under the proposed plan, only 10 aircraft carriers would be operational. Recently, there have been reports that delivery of the U.S.S. *Gerald R. Ford* could be further delayed because of technical difficulties with the electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS).

What is your view of the plan announced by Secretary Gates to permanently change the aircraft carrier force structure to 10 from the current number of 11?

Answer: I understand that Secretary Gates' recommendation is for the Navy's aircraft carrier force structure to be 10 carriers in 2040. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Defense during the Quadrennial Defense Review to examine the aircraft carrier force structure.

Is it Secretary Gates' plan to retire another aircraft carrier when the U.S.S. *Gerald R. Ford* delivers to keep the carrier force structure at 10 carriers?

Answer: I am not aware of such a plan.

If not, do you believe that this reduced carrier force structure for a two-year gap is supported by adequate analysis?

Answer: I have been told that the Navy has developed a mitigation plan. If confirmed, I will review that plan to ensure the Navy can provide sufficient carriers to support the operational needs of the combatant commanders.

How would the aircraft carrier presence requirements of combatant commanders be met with only 10 operational aircraft carriers, particularly if the 10 carrier force structure is made permanent?

Answer: I have not had access to the information necessary to analyze combatant commander requirements. If confirmed, I will fully review this matter.

Surface Combatants

Until Fiscal Year 2009, the Future Years Defense Program had plans for buying DDG-1000 destroyers until the Navy was ready to begin procurement of a new missile defense cruiser, CG(X). During budget deliberations last year, Navy leadership announced that the Navy wanted to cancel the DDG-1000 program after building only two ships and re-start the DDG-51 production line. Ultimately, the Secretary of Defense decided not to cancel the third DDG-1000 that was requested as part of the fiscal year 2009 budget.

In your judgment, can a credible and capable surface force be sustained at the level of multi-mission surface combatant construction the Navy currently plans, and if so, how?

Answer: I have not fully reviewed the Navy's shipbuilding plan; however, I believe that the Quadrennial Defense Review may have an impact on the existing plan. If confirmed, I would seek an appropriate force mix of surface combatants while considering our requirements in terms of capability and capacity.

Has the Navy produced adequate analysis of the effects of the new shipbuilding plan on the surface combatant industrial base?

Answer: I do not have sufficient information on the shipbuilding plan and its relationship to the industrial base. If confirmed, my objective will be to work to ensure that the Navy plan supports force structure needs and maintains a viable industrial base.

In your opinion, how many shipyards capable of building surface combatants does this Nation need?

Answer: The answer to this question is complex and must consider: shipyard capabilities, the need for surge capacity, the benefit of competition in minimizing costs, possible disruptions from natural and man-made disasters, and the industrial infrastructure that supports the shipbuilding industry. If confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Naval Operations, Congress, industry, and others to determine the appropriate number of shipyards needed to efficiently build our surface combatants- a key aspect of our nation's strength.

Acquisition Issues

What are your views regarding the need to reform the process by which the Department of the Navy acquires major weapons systems? If confirmed, what steps would you recommend to improve that process?

Answer: Acquisition reform is a top priority for President Obama and Secretary Gates, and if confirmed, one of my highest priorities would be support them by ensuring the Department of the Navy acquires weapons systems in the most efficient and cost effective way possible.

Department-wide, nearly half of the Department of Defense's 95 largest acquisition programs have exceeded the so-called "Nunn-McCurdy" cost growth standards established in section 2433 of title 10, United States Code. The cost overruns on these major defense acquisition programs now total \$295 billion over the original program estimates, even though the Department has cut unit quantities and reduced performance expectations on many programs in an effort to hold costs down. Many of those programs are being executed by the Department of the Navy.

What steps, if any and if confirmed, would you take to address the out-of-control cost growth on the Department of the Navy's major defense acquisition programs?

Answer: If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to review the acquisition process and existing systems to ensure the Department of the Navy receives items on time and on cost.

What principles will guide your thinking on whether to recommend terminating a program that has experienced "critical" cost growth under Nunn-McCurdy?

Answer: I agree with Secretary Gates that programs that under perform or are over cost should be immediately considered for termination. The Department of the Navy must clearly determine what it needs, what alternatives if any could satisfy those needs, and what options and trade-offs provide best value. If confirmed, should a program experience a Nunn/McCurdy breach, I will work with the Secretary of Defense and other senior leaders in the Department to thoroughly review it and determine if continuation or termination is in the best interest of the Department of the Navy and the taxpayer.

Many experts have acknowledged that the Department of Defense (DOD) may have gone too far in reducing its acquisition work force, resulting in undermining of its ability to provide needed oversight in the acquisition process.

Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes

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

Answer: The acquisition work force has been reduced to the point that it impedes the Department's ability to provide adequate management and oversight of the acquisition process. If confirmed, ensuring the Department of the Navy has adequate personnel to manage and oversee of the acquisition process will be a priority for me.

Section 852 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 establishes an Acquisition Workforce Development Fund to provide the resources needed to begin rebuilding the Department's corps of acquisition professionals.

Do you believe that a properly sized workforce of appropriately trained acquisition professionals is essential if the Navy is going to get good value for the expenditure of public resources?

Answer: Yes.

What steps do you expect to take, if confirmed, to ensure that the Navy makes appropriate use of the funds made available pursuant to section 852?

Answer: It is my understanding that the Department of the Navy is working closely with the DoD to hire additional acquisition professionals. If confirmed, I will review the status of the Department's acquisition workforce, including quantity, competencies, and alignment to ensure the Department of the Navy efficiently and effectively executes acquisition programs.

Would you agree that shortened tours as program managers can lead to difficulties in Acquisition programs? If so, what steps would you propose to take, if confirmed, to provide for stability in program management?

Answer: Shortened tours of program managers can lead to lack of consistency in acquisition programs. If confirmed, I will review the status of the Department's program manager tour lengths.

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?

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

Answer: Stable requirements and funding are critical for a successful acquisition process. If confirmed, I will examine the Navy's acquisition process and seek to maximize stability in funding and requirements.

The Comptroller General has found 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?

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

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to review the Comptroller General's assessment. However, realistic program costs and clearly defined requirements are essential to ensuring an effective and efficient acquisition process.

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: Improvements in the acquisition process require a focus on acquisition of services as well as acquisition of systems. It is my understanding that the Department of the Navy is focusing on these concerns in the acquisition of services. If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that there is proper staffing, training, and management of the acquisition of services in the Department of the Navy.

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 Navy and Marine Corps should take to ensure that its use of interagency contracts complies with applicable DOD requirements and is in the best interests of the Department of the Navy?

Answer: If interagency contracts are not appropriately planned, competed, managed, and monitored, then they are not in the best interest of the Department of the Navy. Acquisition reform must focus upon ensuring that interagency contracts are effective and that the Department's use of interagency contracts complies with applicable rules and requirements.

In the Budget Blueprint that supports the FY2010 Presidential Budget Request, the Administration committed to "set[ting] realistic requirements and stick[ing] to them and incorporat[ing] 'best practices' by not allowing programs to proceed from one stage of the acquisition cycle to the next until they have achieved the maturity to clearly lower the risk of cost growth and schedule slippage."

If confirmed, what steps would you recommend to help ensure that the Department makes good on this commitment?

Answer: It is critical to set and meet realistic requirements and to use best practices throughout the acquisition process. While I do not have sufficient information to recommend any specific steps at this time, if confirmed I intend to support the commitment and that major acquisition programs receive the appropriate level of management attention.

Recent Congressional and Department of Defense initiatives have attempted to reduce technical and performance risks associated with developing and producing major defense acquisition programs, including ships, so as to minimize the need for cost-reimbursable contracts.

Do you think that the Department should move towards more fixed price-type contracting in developing or procuring major defense acquisition programs? Why or why not?

Answer: There are benefits to fixed price contracts; however, they may not be appropriate under all circumstances. The use of fixed price contracts in the acquisition process for major defense programs should be given due attention.

Section 811 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 amended section 2306b of title 10, United States Code to ensure that the Department of Defense enters multiyear contracts only in cases where stable design and stable requirements reduce risk, and only in cases where substantial savings are expected. The revised provision requires that data be provided to Congress in a timely manner to enable the congressional defense committees to make informed decisions on such contracts.

What types of programs do you believe are appropriate for the use of multi-year contracts?

Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe that a multiyear contract should be used for procuring Navy weapons systems that have unsatisfactory program histories, e.g., displaying poor cost, scheduling, or performance outcomes?

Answer: Multi-year contracts are most appropriate when the design and requirements are stable and they provide the best value for the taxpayer and the Department of the Navy. Any weapons system which has an unsatisfactory program history should be closely examined and deficiencies corrected prior to continuing a multi-year contract.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the Navy and the Marine Corps fully comply with the requirements of section 2306b of title 10, United States Code, as amended by section 811 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181) with respect to programs that are forwarded for authorization under a multiyear procurement contract?

Answer: Yes.

The statement of managers accompanying Section 811 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 addresses the requirements for buying major defense systems under multiyear contracts as follows: “The conferees agree that ‘substantial savings’ under section 2306b(a)(1) of title 10, United States Code, means savings that exceed 10 percent of the total costs of carrying out the program through annual contracts, except that multiyear contracts for major systems providing savings estimated at less than 10 percent should only be considered if the Department presents an exceptionally strong case that the proposal meets the other requirements of section 2306b(a), as amended. The conferees agree with a Government Accountability Office finding that any major system that is at the end of its production line is unlikely to meet these standards and therefore would be a poor candidate for a multiyear procurement contract

If confirmed, under what circumstances, if any, do you anticipate that you would support a multiyear contract with expected savings of less than 10 percent?

Answer: I am not prepared to answer this question until I have thoroughly reviewed the NADA 2008 and Section 811. If confirmed, I will work with DOD and Navy acquisition professionals to determine when to use multi-year contracts.

If confirmed, under what circumstances, if any, would you support a multiyear contract for a major system at the end of its production line?

Answer: Any decision to support a multi-year contract would be done on a case by case basis consistent with Section 811, and occur only after detailed analysis and discussion with DOD and Navy acquisition professionals.

What is your understanding of the new requirements regarding the timing of any Department of Defense request for legislative authorization of a multiyear procurement contract for a particular program?

Answer: If confirmed, these requirements would be incorporated as part of the overall analysis of the acquisition process. The Department of the Navy will comply with these timing requirements.

What steps will you take, if confirmed, to ensure that the Navy complies with 10 USC section 2366a, which requires that the Milestone Decision Authority for an MDAP certify that critical technologies have reached an appropriate level of maturity before Milestone B approval?

Answer: If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of the Navy will fully comply with the law.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics has issued a memorandum directing that the largest DOD acquisition programs undergo competitive prototyping to ensure technological maturity, reduce technical risk, validate designs, cost estimates, evaluate manufacturing processes, and refine requirements.

Do you support that requirement?

Yes

What steps will you take, if confirmed, to ensure that the Navy complies with this new requirement?

Answer: If confirmed I will support this requirement in programs where competitive prototyping will further the aims of the memorandum.

Business Management Issues

The Navy's business systems, like those of the other military departments, remain incapable of providing timely, reliable financial data to support management decisions. In particular, the Government Accountability Office has reported that the Navy has not yet followed DOD's lead in establishing new governance structures to address business transformation; has not yet developed comprehensive enterprise architecture and transition plan that plug into DOD's federated architecture in a manner that meets statutory requirements; and instead continues to rely upon old, stove piped structures to implement piecemeal reforms. Section 902 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 endeavored to address this problem by designating the Under Secretary of the Navy as the Navy's Chief Management Officer (CMO). Section 908 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 requires the CMO of each of the military departments to carry out a comprehensive business transformation initiative, with the support of a new Business Transformation Office.

If confirmed, what steps, if any, would you take to ensure that the Navy develops the business systems and processes it needs to appropriately manage funds in the best interest of the taxpayer and the national defense?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department of the Navy follows the DOD lead in establishing new governance structures needed for business transformation. This would also include laying the groundwork for the development of a well-defined, enterprise-wide, business systems architecture and business transformation plan.

If confirmed, what role do you expect to play, and what role do you expect your Under Secretary to play, in carrying out these initiatives?

Answer: I expect the Under Secretary as the designated Department of the Navy Chief Management Officer (CMO) to provide the guidance and oversight to ensure compliance with DoD direction on business transformation. Additionally, if confirmed, I will ensure that the CMO is given the authority to effectively organize the business operations of the department.

Mine Countermeasures Capability

Congress has been particularly interested in the Navy's ability to respond to the asymmetric threat posed by mines. The Navy has had mixed results in fielding robust mine countermeasures capabilities.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the Navy maintains its focus on achieving robust mine countermeasures capabilities for the fleet?

Answer: A capable mine countermeasure program is essential to the operational effectiveness of the fleet. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the Navy maintains a robust program.

Housing Privatization

The Department of Defense has been engaged in the privatization of many of its support functions. Among the most significant privatization efforts are military family housing units and utility systems.

What challenges do the Navy and Marine Corps face in implementing housing privatization?

Answer: I recognize that a public-private venture program has benefits. However, I do not have the information to analyze the specific challenges faced by the Navy and Marine Corps in their housing privatization program. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department of the Navy is implementing the program in the most effective way possible.

Investment in Infrastructure

Witnesses appearing before the Committee in recent years have testified that the military services under-invest in their facilities compared to private industry standards. Decades of under-investment in our installations have led to increasing backlogs of facility maintenance needs, created substandard living and working conditions, and made it harder to take advantage of new technologies that could increase productivity.

Based on your experience in government and the private sector, do you believe the Navy and Marine Corps are investing enough in their infrastructure?

Answer: If confirmed, I will review the sufficiency of the Department of the Navy's investment in infrastructure.

Implementation of Base Closures and Realignment

The 2005 Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process has resulted in the required closure or realignment of numerous major naval installations. The DOD installation closure process resulting from BRAC decisions has historically included close cooperation with the affected local community in order to allow these communities an active role in the reuse of property.

If confirmed, would you change any of the existing efforts to assist affected communities with economic development, revitalization, and re-use planning of property received as a result of the BRAC process?

Answer: If confirmed, I will support the Department of Defense's goals to expeditiously dispose of property in order to facilitate economic development within effected communities. I will also work with local communities to facilitate expeditious conversion of excess property to civilian use.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

In recent years, the Navy has provided extensive support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations throughout the world. Naval and Marine Corps forces responded rapidly to the December 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean utilizing over 25 ships, the hospital ship USNS Mercy, and delivering 24 million pounds of relief supplies. Naval and Marine Corps forces also led recovery and relief operations in Pakistan following devastating earthquakes. These forces and ships of all types also responded to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita across the southern coast of the United States.

What is your view of the importance of the Navy and Marine Corps mission to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief throughout the world?

Answer: These are core capabilities of the Navy and Marine Corps as stated in the Maritime Strategy, and as such, are of high importance.

Do you believe the mission is sustainable within a constrained defense budget?

Answer: As a core capability of the Navy and Marine Corps, it should be sustained within a constrained budget through planning and oversight.

If confirmed, how would you approach the funding and execution of this mission in light of current budget and naval mission priorities?

Answer: Funding will be thoroughly reviewed and analyzed in developing the Department's recommended budget while execution will be subject to planning and oversight.

Department of the Navy Science and Technology

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

Answer: A balanced approach to short-term and long-term research is critical to meet current and future Department of the Navy needs. If confirmed, I will evaluate the research program and work to ensure that an appropriate balance is in place.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will support innovative defense science which might include engaging the Science and Technology Corporate Board as well as take other actions to ensure this vital area is addressed.

If confirmed, what guidance would you give to ensure research priorities that will meet the needs of the Navy and Marine Corps in 2020?

Answer: If confirmed, I will support a balanced program of science and technology investment in basic and applied research and advanced development across the spectrum of naval needs. I will seek a program that focuses on science and technology areas that provide the biggest payoff for the future, fosters innovative thinking, efficient and effective business processes, and improves our ability to transition findings to acquisition programs.

Defense Integrated Manpower Human Resources System (DIMHRS)

DIMHRS is a single integrated human resources pay and personnel system for all the Armed Services and the Defense Finance and Accounting System (DFAS), and is intended to replace many of the systems currently used to perform personnel management and pay functions. DIMHRS, which has been under development for several years, has come under criticism for cost growth, delays in implementation, and not meeting the expectations of each Service.

What are your views of the need for completion of implementation of DIMHRS and what specific benefits, if any, would the Department of the Navy derive from this system?

Answer: I understand that DIMHRS is an initiative to develop and deploy an integrated human resources pay and personnel management system for the entire Department of Defense. Although I do not have the information concerning the specific challenges encountered in developing the DIMHRS system, if confirmed I will work with appropriate authorities to ensure the Department of the Navy has an effective pay and personnel system.

What is your understanding of the Navy and Marine Corps positions with respect to the utility of DIMHRS and its suitability for sailors and marines?

Answer: I understand the position of the Navy and Marine Corps is that DIMHRS is not, at this time, ready for use.

Delivery of Legal Services

What is your understanding of the respective roles of the General Counsel and Judge Advocate General of the Navy in providing the Secretary of the Navy with legal advice?

Answer: The General Counsel and the Judge Advocate General each bring independent and complementary perspectives to the Department's legal requirements. The General Counsel provides specialized expertise in ethics, acquisition and civilian personnel matters. The Judge Advocate General provides the uniformed and operational perspective that is essential to good order and discipline of a globally deployed force. Together, these two leaders comprise an integrated legal cadre that ensures the proper operation of the services and the Department as a whole.

What are your views about the responsibility of staff judge advocates within the Navy and Marine Corps to provide independent legal advice to military commanders in the fleet and throughout the naval establishment?

Answer: Navy and Marine Corps staff judge advocates are selected and trained to provide timely, relevant, and independent advice to commanders afloat and ashore. Flexible and world-wide deployable, the judge advocate communities of the Navy and Marine Corps are structured to ensure sufficient numbers of deployable and well-trained military lawyers are ready to respond to emergent requirements.

What are your views about the responsibility of the Judge Advocate General of the Navy and the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps to provide independent legal advice to the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, respectively?

Answer: The uniformed military attorneys of the Navy and Marine Corps are critical components of the Department's legal team. The Judge Advocate General and the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps perform functions in their respective organizations that are essential to the proper operation of their service and the Department as a whole.

Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps

The Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) recently completed a study of manpower requirements for the Navy in which it concluded that the Navy's Judge Advocate General's Corps was significantly under strength for its mission, including combat service support of Marine Corps' units and Task Force 134 in Iraq.

What is your understanding of the CNA study's findings with respect to manpower in the Navy JAG Corps?

Answer: I have not had the opportunity to review the findings of the CNA study. However, if confirmed, I will consider judge advocate end-strength as part of my overall review of manpower requirements

What is your understanding of the sufficiency of the number of active-duty judge advocates in the Marine Corps to provide legal support for all the Marine Corps' missions?

Answer: I do not have the information to offer an opinion on the sufficiency of current manpower. If confirmed, I will consider this as part of the overall review of manpower requirements.

If confirmed, will you review the judge advocate manning within the Navy and Marine Corps and determine whether current active-duty strengths are adequate?

Answer: Yes.

Support for Wounded, Ill, and Injured Sailors and Marines

Wounded service members from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom deserve the highest priority from the Navy and Marine Corps for support services, healing and recuperation, rehabilitation, evaluation for return to duty, successful transition from active duty if required, and continuing support beyond retirement or discharge.

How do the Navy and Marine Corps provide follow-on assistance to wounded personnel who have separated from active service? How effective are those programs?

Answer: The Navy has established the “Safe Harbor” Program and the Marine Corps has established the “USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment.” They extend support to the Wounded Warrior from separation or retirement from the service through reintegration into a community. If confirmed, I will continue to assess the effectiveness of these programs, and to develop and refine best practices to make sure these programs are successful.

If confirmed, are there additional strategies and resources that you would pursue to increase the Navy’s and Marine Corps’ support for wounded personnel, and to monitor their progress in returning to duty or to civilian life?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work to ensure Sailors and Marines and their families are provided with the best medical care and support they need throughout their recovery, rehabilitation, reintegration as a result of their selfless service and sacrifice.

What measures would you take, if confirmed, to facilitate the seamless transition of wounded, ill, and injured Sailors and Marines from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)?

Answer: Fostering a continuity of care between DoD and VA systems is essential to facilitate the most efficient and effective transition. Continued collaboration with the Department of Defense and Veterans’ Affairs will further strengthen the transition of health care for wounded, ill, and injured Sailors and Marines.

Would you propose any changes to the Navy’s disability evaluation system?

Answer: The Physical Evaluation Board manages the Navy’s disability evaluation system. If confirmed, I will review and assess the evaluation and separation process to ensure it is fair.

National Security Personnel System (NSPS)

Section 1106 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 restored the collective bargaining rights of civilian employees included in the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) established by the Department of Defense pursuant to section 9902 of title 5, United States Code. Under section 1106, the Department retains the authority to establish a new performance management system (including pay for performance) and streamlined practices for hiring and promotion of civilian employees.

What is your view of the NSPS system, as currently constituted?

Answer: I do not have sufficient information at this time on the NSPS system. If confirmed, I will coordinate with the Secretary of Defense to ensure the Navy's human resource management system provides necessary flexibility in assigning work with effective performance management processes aligned to the mission while preserving employee benefits, rights, and protections.

If confirmed, how will you evaluate its success or failure to meet its goals?

Answer: If confirmed, information and data will be collected in various ways, including reaching out to key stakeholders, to give a concrete basis for review of NSPS.

Do you support the pay-for-performance approach adopted for civilian employees in the NSPS system?

Answer: I do not have sufficient information at this time on the NSPS system. If confirmed, I will review how the NSPS system supports the pay-for-performance approach in the Department of the Navy and make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense accordingly.

Do you believe that the Department needs streamlined authority for hiring and promotion of civilian employees to meet its human capital needs?

Answer: At this time I do not have the information necessary to make this judgment.

In your view, is it viable in the long run for the Department of Defense to maintain two separate systems (NSPS and the General Schedule) for its civilian employees?

Answer: I do not have enough information at this time to evaluate the viability of maintaining both the NSPS and General Schedule systems for civilian employees. If confirmed, I will include this issue in my review of civilian pay systems.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to the NSPS authorizing legislation?

Answer: I am informed the DoD is conducting a review of NSPS. Prudence dictates waiting for the results of that review and the related recommendations before making any judgments or assessments at this time.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to the NSPS regulations?

Answer: I am informed the DoD is conducting a review of NSPS. It is best to reserve judgment related to recommendations until the review of NSPS is completed.

Navy and Marine Corps Recruiting and Retention

The retention of quality Sailors and Marines, officer and enlisted, active-duty and reserve, is vital to the Department of the Navy.

How would you evaluate the status of the Navy and Marine Corps in successfully recruiting and retaining high caliber personnel?

Answer: The Navy and Marine Corps continue to recruit and retain high caliber personnel for active and reserve service. Both services have exceeded their goals for active duty enlisted accessions and new contracts in fiscal year 2008 and are already at the goal established for 2009.

What initiatives would you take, if confirmed, to further improve the attractiveness of Navy and Marine Corps, active-duty and reserve service?

Answer: It is my understanding that recruiting and retention have been successful in recent years. If confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to further improve the Naval Services attractiveness to recruits and their families.

Senior Military and Civilian Accountability

While representative of a small number of individuals in DOD, reports of abuses of rank and authority by senior military and civilian leaders and failures to perform up to accepted standards are frequently received. Whistleblowers and victims of abuses often report that they felt that no one would pay attention to or believe their complaints. Accusations of unduly lenient treatment of senior officers and senior officials against whom accusations have been substantiated are also frequently heard.

What are your views regarding the appropriate standard of accountability for senior civilian and military leaders of the Department?

Answer: The US Navy and Marine Corps traditions and history demand the exemplary conduct of its senior civilian and military leaders. The high standards of conduct that were taught to and expected of me as a junior naval officer are precisely the standards I will require of all senior civilian and military leaders in the Department of the Navy if I am confirmed. The Secretary of the Navy and senior military and civilian leaders must set the example for their subordinates. If our nation's Navy and Marine Corps are to be respected among all nations, then we must maintain the highest standards of honor, integrity, and absolute adherence to the rule of law. Therefore, we must ensure prompt and thorough investigation of complaints, as well as swift and equitable treatment of those few people who fail to demonstrate exemplary conduct.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that senior leaders of the Navy and Marine Corps are held accountable for their actions and performance?

Answer: The honor and privilege to lead and command in the naval service carries with it accountability for their actions and performance. If confirmed, I will continue to foster and enforce the Department of the Navy's earnest commitment to the highest ethical standards of principled leadership and honorable service.

Navy Support to Ground Forces

The Navy has been challenged to find new ways of supporting the Army and Marine Corps in Iraq and Afghanistan by taking on non-traditional support functions.

In your view, what are the kinds of non-traditional support the Navy feasibly can provide, and what additional missions, if any, should the Navy be assigned in the Global War on Terrorism?

Given that these are non-traditional roles for Navy personnel, what additional training and equipment have been provided, or, in your view, need to be provided?

Answer: The Navy's Sailor is known and respected for courage, resourcefulness, and versatility. At this time I do not have sufficient information on the types of non-traditional support the Navy can provide. However, I will examine current and anticipated non-traditional support and missions and will work to ensure that the necessary training and equipment is provided for our Sailors to be successful executing them.

What procedures are in place for the Navy to assess the potentially adverse operational effect on organizations from which individual augmentees are drawn? If you do not believe these procedures are adequate, what should be done to strengthen them?

Answer: **At this time** I do not have the information as to what Individual Augmentation procedures are in place. However, if confirmed, I will make it a priority to examine the entire Individual Augmentation process and the impact it has on the readiness of our operational forces.

Prevention and Response to Sexual Assaults

What is your evaluation of the progress to date made by the Navy and Marine Corps in preventing and responding adequately to incidents of sexual assault?

Answer: This is a high priority for me and is an essential aspect of maintaining Navy and Marine Corps values. If confirmed, I will use all means available to ensure that incidents of sexual assault are prevented or responded to rapidly and effectively.

What problems do you foresee, if any, in implementing current policies with respect to confidential, restricted reporting of sexual assaults by Sailors and Marines?

Answer: Confidentiality and restricted reporting of sexual assaults is critical. I will work to ensure effective policies are implemented and enforced.

If confirmed, what actions do you plan to take to ensure that senior civilian leaders of the Department of the Navy have ongoing visibility into incidents of sexual assault and the effectiveness of policies aimed at preventing and responding appropriately to such incidents?

Answer: I will make sure this issue is stressed and that there will be a regular and comprehensive evaluation of policies to ensure effectiveness.

Preventing Sexual Harassment and Violence

The Defense Task Force on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies reported that “Historically, sexual harassment and sexual assault have been inadequately addressed at both Academies [United States Military Academy and United States Naval Academy]. Harassment is the more prevalent and corrosive problem, creating an environment in which sexual assault is more likely to occur. Although progress has been made, hostile attitudes and inappropriate actions toward women, and the toleration of these by some cadets and midshipmen, continue to hinder the establishment of a safe and professional environment in which to prepare military officers. Much of the solution to preventing this behavior rests with cadets and midshipmen themselves.”

If confirmed, what actions would you take to encourage not only midshipmen but also all Sailors and Marines to step up to their responsibility to create a culture where sexual harassment and sexual assault are not tolerated?

If confirmed, I will use all available tools to ensure every midshipman, Sailor, Marine and civilian employee understands that sexual harassment and sexual assault won't be tolerated in the Department of the Navy and that swift and appropriate action will be taken against those who do not value such a culture.

If confirmed, what other actions would you take to address the problem of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Navy and Marine Corps?

Answer: Please see answer to previous question.

Human Capital

The Navy has a large civilian workforce that is integral to the support of the Navy's worldwide mission.

What is your vision for an effective human capital strategy for the Navy's civilian work force?

Answer: The Navy's civilian workforce is made up of over 180,000 employees worldwide, engaged in a myriad of mission areas and career fields. The Navy's vision must be broad enough to encompass this very wide range of people, missions, locations and requirements, as well as provide the framework for developing policies and systems to ensure both capabilities and competencies are in place to meet the changing demands of our global force. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department of the Navy has an effective human capital strategy.

Section 1122 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2006, as amended by Section 1102 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for 2007 and Section 851 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2008, requires the Secretary of Defense to develop and annually update a strategic human capital plan that specifically identifies gaps in the Department's civilian workforce and strategies for addressing those gaps. The Department of Defense has not yet produced a strategic human capital plan that meets the requirements of these provisions.

Do you believe that the Navy has appropriate planning processes in place to identify and address gaps in the capabilities of its civilian workforce?

Answer: At this time I do not have sufficient information about what processes exist. However, if confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps to implement good planning processes that ensure any gaps are identified and addressed.

What do you view as the greatest challenges in recruiting and retaining a highly skilled civilian workforce?

Answer: There are many challenges in recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce, to including compensation, working conditions, fair evaluation systems, and career paths.

Personnel and Health Benefit Costs

The cost of the Defense Health Program, like the cost of medical care nationwide, is escalating rapidly. Similarly, the cost of personnel as a key component of the Services' budgets has risen significantly in recent years.

If confirmed, how would you approach the issue of rising health care and personnel costs?

Answer: Based on my experience with fiscal management in state government and the private sector, I am aware that rising costs associated with health care and other personnel costs pose a significant threat to the fiscal strength of organizations nationwide. Streamlining and effective cost accounting alone cannot adequately ameliorate the effects of increasing medical costs. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Defense to explore changes to the way the department meets these challenges.

Quality of Life Programs

If confirmed, what priorities would you establish to ensure that military quality of life programs are sustained and improved for Navy and Marine Corps members and their families?

Answer: Quality of life programs for Navy and Marine Corps personnel of all ranks and their families are a key component to ensuring readiness, job satisfaction, and retention. If confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to maintain focus and commitment to programs that support the quality of life needs of all naval personnel and their families.

What challenges do you foresee in sustaining quality of life programs, and are there new initiatives that you would undertake, if confirmed, to ensure the availability of high quality services, including child care, education, and recreational opportunities, for Sailors and Marines and their families?

Answer: The current and anticipated economic and fiscal challenges could pose a threat to Navy and Marine quality of life programs. If confirmed, I will work to provide effective and innovative Quality of Life programs that our Sailors, Marines and their families rely on, and are critical to maintaining combat readiness.

Ballistic Missile Defense

Do you view ballistic missile defense – for both deployed forces and the U.S. homeland -- as a core mission for the Navy?

Answer: Yes.

Readiness Levels

What is your assessment of the current readiness of the Department of the Navy to execute its assigned missions?

Answer: While naval forces are conducting combat and combat support missions in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM, the naval forces also stand ready to answer the Nation's call across the spectrum of operations in support of the National Defense Strategy. Despite a high operational tempo due to OIF, OEF, and other combatant commander requirements, our forces remain resilient, motivated, and are performing superbly around the globe. If confirmed, I will work to continue the Navy and Marine Corps proud tradition of readiness and ensure that our Sailors and Marines are fully trained, equipped, and resourced for their assigned missions.

What do you view as the major readiness challenges that will have to be addressed by the Navy and Marine Corps over the next three years, and, if confirmed, how would you approach these issues?

Answer: One of the most significant readiness challenges facing the Navy and Marine Corps is balancing current overseas contingency operations with other anticipated readiness requirements. Navy and Marine Corps procurement, acquisition, maintenance, and recapitalization are also readiness challenges.

If confirmed, I will approach these issues by working with the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps to review the Department's current challenges; craft a clear and concise vision and plan to address them; develop a means to track compliance and real savings for future use; work closely with my counterparts in the other services, OSD, Congress and the defense industry; and re-affirm the strong relationships within the Navy and Marine Corps team.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is currently pending in the Senate.

What are your views on U.S. accession to UNCLOS?

Answer: I do not have sufficient information at this time to adequately address accession to UNCLOS.

From a national security standpoint, what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages to being a party to UNCLOS?

Answer: At this time, I do not have sufficient information to form an opinion on the advantages or disadvantages to being a party to UNCLOS.

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?

Answer: 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 Secretary of the Navy?

Answer: 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?

Answer: Yes

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

Answer: Yes