

Advance Policy Questions for Mr. Juan M. Garcia
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

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 clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the combatant commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the Military Departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the combatant commanders.

Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions?

Answer: I am not currently aware of any specific need for modifications to Goldwater-Nichols. If confirmed I will notify the Under Secretary and Secretary of the Navy of any changes of which I become aware.

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

Answer: I am not aware of any specific areas in which modification would be appropriate.

Duties

Section 5016 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs shall have “as his principal duty the overall supervision of manpower and reserve component affairs of the Department of the Navy.”

If confirmed, what duties do you expect that the Secretary of the Navy will prescribe for you?

Answer: I believe the Secretary of the Navy will require me to provide overall supervision and oversight of manpower and reserve component affairs for the Navy and Marine Corps. I would be responsible for developing integrated policies and programs related to military personnel (active and reserve components) and the civilian workforce.

What actions will you take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

Answer: If confirmed, I will apply my experience as a naval officer and in government service to further my understanding and knowledge of the Navy, its people and organizations. I will diligently evaluate the challenges it faces and the resources necessary to sustain and transform it. I will seek advice and counsel from the military and civilian personnel of the Department and from Members of Congress and their staff.

In carrying out these duties, what would be your relationship with the following officials:

The Secretary of the Navy

Answer: I will work with the Secretary of the Navy to help him achieve his goals, particularly those involving manpower issues. My role will be defined in part by powers he may choose to delegate to me.

The Under Secretary of the Navy

Answer: In his position as the Chief of Staff and Chief Operating Officer of the Department, the Under Secretary will play a significant role in prioritizing and synchronizing the efforts of the Assistant Secretaries of the Navy. If confirmed, I would establish a close, direct, and supportive relationship with the Under Secretary of the Navy.

The other Assistant Secretaries of the Navy

Answer: I would coordinate with them on our combined interests as we work together to support the Secretary's goals.

The General Counsel of the Department of the Navy

Answer: The General Counsel is the senior civilian legal advisor to the Secretary, the Under Secretary, and the Assistant Secretaries and their staffs. I expect to consult and rely upon him/her on a variety of legal issues in discharging my responsibilities.

The Judge Advocate General of the Navy

Answer: As the senior uniformed legal advisor to the Secretary of the Navy, providing legal and policy advice on all legal matters not under the cognizance of the General Counsel, I expect to interact and seek legal advice as it pertains to those matters requiring a military legal perspective when discharging the responsibilities assigned to me.

The Naval Inspector General

Answer: The Naval Inspector General is the senior investigating official in the Department of the Navy and the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of

Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps on all matters concerning inspection, investigations, and audit follow-up. If confirmed, I will establish and maintain a close and professional relationship with the Naval Inspector General.

The Chief of Legislative Affairs of the Department of the Navy

Answer: The Chief of Legislative Affairs is responsible for developing legislative strategies for the Navy. If confirmed I will work closely with him as it relates to the Department's legislative requirements for manpower and personnel.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Answer: I would coordinate and work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on areas of mutual concern to support the goals of the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense.

The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Answer: I would coordinate and work with the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on areas of mutual concern to support the goals of the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense.

The Chief of Naval Operations

Answer: The Chief of Naval Operations has a direct reporting relationship to the Secretary of the Navy. If confirmed, I would support the Secretary on areas of manpower policy as well as program execution.

The Vice Chief of Naval Operations

Answer: I would support the Undersecretary's close relationship with the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, as required, on manpower matters.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps

Answer: The Commandant has a direct reporting relationship to the Secretary of the Navy. If confirmed, I would support the Secretary on areas of manpower policy as well as program execution.

The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps

Answer: If confirmed, I will work very closely with the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps to ensure equitable manpower programs exist across the Department of the Navy.

The Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Answer: If confirmed, I will work very closely with the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs to ensure equitable manpower programs exist across the Department of the Navy.

The Surgeon General of the Navy

Answer: I would look to the Surgeon General for advice and insights on the spectrum of medical affairs affecting our Naval personnel.

The Chief of Navy Reserve

Answer: I would work closely with the Chief of Navy Reserve on the numerous operational and policy matters affecting our reserve component.

The Commander, Marine Forces Reserve

Answer: I would work closely with Commander, Marine Forces Reserve on the numerous operational and policy matters affecting our reserve component.

Qualifications

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

Answer: I believe that my life, work and family experiences have provided me with the qualifications necessary to hold this position. As the son of a career naval aviator, I grew up as a Navy dependent; living, moving, going to school, and waiting out my father's deployments on Navy bases. As a Naval Officer, I served 13 years on active duty, completing five tours and four deployments. Now during my fifth year as a Naval Reservist, I have had the opportunity to command a Reserve Squadron. Trained in law and management at Harvard Law School and the John F. Kennedy School of Government, I've crafted public policy both as a White House Fellow and as an elected legislator. All of these experiences have taught me to understand and appreciate the demands, challenges and experiences of today's active duty service personnel, their reserve counterparts, and their families. They have also taught me how to appreciate the bureaucratic barriers, the competing priorities and the processes to change.

Major Challenges

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

Answer: If confirmed, my challenges will include providing for the health and welfare of our Sailors, Marines and their families, continuing efforts towards active/reserve force integration, attracting, recruiting and retaining top talent both for our civilian and military workforce (particularly in skill sets required for overseas contingency operations), maintaining the superior pay and benefits package our Sailors and Marines deserve, and ensuring the best care for our wounded warriors and their families.

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

Answer: I will work within the DON-DoD framework to address manpower costs while supporting our servicemen and women and their families.

Systems and Support for Wounded Sailors and Marines

Sailors and Marines wounded and injured in 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.

In your view, what were the most critical shortcomings in warrior care, both active and reserve, since 2001?

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to be fully briefed on any shortcomings in wounded warrior care. If confirmed, a review of the systems and support for wounded Sailors and Marines will be a top priority. Our Nation and our Navy owe these wounded Sailors and Marines a debt that can never be repaid.

What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the Navy and Marine Corps response?

Answer: The Navy and Marine Corps have a longstanding tradition and record of success in caring for the medical needs of its personnel and their families. The Navy established the Safe Harbor program, and the Marine Corps established the Wounded Warrior Regiment to improve support services and speed delivery of coordinated care. If confirmed, I will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs, identify best practices and implement process improvements to optimize the success of these programs.

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?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work to foster a seamless transition for continuity of service between the Navy and Veterans Administration systems of care, to include the much discussed electronic medical records. Continued collaboration between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs will further strengthen the transition of wounded, ill, and injured Sailors and Marines.

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

Answer: As I understand, both the Navy's Safe Harbor Program and the Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment extend support to wounded personnel should they be separated or retire due to medical issues, up through and including reintegration to a community. Our heroes deserve our continued support even after leaving active service. I have not had an opportunity to personally assess these programs, but if confirmed I will ensure that these programs provide the best service possible to our very deserving Sailors and Marines

What is your assessment of the need to streamline and improve the Navy's disability evaluation system? If confirmed, how will you address any need for change?

Answer: The Physical Evaluation Board manages the Department of the Navy's disability evaluation system. If confirmed, I will review the evaluation process to ensure it is fair, efficient and thorough. I have not had an opportunity to personally assess this system, but if confirmed I will ensure that this program provides the best service possible to our deserving Sailors and Marines.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will work to ensure Sailors, Marines and their families are provided with optimum medical care and support throughout their recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration. Our Sailors and Marines deserve nothing less.

Officer Management Issues

As the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs you would have significant responsibilities with regard to officer management policies, the promotion system, and recommending officers for nomination to

positions of authority and responsibility.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you make to the officer management system?

Answer: The officer management systems, and in particular the promotion system, are constantly being evaluated and improved. I have experience with aspects of the officer management system from my military service, but I have not been fully briefed on all of the specifics of the program, or the results of the latest evaluations. If confirmed, I will fully consider and evaluate all recommendations for improvement from the Navy and Marine Corps.

Do you believe the current Navy and Marine Corps procedures and practices for reviewing the records of officers pending nomination by the President are sufficient to ensure the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of Defense, and the President can make informed decisions?

Answer: I have not yet been briefed on this issue, but based on my experience as a Naval Officer I know the Department strives to ensure that the review process for officers pending nomination by the President is thorough, expansive, and fair. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the officers recommended by selection boards are best qualified for promotion to meet the needs of the Navy and Marine Corps consistent with the requirements of exemplary conduct.

In your view, are these procedures and practices fair and reasonable for the officers involved?

Answer: While I have not yet been briefed on these procedures and practices, my experience gives me the confidence that the Navy and Marine Corps procedures and practices for reviewing the records of officers pending nomination by the President are fair and reasonable for the officers involved.

General and Flag Officer Nominations

Under DOD Instruction 1320.4, adverse and alleged adverse information pertaining to general and flag officers must be evaluated by senior leaders in the Services and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense prior to nomination.

If confirmed, what role would you play in the officer promotion system, particularly in reviewing general and flag officer nominations?

Answer: If confirmed, I will provide all necessary assistance to the Secretary of the Navy to evaluate adverse and alleged adverse information pertaining to general and flag officer nominations. Given the special trust placed in our senior leaders, it is essential

that nomination packages provide the Secretary with the best possible information regarding the fitness of the officers selected to serve as our senior leaders.

What is your assessment of the ability of the services to document credible information of an adverse nature in a timely manner for evaluation by promotion selection boards and military and civilian leaders?

Answer: The documentation of credible information of an adverse nature is critical to ensuring the reliability of selection board results. I consider this to be one of our most important responsibilities and one that, if confirmed, I would carefully study to ensure information of an adverse nature is properly evaluated.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that only the best qualified officers are nominated for promotion to general and flag officer rank?

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to be briefed on the existing process within the Department of the Navy for developing and promulgating selection criteria for general and flag officers. If confirmed, I will provide the Secretary my frank assessment of the existing processes and will make recommendations of any changes necessary to ensure the best qualified officers are nominated.

Technical Training of General Officers

In your view, do a sufficient number of Navy and Marine Corps flag and general officers have advanced training and degrees in scientific and technical disciplines?

Answer: I have not been briefed on advanced training standards for flag and general officers. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the inventory of senior officer personnel to ensure our Navy and Marine Corps has officers with necessary technical and scientific training.

Are the career paths for officers with technical skills appropriate to ensure that the Navy can execute complex acquisition programs, adapt to a rapidly changing technological threat environment, and make informed investment decisions on DOD, Navy, and Marine Corps resources?

Answer: I have not been fully briefed on the requirements for these technical Navy career paths. If confirmed, I will work with officials across the DON to ensure that the Navy can provide the acquisition and technical expertise required to make informed investment decisions.

If not, what will you do to address this deficiency, if you are confirmed?

Answer: If confirmed I will evaluate whether there is adequate match between acquisition education requirements and senior officer training and education.

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: I believe that the considered and independent counsel of the General Counsel and of the Judge Advocate General of the Navy are absolutely necessary to effective governance of the Department. It is my understanding that the General Counsel and the Judge Advocate General provide the Navy unique perspectives that are complimentary and essential. If confirmed, I will work closely with these two indispensable counsel to ensure that recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy receive the benefit of their independent legal advice.

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 provide critical advice to civilian and military leaders within the Department. My prior experience as a naval officer has impressed upon me the value for commanders to have experienced, well trained staff judge advocates who serve with them, who understand the specific mission and requirements of the commander, and who are prepared to provide essential, independent advice where and when it is needed.

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

Answer: It is critically important that the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps receive independent advice from well experienced, senior uniformed judge advocates.

Navy Judge Advocate General 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 Corps was significantly understrength 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 active duty manpower in the Navy JAG Corps?

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to read or be briefed on the findings of the CNA study. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the study and working with the Judge Advocate General of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to ensure that the Secretary is fully informed about the legal manpower requirements of Marine combat units and the resourcing of the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps.

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: If confirmed, I will work with the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant, and with the Deputy Commandant for Manpower, to ensure that Secretary of the Navy and I are fully informed about the legal manpower requirements for Marine Corps missions.

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: I will.

Active-Duty End Strength

In its 2010 budget submission, the Administration and the Navy requested a permanent end strength of 324,400 in the base budget, and a temporary emergency end strength of 4,400 in the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) request. This additional 4,400 sailors was the only end strength of any service funded in the OCO request.

Is a permanent active-duty end strength of 324,400, in your view, sufficient to allow the Navy to accomplish its numerous missions going forward?

Answer: Determining the appropriate active duty end strength is a critically important issue, and one that I am very concerned about. I have not, however, had an opportunity to be fully briefed on projections for permanent active duty end strength for the Navy's future mission requirements. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Chief of Naval Personnel to ensure that we determine the right size of the military force.

Does the Navy consider this 4,400 increase to be surplus to its permanent and enduring requirements and temporary in nature, or is this manpower the Navy will need for the foreseeable future?

Answer: It is my understanding that Navy requested the 4,400 increase to provide support to Overseas Contingency Operations and not as a permanent increase. If confirmed, I commit to continuously review both permanent end strength requirements for Navy missions as well as to monitor temporary OCO requirements to ensure the Department's budget requests provide the Administration and the Congress a clear understanding of manpower needs.

Navy and Marine Corps Recruiting and Retention

Recruiting and 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 enjoy continued success in recruiting and retaining exceptionally well-qualified personnel. It is my understanding that both the Navy and Marine Corps continue to meet all recruiting goals through the efforts of a strong, well-resourced recruiter force. Once a Sailor or Marine joins the service, success in retention requires that we provide world class benefits to Navy families that are appropriate to a world class force.

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

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to be briefed on initiatives that are in development, but if confirmed I commit to a vigorous review of the entire spectrum of tools available to the Navy and Marine Corps to ensure that as the economy improves we will be able to continue to recruit and retain the talented people who value service and are willing to serve.

Medical Personnel Recruiting and Retention

The Navy is facing shortages in critically needed medical personnel in both the active and reserve components. The Committee is concerned that growing medical support requirements will compound the already serious challenges faced in recruitment and retention of medical, dental, nurse, and behavioral health personnel.

If confirmed, will you undertake a comprehensive review of the medical support requirements for the Navy and the sufficiency of the plans to meet recruiting and retention goals in these specialties?

Answer: I will. Nothing is more important to our Sailors, Marines and their families than to ensure that they receive ready access to world class medical care.

What legislative and policy initiatives, including bonuses and special pays, do you think may be necessary to ensure that the Navy can continue to meet medical support requirements?

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to be briefed on the Department's legislative and policy initiatives, but I am committed to fully evaluating all such initiatives to ensure that the Navy will be positioned to compete for the best medical, dental, nurse and behavioral health personnel available.

Report of the DOD Task Force on Mental Health

The Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health found that the stigma surrounding PTSD and other mental health issues acts as a barrier to many service members seeking the help that they need. Additionally, the Task Force found that there are significant issues with accessibility and numbers of mental health providers, stating that the "military system does not have enough fiscal or personnel resources to adequately support the psychological health of service members and their families."

If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure that appropriate numbers of mental health resources are available to Sailors and Marines in theater, and to them and their families upon return to home station?

Answer: If confirmed, I will strongly advocate ensuring adequate mental health resources are available in theater as well as upon their return from deployment.

What actions should senior leaders take to erase the stigma associated with seeking mental health care?

Answer: The psychological health of our service members and their families is a critical readiness factor. Senior leaders must take the lead in creating a new perception that seeking help demonstrates courage and thereby reduce any perceived stigma.

Operational and Personnel Tempo

Current Department of Defense policy is that active component personnel will have two years of dwell time for each year of deployment and that reserve component members have five years of dwell time for each year they are mobilized.

What is your view of the achievability of this goal? What measures must be taken by the Navy and Marine Corps to be able to achieve it in five years or less?

Answer: The Marine Corps' achievement of an end strength of 202,000, accomplished some three years early, will give us the capacity to reach this goal. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to continue the Department's objective of attaining the 2:1 dwell time.

In your view, how will shifting resources from Iraq to Afghanistan affect dwell-time ratios?

Answer: I have not been fully briefed on the impact of shifting resources from Iraq to Afghanistan. If confirmed, I will review this issue.

What is your assessment of the Navy and Marine Corps' ability to support scheduled troop rotation planning in 2009 and beyond, particularly in combat support and combat service support missions, given this goal?

Answer: I have not been fully briefed on the impact of these scheduled troop rotations. If confirmed, I will review this issue.

In your view, what will be the effect on recruiting, retention, and readiness of the Navy and Marine Corps of the current rates of operations and personnel tempo through 2010?

Answer: It is my understanding that the Navy and Marine Corps enjoy continued success in recruiting and retention. If confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to ensure naval service remains attractive to prospective recruits and that Sailors, Marines, and families receive the support they need to continue serving while operation and personnel tempos remain high. We must prepare for increased competition for the nations best and brightest, when the Nations' economy improves, by continuing our commitment to a ready, resourced recruiting force.

Mobilization and Demobilization

In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the reserve components have experienced their largest and most sustained employment since World War II. Numerous problems arose in the planning and procedures for mobilization and demobilization, e.g., inadequate health screening and medical readiness monitoring, errors due to antiquated pay systems, limited transition assistance programs upon demobilization, and lack of access to members of the Individual Ready Reserve. Reserve force management policies and systems have been characterized in the past as "inefficient and rigid" and readiness levels have been adversely affected by equipment stay-behind, cross-leveling, and reset policies.

What is your assessment of advances made in improving Navy Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve mobilization and demobilization procedures, and in what areas do problems still exist?

Answer: As I understand it, the Navy and Marine Corps have continued to modify, and where necessary improve, the activation process for reserve component Sailors and Marines in order to best support these deploying personnel while at the same time meeting the combatant commander and gaining commander requirements. These processes are evaluated on a continual basis to best meet the needs of Sailors and Marines and the dynamic requirements of gaining commands.

What do you consider to be the most significant enduring changes to the administration of the Navy Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve aimed at ensuring their readiness for future mobilization requirements?

Answer: As an officer in the Navy Reserve I am aware that prior to 9/11/01 the Navy already had initiatives underway to enhance integration between the active and reserve components. The events of 9/11 and OPERATIONS IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM focused greater attention on these initiatives resulting in an enhanced, integrated Total Force. In my view, recent operations have emphasized the readiness and capability of the Reserve Component.

Do you see a need to modify current statutory authorities for the mobilization of members of the reserves?

Answer: I am not aware of any needed modifications to statutory authority for mobilization of the Reserves. If additional authorities or modifications were required, I would recommend those changes to the Secretary of the Navy.

Do you believe that reserve personnel should be mobilized to serve in lieu of civilians in Afghanistan?

Answer: It is my understanding that Marines and Sailors are mobilized to meet Combatant Commander requirements as validated by the Joint Staff and the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed I would advocate utilization of our reserve component consistent with those validated requirements and our commitment to dwell time standards.

Individual Ready Reserve

The Department of Defense established a policy in 2005 mandating the discharge of officers in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) who are beyond their military service obligations (MSO) unless the officer positively elects to remain in the IRR. Meanwhile, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves has found that accessing the IRR as a viable source of manpower for the war has been problematic, and that using the IRR as a solution for unit manning is a failed concept.

What are your views on the proper role of the IRR in Navy and Marine Corps force management planning?

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to review the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves report to understand the specific problems identified. If confirmed I commit to assessing the effectiveness of the IRR as it relates to Navy and Marine Corps support to combatant commanders.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, do you foresee proposing to the Navy and Marine Corps IRR recall policy?

Answer: My understanding is that federal law stipulates that all members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) are eligible for involuntary recall to active duty. I have not been briefed on the need to change any policy or policies currently associated with the IRR.

What are your views about policies affecting continued service by officer and enlisted personnel in the reserve components who have fulfilled their MSO?

Answer: I believe our military is built on the strength of volunteers and I wholly support the continued service of all those that are willing, fit and ready to serve consistent with the needs of the services and the requirements of the law.

What is your assessment of the adequacy of the system in place for members in the IRR receiving orders to active duty to request a delay or exemption for that activation, including the procedures in place for appealing a decision on that request?

Answer: My understanding is that the Services and the Department of Defense have established policies and systems in place to allow all Reservists, including IRR members recalled to Active Duty to apply for delays, deferments, or exemptions from mobilization.

What is your assessment of the value of the IRR to the Navy and Marine Corps All-Volunteer Force?

Answer: The IRR represents a valuable pool of experienced Sailors and Marines for our Nation's defense. If confirmed, I will evaluate the mobilization and demobilization processes for the IRR to ensure that Sailors and Marines willing and able to serve are permitted to do so.

Medical and Dental Readiness of Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Personnel

Medical and dental readiness of reserve component personnel has been an issue of significant concern to the Committee, and shortfalls that have been identified have indicated a need for improved policy oversight and accountability.

If confirmed, how would you seek to clarify and coordinate reporting on the medical and dental readiness of the reserves?

Answer: As an officer in the Navy Reserve, I recognize medical and dental readiness as essential to our mission. The best trained reserve Sailors and Marines are unable to perform their missions if they lack essential medical and dental readiness. If confirmed, I will use my experience and all available resources to evaluate current readiness reporting processes to ensure our Nation has the warfighting capability that our Reserve Sailors and Marines are trained to provide.

How would you improve upon the Navy and Marine Corps' ability to produce a healthy and fit reserve component?

Answer: If confirmed, I will use my experience as a Navy Reserve officer to fully inform my review of the reserve component with the goal of improving the health and fitness of the reserve component, as well as ensuring accurate and timely accounting from our medical component.

Lessons Learned

What do you believe are the major personnel lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) which you would seek to address if confirmed as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

Answer: I am confident that there are valuable personnel lessons learned from OEF and OIF. The sacrifices of our Sailors and Marines, and their families in support of these operations were made at great cost. If confirmed, I will seek out and review these hard-earned lessons learned with senior leaders within the Department of the Navy.

TRICARE Fee Increases for Military Retirees

Secretary Gates recently told officers at the Air War College that "health care is eating the (Defense) Department alive."

How do you interpret this statement and do you agree with the Secretary's assessment?

Answer: I interpret Secretary Gates' comments to be an acknowledgement of the huge cost associated with the Departments' overall medical care expenses. I understand his concerns. I have had the privilege to receive military medical care for most of my life. As you know, the medical care that is provided is of a very high quality. This care, however, comes at a substantial cost to the overall Department of Defense budget.

What is your view of the need for increased beneficiary payments in reducing overall health care costs to the Department?

Answer: The Department should consider all available options in order to confront the rising cost of military health care. Certainly, increasing the beneficiary payments would reduce the costs. However, this may also have an adverse impact upon those beneficiaries. Health care is a significant benefit to our military service members and their families, earned with sweat and often blood, and any change must be thoroughly analyzed and carefully communicated.

What other reforms in infrastructure, benefits, or benefit management, if any, do you think should be examined in order to control the costs of military health care?

Answer: I will support efforts by the Department of Defense to responsibly control the costs of military health care.

Personnel and Entitlement Costs

In addition to health care costs, personnel and related entitlement spending continue to increase rapidly and are becoming an ever increasing portion of the DOD budget.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to control the rise in personnel costs and entitlement spending?

Answer: Personnel costs represent the largest part of the Department's budget. One of the keys to controlling personnel costs is to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible with respect to utilization of personnel. It is critical that we apportion that part of the budget devoted to personnel to benefits that deliver the best value to naval personnel while being good stewards of the taxpayer's dollar.

If confirmed, I will strive to do this while also seeking to find new options and approaches to address the rising personnel costs and work with Congress, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy to address this critical matter.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to avoid a requirement for multi-million dollar end-of-year reprogramming to cover personnel costs?

Answer: If confirmed, I will examine the processes and requirements associated with personnel costs to determine what actions may be taken to reduce this reliance upon end-of-year reprogramming.

Family Readiness

Military members and their families in both the active and reserve components have made, and continue to make, tremendous sacrifices in support of operational deployments. Senior military leaders have warned of growing concerns among military families as a result of the stress of frequent deployments and the long separations that go with them.

In your view, what are the key indicators of the stress on Navy and Marine Corps families at this time?

Answer: There are a number of tangible indicators of stress on our military families reflecting the impact of seven years of wartime operations. These range from financial hardship, marital difficulties, psychological problems for children, to the most tragic imaginable, a member taking their own life. I intend to do everything possible to responsibly address the need for services and the demand for support programs by Navy and Marine Corps families.

If confirmed, what will you do to address these key indicators?

Answer: I have personally experienced the impact of extended deployments, both as the deployer and as a dependent. If confirmed, I will work to ensure these resources are available to our families experiencing the effects of frequent deployments. Additionally, I will continue to advocate consistent standardized quality family support and child and youth programs.

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issue for Sailors and Marines and their families?

Answer: I consider all family readiness issues to be important, but obviously the most dramatic and tragic are mental health issues that may result in suicide. If confirmed, I will focus on Navy and Marine Corps family readiness programs, and will strive to meet all family readiness needs throughout the Navy-Marine Corps team. However, I intend to pay particular attention to suicide risks and take every reasonable measure to reduce them.

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: While fiscal challenges threaten Navy and Marine Corps quality of life programs, sustaining our current accredited programs will be a priority. If confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Naval Operations and 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.

If confirmed, how would you ensure support for reserve component families, particularly those who do not reside near an active-duty military installation, related to mobilization, deployment, and family readiness?

Answer: If confirmed, I intend to work with the Secretary of the Navy and the other military services to maintain focus and commitment to the quality of life needs of all personnel, regardless of where they live.

In your view, what progress has been made, and what actions need to be taken in the Navy and Marine Corps to provide increased employment opportunities for military spouses?

Answer: Military spouse employment is a readiness and quality of life issue and a top priority for the Department of the Navy. Significant progress has been made through State and Congressional support for our military spouses through alternative certifications and reciprocal agreements. I will consider a number of options, to include assessing whether allowing spouses to use FPO addresses will improve their ability to engage in home businesses.

If confirmed, what additional steps would you take to ensure that family readiness needs, including child care, are addressed and adequately resourced?

Answer: We will continue to utilize feedback mechanisms from Sailors, Marines, and their families to address their concerns. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that effective and innovative Quality of Life programs including Child Development Centers that our Sailors, Marines and their families rely on, remain resourced and a priority for Department of the Navy. Again, as someone who has both utilized such Development Centers for my children, and as a military child myself, I appreciate the importance of such facilities.

Support for Single Sailors and Marines

While the percentage of married Sailors and Marines has steadily increased, a substantial portion of them, especially young Sailors and Marines, are single.

What are the unique support needs of single Sailors and Marines, especially those returning from combat?

Answer: My military experience has convinced me that all single sailor support needs are not alike. In many ways, their needs differ depending upon seniority. Many junior single personnel are away from their families for the first time and need life skills to adjust to living on their own. More senior single personnel live in the community and may be significantly impacted by a deployment since there is no one to care for their

household. They may not have a support structure to monitor their well-being upon their return from combat operations or deployment.

If confirmed, what would you do to address these needs?

Answer: If confirmed, I would continue to emphasize the availability of Fleet and Family Support Centers and the Marine and Family Support Centers resources and services to all of our Sailors and Marines. The importance of continuing the efforts put in place to engage a single Service member's preferred point of contact during a single Sailor's or Marine's deployment remains important and cannot be over-emphasized.

National Security Personnel System

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. Senior DOD officials have stated that they do not intend to expand NSPS to include employees in bargaining units that are represented by employee unions.

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

Answer: I have had limited opportunity to fully evaluate the NSPS system. It is my understanding that the Department is currently reviewing the programs, policies and practices of NSPS. It seems prudent to allow this review to be completed prior to altering or eliminating the system. Regardless, it is critical for the Department to have a comprehensive system for employee management which provides accountability, flexibility and is mission-driven to incorporate pay for employee performance.

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

Answer: Yes. Appropriately compensating our workforce for their performance is essential. While I am familiarizing myself with the specifics of the NSPS pay-for-performance program, it seems reasonable to establish a clear relationship between the organization's mission and the work performed.

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

Answer: Expedited hiring authority is an exceptional tool in the recruiting process and in building a strong public workforce. If confirmed, I would pursue expedited hiring authority for critical positions.

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: Currently, there are a number of personnel management systems operating within our workforce, including NSPS and the GS. If confirmed, I will review all of them before making recommendations on what is optimal to achieve mission.

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

Answer: I have no specific legislative change to propose at this time. I believe that it is important to wait for the final report and recommendations of the on-going Department review of NSPS policies, regulations and practices.

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

Answer: I have no specific regulatory changes to propose at this time. It is important to wait for, and subsequently evaluate, the final report and recommendations of the on-going Department review, as well as any additional legislative changes to determine what new regulations would be appropriate.

Balance Between Civilian Employees and Contractor Employees

In recent years, the Department of Defense and the Department of the Navy have become increasingly reliant on services provided by contractors. Over the past eight years, DOD's civilian workforce has remained essentially unchanged in size. Over the same period, the DOD's spending on contract services has more than doubled, with the estimated number of contractor employees working for the Department increasing from an estimated 730,000 in Fiscal Year 2000 to an estimated 1,550,000 in Fiscal Year 2007. As a result of the explosive growth in service contracts, contractors now play an integral role in the performance of functions that were once performed exclusively by government employees, including the management and oversight of weapons programs, the development of policies, the development of public relations strategies, and even the collection and analysis of intelligence. In many cases, contractor employees work in the same offices, serve on the same projects and task forces, and perform many of the same functions as federal employees.

Do you believe that the current balance between civilian employees and contractor employees is in the best interests of the Department of the Navy (DON)?

Answer: The DON “Smart Work” initiative contracted out certain tasks and duties, thereby freeing up permanent personnel. This was an understandable and admirable initiative. However, over time it may have gone too far. If confirmed, I will revisit this issue and look for every opportunity to “in source” where it would increase efficiencies. I am committed to achieving the optimal mix of military, federal-civilian, and contractor personnel and to be better stewards of taxpayer resources.

In your view, has the DON become too reliant on contractors to perform its basic functions?

Answer: It would be unwise to assume that contracting out all critical readiness capabilities is the most prudent route to steward scarce resources. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current balance and establishing the process necessary to analyze the costs and benefits of contracting.

Do you believe that the current extensive use of personal services contracts is in the best interests of the DON?

Answer: Similar to my concerns regarding contractors, it is unwise to assume that the use of personal service contracts is always the best route to addressing our needs in light of limited resources. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current balance and establishing the processes necessary to analyze the costs and benefits of these types of contracts.

Do you believe that the DON should undertake a comprehensive reappraisal of “inherently governmental functions” and other critical government functions, and how they are performed?

Answer: It is always in our best interest to carefully review the direct, indirect and potentially unintended consequences of a decision to contract out functions that may be considered inherently governmental. If confirmed, I am committed to establishing the processes necessary to perform this analysis.

If confirmed, will you work with other appropriate officials in the DON to address these issues?

Answer: Yes.

One reason for the explosive growth in DOD’s contractor workforce has been the continuing limitation placed on the number of civilian employees of the Department of Defense. Rather than saving money as intended, this limitation has

shifted all growth to contractor employees.

Would you agree that the balance between civilian employees and contractor employees in performing DON functions should be determined by the best interests of the DON and not by artificial constraints on the number of civilian employees?

Answer: Yes.

If confirmed, will you work to remove any artificial constraints placed on the size of the DON's civilian workforce, so that the number of employees most appropriate to accomplish its mission can be hired?

Answer: Yes.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Numerous cases of sexual misconduct involving service members at home station and in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan have been reported over the last several years. Many victims and their advocates contend that they were victimized twice: first by attackers in their own ranks and then by unresponsive or inadequate military treatment. They asserted that the military failed to respond appropriately by providing basic services, including medical attention and criminal investigation of their charges.

What is your evaluation of the progress to date by the Navy and the Marine Corps to prevent additional sexual assaults at home station as well as deployed locations?

Answer: If confirmed, I will be guided by the fact that American families have entrusted us to care for their sons and daughters. I will not allow these young patriots to be victimized by their own. The Navy and Marine Corps have undertaken several important measures to strengthen the prevention and response to sexual assaults. Although I have not had an opportunity to fully review these programs, as a Navy Commander, I know these programs are critically important. If confirmed, I will have no greater priority or responsibility.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources the Navy and Marine Corps have in place to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault?

Answer: If confirmed, I will evaluate the current training and resources to ensure

Department of the Navy investigative organizations have the ability to respond swiftly and appropriately to address all allegations of sexual assault.

What is your understanding of the resources and programs the Navy and Marine Corps have in place in deployed locations to offer victims of sexual assaults the medical, psychological, and legal help that they need?

Answer: As a deploying force, Navy and Marine Corps units offer victim protection and support with victim advocates on board as well as additional assistance through ‘reach back’ capability. Services maintain close coordination to ensure support in joint units. NCIS also deploys to the combat areas special agents who are trained in investigating sexual assaults.

Do you consider the Department of the Navy’s current sexual assault policies and procedures, particularly those on confidential reporting, to be effective?

Answer: Confidentiality and restricted reporting of sexual assaults are critical. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring effective policies are implemented and enforced.

What problems, if any, are you aware of in the manner in which the confidential reporting procedures have been put into effect?

Answer: It is imperative to strike the right balance between the legitimate interests of the victim of sexual assault who makes a confidential report, the Navy Commander who is responsible for the welfare of the victim, and the interests of the military justice system which seeks resolution. In my view, Navy leaders must continue to reconcile these competing interests.

If confirmed, what actions would you 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: If confirmed, I will evaluate the current reporting and response systems to determine if any modifications would improve the visibility for senior leadership.

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 the service Academies. 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.”

What is your assessment of the policies and procedures at the United States Naval Academy to prevent and respond appropriately to sexual assaults and sexual harassment and to ensure essential oversight?

Answer: As a critical source for future Naval Officers, it is essential to ensure that midshipmen are trained in a culture that fosters respect and rejects sexual harassment and assault. If confirmed, I will work with the Superintendent of the Naval Academy to ensure the strongest, most response-oriented programs are in place.

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?

Answer: Both the Navy and the Marine Corps continue to stress their unequivocal position that sexual assault is completely at odds with their core values – and that all Sailors and Marines are honor bound to step up, step in and take personal responsibility for preventing sexual assault and holding offenders accountable.

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: If confirmed, I will ensure that every individual and organization under my office has access to the training and tools essential to promote a culture consistent with Navy and Marine Corps values.

Religious Guidelines

What is your understanding of current policies and programs of the Department of Defense and the Department of the Navy regarding religious practices in the military?

Answer: It is my understanding that the Department of Defense and the Department of the Navy have placed a high value on the rights of members of the military services to worship according to the dictates of their individual beliefs. From my experience at sea, I know the lengths our service goes to accommodate all faiths. These policies have been created in order to comply with the First Amendment to the Constitution and Federal law.

Do these policies accommodate, where appropriate, religious practices that require adherents to wear particular forms of dress or other articles of religious significance?

Answer: Yes. DoD policy requires that the accommodation of religious practices be approved by commanders who strike the appropriate balance between accommodation and ensuring there is no adverse impact on mission accomplishment, military readiness, unit cohesion, standards or discipline.

In your view, do these policies accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief?

Answer: Yes.

In your opinion, do existing policies and practices regarding public prayers offered by military chaplains in a variety of formal and informal settings strike the proper balance between a chaplain's ability to pray in accordance with his or her religious beliefs and the rights of other service members with different beliefs, including no religious beliefs?

Answer: Yes. Tolerance, inclusiveness, and mutual respect guide Navy policy and practice in order to balance the rights of chaplains and those of many diverse faiths or non-faiths who attend formal and informal functions.

What is your assessment of the policies and procedures at the United States Naval Academy to ensure religious tolerance and respect?

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to focus specifically on the policies and procedures at the Naval Academy in this regard. I would expect that the policies and procedures of the Naval Academy would align with the First Amendment to the Constitution, Federal law, and the policies of the DoD.

Suicide Prevention

The Committee is concerned about the increasing rate of suicides in the Navy.

In your view, what is the cause of this increase in suicides?

Answer: Factors commonly associated with Navy and Marine suicides include multiple life stressors such as problems in relationships or work, administrative or legal actions and physical health concerns. Additionally, mental health problems, alcohol and substance abuse increase suicide risk. Preventing suicides requires preventing life problems, when possible, or resolving them before the problems escalate into suicidal thinking.

What is your assessment of the Navy's response to this increase in suicides?

Answer: While I have not been fully briefed on the Navy's response to the increase, I am aware that the Navy has taken a proactive approach to suicide prevention with primary focus on building resilience through the Navy's Operational Stress Control Program, now in its early phases. If confirmed, I intend to leverage all tools available to improve the quality and access to such programs, to reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health treatment, and to consider new programs to help families and units deal with the trauma of these devastating acts. There is much to be done and efforts will require continued support.

Foreign Language Proficiency

A Foreign Language Transformation Roadmap announced by the Department of Defense on March 30, 2005, directed a series of actions aimed at transforming the Department's foreign language capabilities, to include revision of policy and doctrine, building a capabilities based requirements process, and enhancing foreign language capability for both military and civilian personnel. More recently, Congress authorized incentive pay for members of precommissioning programs to study critical foreign languages.

In your view, what should be the priorities of the Federal Government to expanding the foreign language skills of civilian and military personnel and improving coordination of foreign language programs and activities among the Federal agencies?

Answer: Foreign language proficiency is an invaluable skill for the Department of the Navy. This is especially true in many of our mission critical occupations. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to identify the foreign language training available for the workforce and to establish a baseline from which to begin a review of potential training gaps. In this effort, it only makes sense to attempt to harness the expertise attained by other federal agencies through a coordinated approach.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to identify foreign language requirements, and to design military and civilian personnel policies and programs to fill those gaps?

Answer: I am not currently familiar with the Department's programs to attain foreign language proficiencies. If confirmed, my first step would be to review determinations of any assessments of foreign language requirements. I will need to see how they relate to language proficiency and cultural awareness in the force. Next, I will review our current capabilities in light of these requirements and analyze potential options to ensure that the capabilities meet the requirements.

What is your assessment of an appropriate time frame within which results can be realized in this critical area?

Answer: Based upon my limited knowledge of the Department's programs in this regard, I am unable to provide a timeline at this time. If confirmed, however, I will work closely with members of the Committee to achieve results in the greatest possible time.

Legislative Fellowship Program

Each year, the Services assign mid-career officers to the offices of Members of Congress under the Legislative Fellows Program. Upon completion of their legislative fellowships, officers are required to be assigned to follow-on positions in their services in which they effectively use the experience and knowledge they gained during their fellowships.

What is your assessment of the value of the Legislative Fellows program to the Navy and the DON's compliance with utilization and assignment policies for officers who have served as legislative fellows?

Answer: My experience as a Naval Reserve officer and as a former White House Fellow convinces me that officers selected for fellowships receive invaluable insights from their assignments. I also believe that the military benefits greatly when those officers return to serve in post-fellowship utilization tours. The needs of the Navy and officer's professional development as well as career progression are both well served when these officers are able to take their experience as fellows to follow on assignments.

Defense Integrated Military 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 failure to meet the expectations of each Service.

What is your assessment of the need for an integrated, cross-service personnel and pay system?

Answer: I have not been fully briefed on DIMHRS program or its impact on the Navy and Marine Corps. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to understand the potential options available under this system and the impact to personnel management and pay.

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: The Department needs a comprehensive human resources system to enable rapid, accurate and accessible personnel information that will support the full range of our Navy and Marine Corps operational environments.

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 have not been briefed on the Department's position.

Do the Navy and Marine Corps intend to implement DIMHRS when it is operationally ready?

Answer: I have not been sufficiently briefed on the Department's current plans regarding the implementation of DIMHRS.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to the implementation schedule and process currently in place?

Answer: I have not been briefed upon the implementation schedule and am not in a position to make such a recommendation.

GI Bill Benefits

Last year, Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act that created enhanced educational benefits for service members who have served at least 90 days on active duty since 9/11. The maximum benefit would roughly cover the cost of a college education at any public university in the country.

What is your assessment of the effect of the Act on recruiting and retention of Sailors and Marines and on nuclear-trained personnel in particular?

Answer: The implementation of this program is very recent, and initial benefits will not begin distribution until next week. Consequently, there is not enough data at this time to provide an accurate assessment of the Act's effect on recruiting and retention. Anecdotally, I sense enormous enthusiasm from Sailors and Marines about the program, particularly the transferability component.

What is your understanding of the sufficiency of the implementation plan in the DON for the transferability provisions contained in the Act?

Answer: It is my understanding that the Department of Navy has successfully implemented the transferability provisions contained in the Act. As part of my oversight role, if confirmed, I will monitor this on a regular basis.

Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation

The Department has completed the 10th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC), releasing Volume I of its report in February 2008 and Volume II in July 2008. Among other recommendations, the QRMC proposes a new defined benefit retirement plan that more resembles the benefits available under the Federal Employees Retirement System than the current military retirement benefit; increasing TRICARE fees for retirees; and the adoption of dependent care and flexible spending accounts for service members.

What is your assessment of the QRMC recommendations, particularly the proposed new defined retirement plan?

Answer: I have not had an opportunity to review the QRMC. I recognize the need to evaluate the merits of a defined benefit retirement plan and related programs for our military retirees and their families. If confirmed, I will thoroughly review the QRMC to better understand their recommendations.

Do you believe the Department of the Navy should offer dependent care and flexible spending accounts to sailors and marines?

Answer: I recognize the importance of providing a mechanism for families to build savings for dependent care. The adoption of dependent care and flexible spending accounts should be evaluated as options in a comprehensive review of potential programs to further assist families as well as to build additional incentives for the recruitment and retention of our military personnel.

Management and Development of the Senior Executive Service (SES)

The transformation of the Armed Forces has brought with it an increasing realization of the importance of efficient and forward thinking management of senior executives.

What is your vision for the management and development of the Navy senior executive workforce, especially in the critically important areas of acquisition, financial management, and the scientific and technical fields?

Answer: My vision would be to establish a program to develop a senior civilian workforce with a broad background of skills and experiences, prepared to support the warfighter and respond to changing management requirements of the Department.

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 Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

Answer: Yes.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided in a timely manner 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.