

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Ms. Melissa Dalton
Nominee to be Under Secretary of the Air Force

Duties and Responsibilities

What is your understanding of the current duties and functions of the Under Secretary of the Air Force?

The Under Secretary of the Air Force is responsible for the affairs of the Department of the Air Force, comprised of the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force, to include organizing, training, and equipping Air and Space Forces and for the welfare of approximately 700,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian Airmen and Guardians and their families serving around the world. The Under Secretary oversees the department's annual budget and directs strategy and policy development, risk management, weapons acquisition, technology investments, and human resource management across a global enterprise. Per Title 10, the Under Secretary shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of the Air Force may prescribe.

What background and experience do you possess that render you highly qualified to perform these duties and responsibilities?

With over two decades of experience in defense policy and intelligence matters, I have a deep background in strategy, policy, operations, processes, and workforce issues involved in the Department of Defense overall. I have worked with the Department of the Air Force throughout my OSD experience, and I understand the vital role that the Air Force and Space Force play in bringing talent, capability, and concepts needed to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, principally the pacing challenge posed by the People's Republic of China.

Do you believe there are any steps you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the Under Secretary of the Air Force?

If confirmed, I look forward to deepening my experience and expertise on personnel issues to provide the best possible care for our Airmen and Guardians. The Department of the Air Force faces challenges to recruitment and retention of talent in the Air Force due to a range of factors while also harnessing the exciting opportunity of growing the Space Force. If confirmed, I would prioritize addressing these issues. I believe we have a fundamental responsibility to provide the best care and support to our Service Members and their families, to honor their service and sacrifice.

In your view, what should be the role of the Under Secretary of the Air Force in bringing the United States Space Force to full operational capability?

If confirmed as Under Secretary of the Air Force, I would look forward to working in

support of Secretary Kendall and with the Chief of Space Operations and Vice Chief of Space of Operations to bring the Space Force to full operational capability. I would do so by helping to accelerate and enable combat readiness for U.S. forces, developing Guardians that underpin the Service's readiness, and leveraging partnerships with U.S. industry and with allies and partners. I would look forward to being an advocate for these issues within the Department of Defense, through budgetary, personnel, and governance processes, working closely with OSD, the other Military Departments, and USSPACECOM, and in partnership with Congress.

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to ensure that your tenure as Under Secretary of the Air Force epitomizes the fundamental requirement for civilian control of the Armed Forces embedded in the U.S. Constitution and other laws?

I would ensure that Secretary Kendall's priorities provide direction for the Air Force's and Space Force's strategy, budgetary, personnel, acquisition, and technology decisions through governance and processes where both civilian and military leaders represent Service equities. I would forge strong partnerships with the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force and Vice Chief of Space Operations to enable continuous dialogue and to develop options and recommendations together for Secretary Kendall and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and Chief of Space Operations. I would ensure Congress is a partner in providing oversight of the Department of the Air Force through regular consultations, briefings, and testimony.

What additional duties and functions would you expect and/or recommend the Secretary of the Air Force to prescribe for you, if confirmed?

If confirmed, as Under Secretary I would perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of the Air Force may prescribe. I would look forward to helping to drive Secretary Kendall's vision for re-optimizing the Air Force and Space Force for Great Power Competition throughout the Department of the Air Force, and in support of the 2022 National Defense Strategy.

If confirmed to be the Under Secretary of the Air Force, what role would you establish for yourself in the overall supervision of the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force and the Air Force General Counsel?

The Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force and Air Force General Counsel report to the Secretary of the Air Force. I would look forward to working closely with them to advance Secretary Kendall's priorities through regular consultation and providing clarity, when needed, of Secretary Kendall's intent. I would represent their equities in senior, internal DoD governance bodies focused on strategy, budget, personnel, and other matters.

If confirmed, what innovative ideas would you consider providing to the Secretary of the Air Force regarding the organization and operations of the Department of the Air Force?

As in other areas of the Department of Defense, I believe we must look for opportunities to harness advances in automation and artificial intelligence (AI) in the Department of the Air Force. Although there is plenty of work to do and proof of efficacy needed to be done on the use of automation and AI for weapons systems and platforms, including ensuring their ethical use, I believe there are already many proven and reliable uses of automation and AI in supply chains, personnel management, and training in other sectors that could be leveraged in the Department of the Air Force.

What additional resources and authorities do you perceive would better enable the Under Secretary of the Air Force to organize successfully the business operations of the Department of the Air Force?

If confirmed, I would look forward to partnering with Congress, Secretary Kendall, the Chief and Vice of Staff of the Air Force, and the Chief and Vice Chief of Space Operations to evaluate what additional resources and authorities would better enable the Department of the Air Force to organize business operations successfully. I understand that Secretary Kendall and Department of the Air Force leadership are examining how to organize the Department of the Air Force for Great Power Competition, and I look forward to learning more about and advancing these efforts, if confirmed.

If confirmed, on which specific business operations would you focus your improvement efforts and why? What performance goals and measures would you establish for evaluating increases in the overall efficiency and effectiveness of each business operation you cite?

I believe there are improvements we can make to improving our personnel management systems and making quality of life and service programs more accessible for our Airmen, Guardians, and their families. We can build exquisite capability but without taking care of our people, we will not accomplish our mission or stated aims for the Department of the Air Force.

No matter what innovations we implement, it will always be important that the changes we make and the metrics by which we measure our success or failure are tied directly to how we accomplish our mission. Every innovation and initiative that I recommend would be designed to improve the speed, accuracy, and efficiency for accomplishing the Department of the Air Force's stated goals of dominance and superiority in the air and space domains.

To the extent the Air Force performs functions—operational or institutional—that overlap with those of other Department of Defense (DOD) components, what would be your approach, if confirmed, to consolidating and reducing those redundancies?

If confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with the Under Secretary of the Army and the Under Secretary of the Navy and with OSD Components to identify ways to consolidate and reduce unnecessary redundancies. Given my OSD experience, I would bring a joint perspective to the Department of the Air Force and look for joint and

combined solutions for capability development and operational concepts where possible.

If confirmed as the Under Secretary of the Air Force, how would you interpret your relationship with the Deputy Secretary Defense in her role as Chief Operating Officer of the Department of Defense under provisions of title 31, U.S. Code, section 1123?

If confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with the Deputy Secretary of Defense on strategy to operational concept to resource alignment, program and budget review, personnel, and governance issues to ensure the Department of the Air Force equities are represented and advanced through the business operations and processes of the Department of Defense.

If confirmed, how would you work to improve the quality and quantity of Air Force management personnel and expertise?

I believe we need to enhance the agility and resiliency of our military, civilian, and contracted workforce within the Department of the Air Force, as well as the processes and systems they manage. We should seek to recruit, train, develop, and retain top talent within the Department of the Air Force at all levels. We should aim for continuous workforce improvement, being open to integrating process automation and cloud systems, while keeping an eye on total cost of ownership and operational measures of effectiveness. Ultimately, we should aim to free up time for the workforce, removing repetitive processes and lengthy paperwork so that they can focus on advancing the mission of the Department.

How would you make use of advanced business practices and technologies, and leverage the capabilities of Air Force laboratories and research universities and business and public administration schools to improve Air Force management capabilities, if confirmed?

Through stakeholder outreach and partnerships with the Air Force laboratories, research universities, and business and public administration schools, I would seek best practices for improving Air Force management capabilities and recommend ways to integrate them into Department of the Air Force business operations, if confirmed. I believe there are initiatives to be gleaned from these partnerships to enhance the Department of the Air Force's personnel management systems and to make quality of life and service programs more accessible for Airmen, Guardians, and their families.

Major Challenges and Priorities

What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you would face if confirmed as Under Secretary of the Air Force?

The 2022 *National Defense Strategy* clearly prioritizes the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the pacing challenge for the entire Department. We must ensure that the Air Force and Space Force are organized, trained, equipped, and resilient to meet the PRC

acing challenge, are prepared to deter aggression, and if called upon, to fight and win the nation's wars.

A second critical challenge is nuclear modernization. After years of focus on post-9/11 priorities, and given the nuclear threat landscape, it is vital for the United States to invest in modernizing the nuclear triad as the bedrock of our national defense and for our extended deterrence commitments to our Allies. The Department of the Air Force is responsible for modernizing two legs of the triad.

Most importantly, the Department of the Air Force faces challenges to recruitment and retention of talent in the Air Force due to a range of factors while also harnessing the exciting opportunity of growing the Space Force. We can build exquisite capability but without taking care of Airmen, Guardians, and their families, we will not succeed in achieving our aims. I believe we have a fundamental responsibility to provide the best care and support to our Service Members and their families, to honor their service and sacrifice.

What plans do you have for addressing each of these challenges, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I would look forward to driving Secretary Kendall's vision for the Department of the Air Force forward, working with the Department's civilian and military leadership to ensure that the Department is focused on addressing the PRC pacing challenge through strategies, programs, budgets, risk mitigation, acquisition and technology, and personnel management.

Leveraging my experience co-leading the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review, I would steward modernization of two legs of the nuclear triad, working with OSD Acquisition and Sustainment and the Service Acquisition Executives, if confirmed.

I would make recruitment and retention for Department of the Air Force a priority area of focus, if confirmed. I would ensure that we harness innovative approaches for recruitment across the United States to appeal to Generation Z through traditional and new media platforms and through campaigns that generate a call to service with purpose, opportunity, and commitment. I would strengthen quality of life and quality of service programs to enhance retention, including improving housing, health care, childcare, education and training, and support for Service Members' families. Our Airmen and Guardians deserve no less.

What lessons have you learned as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Security in terms of your relationship with Congress, and how would you apply those lessons, if confirmed, to this new role?

My experience as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs has deepened my appreciation for the role of Congress. In my current position, I am proud to have briefed and testified before Congress over two dozen times. I want to thank Congress for the reauthorization of the Section 130i authority,

which has proved critical in defending DoD facilities and assets from UAS threats, and for appropriating resources necessary to begin the modernization of NORAD capabilities, including funding for the Over the Horizon Radars and other capabilities to enhance NORAD's domain awareness. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with Congress regularly and providing timely and accurate information to advance our nation's priorities in an active, bipartisan, transparent, and cooperative spirit. I have long viewed Congress as a partner, and I will continue to do so in my current position and if confirmed as Under Secretary of the Air Force.

2022 National Defense Strategy

The 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) identified China as the “most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge for the Department” and stated that Russia poses an “acute threat,” as illustrated by its brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. The NDS also identifies “[m]utually-beneficial Alliances and partnerships” as “an enduring strength for the United States.”

In your view, does the 2022 NDS accurately assess the current strategic environment, including prioritization among the most critical challenges and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its allies? Please explain your answer.

I believe the 2022 NDS accurately captures the growing challenges from the PRC and the acute threat posed by Russia. The deterrence priorities outlined within establish a purposeful way forward to proactively address these global competitors, while we remain vigilant and deliberate in our responses in the face of other persistent threats, including those posed by North Korea, Iran, and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO).

We've witnessed the PRC's attempts to erode the rules-based order across the Indo-Pacific region through coercive operational behavior; Russia's further invasion of Ukraine threatens European security; North Korea and Iran continue to seek weapons of mass destruction and long-range delivery systems through development or purchase; VEOs continue to threaten our security with increasingly sophisticated capabilities.. The increasingly coercive actions taken by those who challenge the free and open international order can only be checked through synchronized activities and investments to aggregate resources and shift conditions in our favor.

In your view, does the 2022 NDS correctly specify the priority missions of the DOD and the capabilities by which DOD can achieve its objectives in the context of the current strategic environment? What do you perceive as the areas of greatest risk?

Yes. While addressing the rapidly evolving nature of the security environment, the NDS sets clear priorities, and identifies the most important strategic ends, while outlining key capabilities to invest in, such as hypersonic and autonomous systems and long-range strike. While we know investing in specific systems will strengthen our competitive

advantages, it also emphasizes a holistic approach through integrated deterrence. Importantly, the NDS acknowledges that close collaboration with Allies and partners is foundational to the pursuit of U.S. national security interests and integrating with them as early and often as possible is essential to mitigating military risk to the United States. If confirmed, I commit to a more detailed discussion of risk in a classified setting.

In your view, is the Air Force adequately sized, structured, and resourced to implement the 2022 NDS and the associated operational plans? Please explain your answer.

The NDS calls for broad and deep change in developing and managing military capability to address key operational areas. Implementing the NDS requires hard choices and adherence to priorities. If confirmed, I pledge to work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force Leaders to ensure the Department is organized, trained, and equipped to meet the objectives of the 2022 NDS. I will also review investments to ensure the Air and Space Forces can defend the homeland, modernize the deterrence mission, and project combat power against any adversary.

If confirmed, how would you address any gaps or shortfalls in the ability of the Air Force to meet the demands placed on it by the 2022 NDS and the operational plans that implement the strategy?

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force leaders to continue developing concepts and capabilities, as well as making investments, to meet the demands of the 2022 NDS. I will also work with the Office of the Secretary of Defense to ensure we continue to balance the demand of resources we need today with modernizing the force to sustain and strengthen deterrence for tomorrow.

If confirmed, what changes or adjustments would you advise the Secretary of the Air Force to make in the Air Force's implementation of the 2022 NDS?

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force leaders to support and assess the Air Force's implementation of the 2022 NDS. This includes continued development of relevant combat-credible forces and a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent, strengthening our network of Allies and partners, and making investments in our Airmen and Guardians. I will also work with Department of the Air Force leaders and Office of the Secretary of Defense counterparts to evaluate and modify application of the NDS as needed to adapt to the evolving strategic environment.

Homeland Defense

The National Defense Strategy indicates that defending the homeland is the top priority. The Air Force especially is increasingly having to deal with non-traditional threats to its bases and mission, notably from small unmanned aerial systems (UASs) and balloons in military airspace.

What have you learned in your role as ASD for Homeland Defense that will help you and the Air Force in addressing these problems?

I have learned that we have important gaps in our capability to counter the evolving hazards and threats posed by UAS and other non-traditional threats. For example, low-flying autonomous and semi-autonomous UAS are very difficult to detect. If confirmed, I will press to close important capability gaps.

I have also learned that there is a consequential shortcoming in DoD's statutory authority to counter UAS threats in the homeland due to the partial termination provision in section 130i of title 10, U.S. Code. DoD must make hard choices every year in planning, programming, and budgeting across the five-year Future Years Defense Program for its many high priority mission requirements.

Requirements related to DoD's protection of certain facilities and assets, such as those associated with DoD's air defense of the United States, are less competitive in DoD's planning, programming, and budgeting process because DoD's authority to provide this protection expires in three years. If confirmed, I will support DoD's efforts to work with the Congress to close important authority gaps.

Southwest Border

As Assistant Secretary for Homeland Defense, your portfolio included defense support of civil authorities at the southwest border.

What lessons have you learned that you would want to share with this Committee about DOD support to DHS at the southwest border?

In response to DHS requests for assistance, DoD has supported DHS's border security mission at the southwest border for 21 of the last 24 years, at a cost to DoD of more than \$4 billion. From this, I have learned many lessons, including:

- Thanks to the support of the Congress, DoD has developed and maintains substantial capabilities and capacities to carry out its mission to defend our nation. These substantial DoD capabilities and capacities may also be applied, when needed, to support DoD's Federal partners in carrying out their missions, including supporting DHS in carrying out its mission to secure the southwest border.
- DHS is not sufficiently resourced to carry out its mission to secure the southwest border.
- DHS's continued reliance on DoD presents a risk to the Nation should DoD forces, capabilities, and resources need to be committed to a major overseas contingency.

What other suggestions do you have that would help reduce illegal drug and human trafficking at the border?

Congress assigned the law enforcement responsibility for securing the borders of the United States against drug and human trafficking to DHS, so I must defer to DHS.

However, it has become clear to me in my role as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs that DHS is not sufficiently resourced to carry out its mission to secure the southwest border.

What role do you believe DOD should play in addressing the crisis at the southwest border? What aspects of the current DOD role at the southwest border could be improved?

DHS has the statutory responsibility for securing the borders of the United States, so DoD's role is appropriately a supporting one. When DHS's capabilities or capacity to carry out its responsibility are exceeded, DHS may, consistent with the law, request DoD support. In response to DHS requests for assistance, DoD has supported DHS's border security mission at the southwest border for 21 of the last 24 years, at a cost to DoD of more than \$4 billion.

DoD support is best suited for exceptional, temporary crises, such as when DoD temporarily assisted civilian border agencies following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. DoD assistance bought these agencies the time they needed to increase their capacity to provide the heightened level of security necessary at the northern and southern borders. Resourcing DHS so that DoD support at the southwest border can once again be for exceptional, temporary crises would be a significant improvement, benefiting both DHS's border security mission and DoD's national defense mission.

Do you believe that the incomplete barrier along the southwest border should be completed as part of a broader border security policy? Why or why not?

Prior Republican and Democratic Administrations have determined that a border barrier can serve as part of a system of border security to mitigate the flow of unlawful entries into the United States. I defer to DHS, as the agency assigned the statutory responsibility for border security, to determine whether further construction of a border barrier can serve as part of a larger system of border security efforts to mitigate the flow of illicit trafficking and unlawful entry into the United States.

At what point did you become aware that DoD was auctioning off border wall materials? Please explain the notification process about these auctions and any delays or omissions in notification to Congress.

As Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs, my

duties do not include management of the disposition of excess DoD property. I first became aware of the auctions of these excess materials when I was asked by Members of the Committee to explain the auctions.

Except for section 2890 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, I am unfamiliar with any requirements to report, brief, or notify Congress related to the disposition of excess DoD property. DoD will always comply with the law, including the provision in the FY2024 NDAA.

Indo-Pacific Region

China’s robust anti-access, area denial (A2/AD) capabilities—including long-range ballistic and cruise missiles, advanced integrated air defenses, electronic warfare, and cyber—pose a significant challenge for U.S. forces. The Commander of United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) and the Chiefs of the Military Services have often emphasized the importance of distributed, adaptive, and resilient basing in the Indo-Pacific region to address the challenge posed by China’s advanced A2/AD capabilities.

In your view, what are the key areas in which the Air Force must improve to provide the necessary capabilities and capacity to the Joint Force to prevail in a potential conflict with China?

I understand Secretary Kendall has developed seven Operational Imperatives, supplemented by cross-cutting operational enablers, that identify critical warfighting capabilities needed to deter our adversaries and prevail in combat. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary on the Operational Imperatives and other initiatives to close key capability gaps, ensuring the Air and Space Forces can deliver on their core missions and enable the Joint Force to deter, and if necessary, defeat our pacing challenge.

In your view, how does the threat posed by Chinese missile forces affect the Air Force’s posture in the Indo-Pacific region? In your assessment, have Air Force investments, posture shifts and/or new operational concepts sufficiently addressed this threat?

The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) poses significant threats in the kinetic and non-kinetic environment to the Joint Force and facilities in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as to those of our Allies and partners. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Department of the Air Force military leaders to assess specific threats to Department of the Air Force forces and facilities and new investments, posture shifts, and operational concepts to address the threat and protect our critical infrastructure.

Do you believe the planned joint force mix of tactical aircraft is sufficient to counter current and future threats in INDOPACOM, where the “tyranny of distance” is such a major factor?

“Tyranny of distance” challenges are inherent in operations in the Indo-Pacific. Integrated deterrence, as well as joint warfighting functions, will be critical to countering current and future threats in the region. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders, counterparts in the Services and the Office of Secretary of Defense, and Allies and partners to ensure the Department of the Air Force provides an appropriate mix of aircraft for the Joint Force to compete effectively in the INDOPACOM Area of Responsibility.

Do you believe DOD has sufficient sealift and airlift capabilities to support the Air Forces throughout INDOPACOM for both training and contingency purposes?

The demands of operating in the Indo-Pacific theater will continue to place high value on the Air Force’s ability to swiftly move and sustain the Joint Force over global distances in challenging environments. I share your concern about the Air Force mobility enterprise’s ability to meet contingency demands. Across the Department of Defense, we’ll need to examine and balance theater air and sealift capacities, as these must work together to move and sustain forces across the vast Indo-Pacific theater. If confirmed, I will work closely with Air Force leaders to ensure the Department of the Air Force airlift capabilities will have training and contingency solutions for the joint force within INDOPACOM and other Combatant Commands.

In your view, are there alternative concepts of operation, platforms, and basing opportunities exist to address potential shortfalls in this area?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary of the Air Force, Chief of Space Operations, and Chief of Staff of the Air Force on the Department’s ongoing efforts that aim to combat the PRC’s anti-access area denial capabilities and enable the Joint Force to deter adversaries and prevail in combat, such as the Operational Imperatives, Joint Warfighting Concept, Air Force Future Operating Concept, and Agile Combat Employment.

Europe

In your view, what are the key areas in which the Air Force must improve to provide the necessary capabilities and capacity to the Joint Force to deter Russian aggression and, if necessary, prevail in a potential conflict with Russia?

The 2022 NDS prioritizes the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as our pacing challenge, while also addressing the acute threat posed by Russia. The Joint Force is concurrently preparing to meet challenges posed by the PRC and deter further aggression in Europe and, if necessary, prevail in a potential conflict with Russia. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders, the Office of the Secretary of Defense counterparts, and Allies and partners to increase capacity and capabilities to meet challenges in the European region.

Air Force Readiness

How would you assess the current readiness of the Air Force—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—to execute its required missions?

The Air Force has organized and trained to counter violent extremist organizations for the last two decades and has demonstrated such capability with great effectiveness. However, challenged with a global landscape marked by a competitor with the intent to reshape the international order, the Air Force must be prepared to counter its military influence. DOD stands now at an inflection point where it must retool readiness and focus acquisition of materiel and equipment to meet that potential threat. Specifically, the Air Force must reorganize to enable the training its personnel need to be ready for a peer conflict. I know Secretary Kendall and Air Force leaders are already committed to improving readiness. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to address and continue Air Force efforts towards building and maintain mission readiness.

In your view, what are the priority missions for which current and future Air Force forces should be trained and ready in the context of day-to-day activities, as well as for contingencies?

From day-to-day activities to contingency operations, the current and future Air Force must be trained and ready to conduct its five core missions: Air Superiority, Global Strike, Rapid Global Mobility, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, and Command and Control. However, the changing threat environment will shift the ways in which those missions are conducted. Pivoting to a peer threat, the Air Force must continue its efforts to develop key capabilities to remain at the leading edge. From developing future units of action designed to execute the Agile Combat Employment scheme of maneuver to investing in technologies that leverage current and future advancements, such artificial intelligence, the Air Force must continue to hone its warfighting capability.

Does the Air Force have the requisite analytic capabilities and tools to support you, if confirmed as the Under Secretary of the Air Force, in measuring its readiness to execute the broad range of potential Air Force missions envisioned by 2022 NDS and associated operational plans—from low-intensity, gray-zone conflicts to protracted high intensity fights? Please explain your answer.

Possessing the appropriate analytical tools and skills to support sound decision making is vital to success in the current and future strategic environment. The Department of Defense strives to maintain robust modeling and simulation, wargaming, and analytical expertise to assess its readiness. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force leaders to continuously assess and improve the Department's analytical capacity and capabilities to meet the demands of the 2022 NDS and associated operational plans.

If confirmed, how would you prioritize maintaining readiness in the near term, with modernizing the Air Force to ensure future readiness?

In the near term, constrained by the resources, the Air Force must focus on developing readiness for a peer threat while making smart risk decisions to prevent overleveraging the force. To ensure future readiness, I believe the Air Force should focus efforts towards finding balance between readiness and modernization. This is a tough challenge because modernization cannot be only in time of need and should not be conducted across the force simultaneously. If confirmed, I will work with Air Force leadership to plan ahead to phase in modernization to minimize competition for resources and increase our total force readiness to and take only calculated and appropriate risk to either.

Equipment Readiness

What is your understanding and assessment of the methods currently used for estimating the funding needed for the maintenance of Air Force equipment?

I understand the Air Force employs a rigorous, bottom-up build of life-cycle equipment sustainment requirements.

Each sustainment task is catalogued in a management information system and costed for labor hours and materiel. I believe benefits could be derived from Air Force reassessment of aircraft equipment maintenance funding methodologies.

Do you believe that increased investment is needed to reduce the backlog in equipment maintenance?

I recognize the importance of Air Force readiness and understand that it is a key priority as the Air Force postures its force for potential conflict. Consistent and predictive funding would allow for more accurate forecasts and equipment sustainment actions.

Increased investment to reduce the backlog and rebuild capability in equipment maintenance is critical to restoring readiness.

If confirmed, I will work Secretary Kendall and Chief Allvin to support all lines of effort in resolving this problem.

In your view, how important is reduction of the materiel maintenance backlog to improvements in readiness?

Reducing the materiel maintenance backlog is essential to improving Air Force readiness. Increased and on-time funding for sustainment, training, and infrastructure are all necessary to reduce the materiel maintenance backlog and ensure the Air Force can improve readiness.

Budget

If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of funding for the Air Force?

I would reference our ability to meet National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy priorities when determining the adequacy of resourcing. In line with our strategy, I would prioritize investments in capabilities that provide a competitive edge against our pacing challenge and build the talented and ready workforce our critical missions demand. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure the Department of the Air Force is funded to meet the demands of our complex security environment.

Section 222a of title 10, U.S. Code, provides that not later than 10 days after the President’s submission of the defense budget to Congress, each Service Chief must submit to the congressional defense committees a report that lists, in order of priority, the unfunded priorities of his or her armed force.

What are your views of this statutory requirement and the utility of unfunded priorities lists?

In accordance with 10 U.S.C. 222a, Service Chiefs submit an Unfunded Priority List (UPL) to the Congressional Defense Committees. The UPL allows the Chiefs to identify areas where, if given an increase in funding, their services could help improve capability or accelerate programs. All the services, including the Air Force and the Space Force, must make difficult funding decisions that balance manpower, modernization, and readiness capabilities to provide a competitive edge.

Acquisition

As Under Secretary of the Air Force, what would be your role in the Air Force acquisition process—including in the processes of defining requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?

If confirmed, I will fulfill my role in the acquisition process as assigned to me by the Secretary of the Air Force and as prescribed by 10 U.S.C. § 9015. This will include executing all aspects of acquisition and budgeting as requested by the Secretary and in accordance with department policy. Additionally, I will work the Secretary of the Air Force, the Service Chiefs for the Air Force and the Space Force, and their staffs, to ensure acquisition, requirements, and budgets align.

If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to improve each of the three aspects of the Air Force acquisition process—requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?

If confirmed, I will team with the Assistant Secretaries for Financial Management; Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics; and Space Acquisition and Integration to review current processes and identify where there is room for improvement. Next, I will work

with them to develop potential efforts for consideration by the Secretary and support the decision throughout implementation. We must ensure the budget is allocated to deliver effective programs that meet requirements.

What actions would you propose to take, if any, to ensure that Air Force requirements are realistic, technically achievable, and prioritized?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary of the Air Force to synchronize budgetary and warfighter requirements in accordance with statutory authorities. I will work with the Secretary and Department of the Air Force leaders to ensure requirements are prioritized to meet warfighter needs in an affordable manner that maximizes taxpayer value and warfighter capability. Finally, I will work with the Office of Secretary of Defense and Joint Staff to support the development and implementation of a streamlined requirements process pursuant to section 811 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024.

What specific measures would you recommend to take to control “requirements creep” in the Air Force acquisition system?

If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department of the Air Force continues to conduct statutorily required configuration steering boards to ensure appropriately scoped requirements and prevent unnecessary changes to program requirements that could increase cost or delay schedule.

If confirmed, how would you utilize your authority as Under Secretary of the Air Force, to arrest the exponential escalation in cost that, in recent history, has marked the acquisition life-cycle of Military Service platforms and weapons systems?

If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force leaders to review all options to address cost growth in service platforms and weapons, ensure tradeoffs between cost, schedule, and performance are fully considered, and ensure programmatic and requirements discipline is maintained throughout the acquisition life-cycle. More specifically, I am aware of the challenges the government faces in obtaining and preserving technical data rights. It is important to acquire the data rights needed to foster a competitive environment for development, production, and sustainment work to keep weapon system costs affordable.

In your view, in whom should accountability for large-scale acquisition failures and/or extraordinary cost overruns vest?

If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary to ensure that the causes of acquisition failures are understood, that accountability is appropriately applied, and that management changes are made to correct issues that are identified. I would also work with the Department of the Air Force leadership to ensure requirements, schedule, and cost are all realistic to ensure we have adequate accounting for potential risks that may need to be mitigated. This will best posture the Department to execute programs within cost and

schedule.

Are there other roles or responsibilities in the acquisition process that should be assigned to the Military Services rather than to OSD, in your view?

If confirmed, I will work with the Assistant Secretaries for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics and Space Acquisition and Integration to review current roles, responsibilities, and authorities to better understand if, and where, modifications should be made to the benefit of the Department of the Air Force, OSD, and the warfighter.

In your view, what is the appropriate focus the Air Force should have on life cycle costs when executing acquisition programs?

The Department of the Air Force must focus on affordability during all stages of acquisition programs and must develop and deliver needed capabilities with a keen eye on affordability. This includes ensuring sustainment costs drivers are part of design decisions early in development. If confirmed, I will explore approaches to reduce costs during sustainment which is the majority of a program's life-cycle costs.

Were the Secretary of the Air Force to continue the assignment to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force of responsibility for those aspects of the function of research and development relating to test and evaluation for Air Force acquisition programs, how would you exercise oversight of the Chief's execution of this responsibility, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I would continue to engage with the Air Force Test Community through AF/TE, Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Command (AFOTEC), and the Air Force Test Center, while coordinating efforts with the Director of Operational Test & Evaluation (DOT&E).

Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe it appropriate to procure weapon systems and equipment that have not been demonstrated through test and evaluation to be operationally effective, and operationally suitable?

If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chiefs of the Air Force and Space Force, and the Assistant Secretaries for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics and Space Acquisition and Integration to ensure that systems procured by the Department of the Air Force are operationally effective and suitable. I would be guided in these decisions by the use of rigorous test and evaluation as well as by a clear understanding of the operational and strategic risks associated with fielding or failing to field such systems.

What do you see as the role of the developmental and operational test and evaluation communities with respect to rapid acquisition, spiral acquisition, and other streamlined acquisition processes?

Testing plays a critical role in all acquisition programs included those that are rapid and/or streamlined. Developmental testing and operational testing are both helpful to inform Department of the Air Force leadership on system capabilities and vulnerabilities, as well as the need and the potential to continue development of systems so that they better provide capabilities to the Department of the Air Force.

To what extent should the Air Force exploit non-developmental or commercial off-the-shelf solutions to meet Air Force requirements? Would this put capabilities into the hands of Airmen and Guardians more quickly, in your view?

Under the right circumstances, commercial off-the-shelf acquisitions can be a fast and affordable approach to bring solutions to the warfighter. If confirmed, I would work with the Assistant Secretaries for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics and Space Acquisition and Integration to ensure these options are considered and to understand additional areas where such solutions make sense.

Space

In your view, does the 2022 NDS accurately assess the strategic environment as it pertains to the domain of space?

The 2022 NDS accurately assesses the strategic environment as it pertains to the space environment. Specifically, I agree that both Russia and China are advancing and integrating space, counterspace, and information warfare into their holistic approaches to joint warfare. The 2022 NDS also accurately assesses that both nations are already deploying counterspace capabilities that can target our Global Positioning System and other space-based capabilities that support our military power and daily civilian life.

In your view, what will “great power competition” look like in space and to what extent do you view China's and Russia’s activities related to the space domain as a threat or challenge to U.S. national security interests?

The PRC and Russia both view space as a warfighting domain and an element of statecraft influence. The PRC sees success in space as an integral part of Chairman Xi’s “China Dream” to establish a powerful and prosperous China. The PRC has expanded its space-based capabilities in support of the PLA at a significant pace. Russia has been an historic leader in outer space, and in the future they are looking to partner with the PRC as a counterbalance to the US and our partners’ joint explorations in space. The DoD, the Department of the Air Force and the Space Force are properly focused for this competition.

Are there other nation-states or other actors operating in space that you perceive as a risk to the United States or as cause for concern? If so, why?

Both Iran and North Korea have active domestic space programs and have each

conducted successful space launches within the past year. Moreover, both have demonstrated the capability and willingness to jam foreign satellite communications to suppress information access for their own populations and for their regional rivals. Combined with larger patterns of bad behavior, further developments in the Iranian and North Korean space programs could pose additional threats to U.S. space assets, either intentionally or inadvertently.

How would you assess the current readiness of the Space Force—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—to implement the NDS and U.S. strategic objectives as they relate to the space warfighting domain?

The Space Force continues to make great strides toward improving readiness in an era of Great Power Competition. Over the last 4 years, Space Force has increased readiness through a force presentation model that enables high-end operations while providing capacity for threat-informed advanced training and equipment sustainment for employed-in-place and deployed operations. Space Force is prioritizing readiness, to include readiness reporting, with its development of a readiness reporting tool and an automated equipment reporting system. Further, the Space Force now presents Service Components to many of the Combatant Commands, with more on the way, that enable enhanced integration.

If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense and Congress to focus on continuing to ensure the Space Force has the personnel, equipment, and training ready to support U.S. strategic objectives and the National Defense Strategy.

Is there anything you would do, if confirmed, to change the framework of the United States Space Force, as presently envisioned? Please explain your answer.

If confirmed, what would be your relationship with:

The Commander, U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM)

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department of the Air Force is providing necessary institutional support and is adequately organizing, training, equipping and presenting forces to USSPACECOM to accomplish its assigned missions and ensure our forces are meeting the USSPACECOM commander's requirements.

The Commander, U.S. Space Force

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Chief of Space Operations to ensure the Space Force has what they need to organize, train, equip and present Guardians to the Joint Force, and ensure Space Force equities are adequately accounted for when executing my duties.

The Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration (SAF/SAI)

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Hon Frank Calvelli, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration, who is the first Space Service Acquisition Executive thanks to Congress establishing this key position in the Department. Hon Calvelli is focused on delivering space capabilities quickly to the warfighter and ensuring space capabilities are integrated with Joint Force capabilities to posture warfighters for success during times of crisis or conflict, which I fully support.

The Director, National Reconnaissance Office

If confirmed, I will work with the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office to further strengthen the long-standing partnership between the Department of the Air Force and the NRO.

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to cultivate a warfighting ethos in the U.S. Space Force?

If confirmed, I will ensure suitable policy, guidance, and resources are in place to support our Guardians' ability to attain a high level of proficiency in the new tactics, techniques, and procedures required to deter adversaries and defend national interests in the contested space environment.

If confirmed, how would you and the Department of the Air Force, writ large, support the Chief of Space Operations in recruiting and retaining space warfighters who will form the new Space Force?

Recruiting and retaining Guardians is an operational imperative and essential to bringing this service to full mission capability and ensuring its future success. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department's recruiting, retention, and training programs are casting a wide net for highly-qualified and diverse talent, highlighting the truly unique and exciting professional opportunities only afforded to Guardians, and are identifying innovative approaches to compete with private-sector opportunities.

What is your vision for the inclusion of the Reserve Components as a part of the U.S. Space Force and as contributors to Joint Force space operations and activities?

I see significant value integrating space-focused reserve component members into the Space Force. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to review Space Force requirements and evaluate how best to achieve implementation of the Space Force Personnel Management Act, integrating the experience current Air Force Reserve members bring to build credible combat depth to satisfy Space Force and Joint Force mission requirements. The FY24 NDAA directed a report on Air National Guard space assets and if confirmed, I will ensure timely delivery of that report.

Were there to be a conflict in a space or related domain, what are your views on the

importance of unity of command as compared to unity of effort between DOD and Intelligence Community assets, both in space and on the ground?

Through all phases of competition, unity of effort between DoD and IC space and ground assets is instrumental to meet national security objectives. While coordination between DoD and IC space-based assets is critical for the synchronization of operations, activities, and investments, unity of command is not a pre-requisite to achieve a unified approach. Combatant Commanders must have assured access to military intelligence capabilities, as well as the broader national intelligence architecture, to meet their warfighting objectives, which is only possible through a unity of effort.

If confirmed, what would be your role, and that of the Department of the Air Force, in ensuring the direction and management of Space acquisition? How would you ensure the full integration of acquisition programs across the national security space enterprise—to include the members of the Intelligence Community?

Congress established the position of Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration specifically to focus on managing space systems and programs. If confirmed, I will support Hon Frank Calvelli in his statutory role as Chair of the Space Acquisition Council, which brings national security space stakeholders together, including the Intelligence Community, to ensure integration.

What specific actions would you take, if confirmed, to enhance existing Department of the Air Force acquisition policies and processes to move space operations projects to orbit faster and cheaper?

If confirmed, I will support Hon Frank Calvelli, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration, who published 9 Space Acquisition Tenets in 2022 that describe how the space acquisition enterprise can deliver resilient and integrated space capabilities with speed. His tenets, coupled with his Simple Formula for Going Fast by building smaller systems, using existing technology, driving contract scope to 3 years or less from launch, and using fixed price contracts will deliver space capabilities to orbit faster and at a better value for the taxpayer.

The Space Force has been chronically late in developing space battle management capabilities which includes (1) integrating space domain awareness through a myriad array of sensor data; (2) connecting the sensor data to weapon systems and; (3) developing a fire control solution for those weapon systems.

What is your assessment of each of those three phases of battle management and command and control?

While there is always more work to be done, I believe the Space Force continues to make progress in integrating capabilities to support battle management and command and control. In addition to developing updated systems and data connections, the USSF is taking additional steps to ensure the service is best postured to conduct future space

warfighting if called upon to do so. The USSF has taken the first foundational steps to achieve this and to ensure the right people, equipment, training, and doctrine are in place to win future conflicts.

If confirmed, I'm committed to continuing to ensure progress in this important area. It's critical the Space Force integrates and synchronizes with all-domain operations across CCMDs. This command and control construct provides the operational agility and tactical feedback necessary to adjust operations in a complex, contested environment.

What is your assessment of our ability to develop and an operational test and training capability for our ability to protect and defend our space assets using a wide variety of weapon systems on the ground and in space?

The USSF has a long history of test and training capabilities to support warfighting missions. As potential adversaries continue to advance their threat capabilities, the USSF, too, must evolve its approach to both system evaluation (testing) and Guardian training. The primary effort the USSF is developing, with Chief of Space Operations as the champion, is the Operational Test and Training Infrastructure (OTTI). This broad effort will provide the range, facilities, and capabilities to test and evaluate existing/emerging US and allied capabilities in space and cyberspace in live, virtual, digital, and electromagnetic environments. It will also allow Guardian/Airmen space operators to train to key threats in those same environments. The OTTI program office, while currently in its infancy, consists of both acquisition and operational experts to ensure holistic weapons system test and warfighting capabilities are accounted for.

Do you support the National Security Space Launch (NSSL) competition Phase II program as it is currently being executed? How do you see the “delivery on orbit as a service” in relation to NSSL?

I have not had the opportunity to review the NSSL Phase II acquisition program as it is currently being executed. In general, I support increased competition among domestic launch services and appreciate the importance of effectively transitioning from non-allied space capabilities.

What is your assessment of the ability for the Secretary of the Air Force to function as a force provider to combatant commands for space based ground and air moving target indicator capability? Do you support having the Secretary retaining control over the selection of the targeting deck for such a capability as a force provider?

The Secretary of the Air Force is well postured via the USSF to perform force presentation of these vital military warfighting capabilities, essential to planning and conducting tactical operations, to the Combatant Commands. While the specific systems and processes are currently being evaluated through a series of Joint, Interagency, and Ally/Partner wargaming exercises, USSF force elements, assigned to the Combatant Command (CCMD) through USSF Service Components, will stand ready to employ the CCMD's allocated capacity and task the constellation based on that Combatant

Commander's priorities and direction. The USSF, like all other services, maintains a core function of presenting forces to combatant commands; the presentation of Moving Target Indicator capability to combatant commands is no different.

Air Force Programs

What is your understanding and assessment of the research, development, and acquisition programs supporting Air Force modernization?

I have not had the opportunity to review the full extent of the Department of the Air Force research, development, and acquisition programs supporting Air Force modernization. If confirmed, I will prioritize this review to ensure each are adequately resourced to support Department of the Air Force needs.

The Air Force is on record as stating a need to purchase a minimum of 72 fighter aircraft per year to maintain requisite force structure.

In your opinion, what is the optimum mix of 4th and 5th generation aircraft required to meet the threat outlined in the NDS?

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force leaders on evolving the fighter force to ensure dominance over peer adversaries and provide the capability and capacity to meet worldwide demands, both in current and future operating environments. As part of that, I will evaluate an appropriate mix of 4th and 5th generation aircraft that reflects relevant budget constraints and provides acceptable levels of risk.

Given the importance of extending the range of U.S. aircraft, what do you believe to be the overall tanker requirement for the Air Force? At what rate and on what schedule must the Air Force procure the new KC-46 to meet that requirement?

A robust and reliable refueling capability is vital to our national defense. If confirmed, I will review tanker fleet requirements and work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force leaders to ensure the fleet meets the needs of the joint force and Department of the Air Force allies and partners, while also maintaining the statutory requirement for a 466 Total Active Inventory tanker fleet.

Large-scale exercises such as Red Flag have illustrated that 5th generation fighters such as the F-22 and F-35 need to fly against multiple adversary aircraft to conduct much of their required training. The Air Force has taken a number of steps to address shortages in adversary air, including using contract air and requiring units in training to supply their own adversary air.

What are your views as to the appropriate balance of contract and organic adversary air capability?

The Air Force continues to strike an appropriate balance of contract and organic adversary air capability; however, the pacing threat challenges the state of the technologies and systems currently in use. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Air Force leaders to achieve scalable, sustainable, and affordable threat representable capability that allows the Air Force to address the pacing threat without worsening 5th Generation aircraft readiness. That will ensure operators receive the most realistic and timely training possible when combined with optimizing the Air Force's adversary air programs, including appropriate use of contract adversary air.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force properly addresses the challenges associated with the availability of adversary air to ensure that its 5th generation fighters are properly trained and ready for combat?

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Air Force leaders to review, identify, and remedy challenges in the Air Force's adversary air programs and optimize its Operational Test and Training Infrastructure to ensure the 5th generation fighter force is combat mission ready to meet operational requirements in current and future operating environments. I believe the solution lies in a balanced combination of virtual and live training, providing fifth generation forces with the most realistic and operationally relevant training available for the resources available.

What is your assessment of the readiness of the Air Force heavy bomber fleet? As to each of the airframes listed below, what improvements would you direct, if confirmed, to increase the mission readiness of each airframe?

B-1

B-52

B-2

I have not had the opportunity to be briefed on the current readiness of each airframe, therefore, I am not in a position to identify necessary improvements that would enhance the readiness of the B-1, B-2, or B-52.

Munitions

Air Force munitions inventories—particularly for precision guided munitions and air-to-air missiles—have declined significantly due to high operational usage, insufficient procurement, poor program execution, and a requirements system that does not adequately account for the ongoing need to transfer munitions to our allies. Due to draw down of certain weapons systems to support Ukraine, the Department of Defense has begun

to increase production and bolster the industrial base.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure the Air Force has sufficient inventories of munitions to meet the needs of combatant commanders?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department of the Air Force has sufficient munitions inventories to achieve our national security objectives. I will review the current requirements system to ensure that the needs of our partners and allies and the full range of Department of the Air Force missions are considered in determining munition requirements so that the Department of the Air Force maintains sufficient munitions inventories.

What changes in budgeting and acquisition processes would you recommend to facilitate faster Air Force munitions replenishment rates?

If confirmed, I would review the current budget for munitions and work with acquisition executives to understand business approaches that would help expedite replenishment rates and potentially help realize cost savings.

Unmanned Systems

What is your opinion on the manned and unmanned teaming envisioned by the Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) program?

In general, I support operational concepts and programs that expand the reach and effects of crewed/uncrewed capabilities, particularly those that provide more affordable, less exquisite, and more risk-tolerant solutions while still providing threat-relevant capability. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the role of CCAs in the future force, including their potential to provide risk-tolerant affordable mass in highly contested environments. I will also work closely with Department of the Air Force leaders, Department of the Navy counterparts, and Congress to ensure standing up this critical capability.

Given the amount of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) required to meet combatant commander demands, do you believe it is appropriate to shut down the production lines for the current unmanned fleet of MQ-9s and divest all of the RQ-4s before adequate ISR capacity in other systems is fielded as a substitute?

I am not privy to the Department of the Air Force internal data that informed these decisions. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to understand these decisions and the efforts in place to ensure we are meeting the rapidly evolving and dynamic combatant command requirements for ISR.

Do you see utility in encouraging the Military Services to conduct more joint development in the area of aircraft and unmanned systems?

I believe that, in certain instances, joint development can enhance resilience and risk management in collective capabilities to benefit the joint force. There are several ways to approach such development including through the assignment of a clear service lead. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders and service counterparts to leverage and contribute to the Department of the Air Force efforts to develop advanced technology, including uncrewed systems, in support of the joint force.

Test and Evaluation

In your view, are the Air Force's test and evaluation capabilities, including the test and evaluation workforce and infrastructure, adequate?

Yes. The Air Force has a dedicated test and evaluation (T&E) Enterprise that is continuously adapting to meet emergent threats and technologies. The T&E workforce is working to modernize and digitize where those investments will obtain the highest returns. If confirmed, I look forward to seeking opportunities made possible by digital engineering and agile software development to better integrate developmental and operational test in order to accelerate fielding of capabilities without increasing risk.

In which areas, if any, do you feel the Air Force should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?

If confirmed, I will support continued investments to improve modeling and simulation capabilities, digital tools, and prototyping to help refine technical requirements and measure technical success in critical areas such as Hypersonics, Cyber-Security, Directed Energy, Autonomous Systems, and Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning.

If confirmed, how would you accelerate the development of these new capabilities?

If confirmed, I will continue to leverage the successful partnerships between the Air Force Test Center, Air Force Operational Test & Evaluation Center, and Program Executive Office for Digital in improving current and developing new test approaches to support rapid acquisition of new capabilities.

What are your views on the appropriate roles of OSD developmental and operational testing organizations with respect to testing of Air Force systems?

OSD oversight provides an independent assessment of the adequacy of the testing of Air Force systems. They also have visibility across the other services which presents an opportunity to apply lessons learned and best practices in other services to improve the Department's ability to deliver effective warfighting capability at the speed of relevance and more efficiently.

If confirmed, I will ensure Air Force program offices work closely with OSD in the testing and assessment of Air Force systems.

Air Force Military End Strength

In your view, is the Air Force's current end strength sufficient to meet national defense objectives? If not, what end strength do you believe is necessary to do so?

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force to review Air and Space Force end strength requirements to ensure an adequate balance between current operational requirements and any future force requirements. During FY23, the initiatives and incentives implemented plus a concerted recruiting surge across the Department of the Air Force resulted in putting the Air and Space Forces in a much better position for FY24. If confirmed, I will commit to ensuring the right end strength is achieved to properly sustain a force structure that meets all mission demands and continuing to work on modernizing our capabilities and our force.

How will the continued stand up of the Space Force, and the related transfer of Air Force personnel, impact Air Force and Space Force end strength requirements over the next 5 years, in your view?

As the Space Force continues to mature, I understand their end-strength will see modest growth in order to meet space requirements, with mission transfers from the other services largely supporting this growth. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force to review Air Force and Space Force end-strength requirements to ensure the Department of the Air Force is adequately balancing the trade-offs between meeting current operational requirements and future force requirements.

What additional force shaping authorities and tools does the Air Force need, in your view?

If confirmed, I will review existing force shaping authorities and tools with the Secretary of the Air Force to ensure the Department of the Air Force is postured accurately to manage force strength. I commit to working with Congress to ensure the Department of the Air Force remains agile and responsive regarding the size and skills needed.

Air Force Recruiting and Retention

Currently, the Air Force is experiencing a 20-year high in personnel retention levels. This will challenge leaders to ensure that there is sufficient room for fresh talent to enlist or commission.

If confirmed, how would you ensure the Air Force can continue to bring in new talent, while managing high retention?

In order to remain competitive in the race for talent, we must continue to evolve our

approach to force development and quality of life in a way that appeals to those who serve or wish to serve. If confirmed, I will ensure those issues remain foremost priorities and address any shortfalls whether that means leveraging existing authorities or seeking out new ones.

How would an individual's job performance factor in to your decisions to grant enlistment extensions or officer continuation?

An individual's job performance is a critical factor in determination of granting enlistment extensions or officer continuations, and if confirmed, I will continue to emphasize exceptional performance when making those decisions, as well as balancing the need to fill critical skill areas.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force maintains sufficiently high recruitment and retention standards?

The Department continuously evaluates recruitment and retention programs to optimize policies and processes necessary to thrive in the fierce competition for talent. These efforts have directly resulted in historically high retention rates and have begun pulling the Department out of a two-year recruiting slump. If confirmed, I will support the Department's ongoing efforts in reducing unnecessary barriers to service, ensuring we recruit and retain quality, highly skilled talent reflective of the Nation we serve.

In your view, what impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the Air Force have on restricting the number of individuals eligible for military service?

In my view, we must balance our standards, to keep pace with medical science and modernization while meeting the need for a ready and capable force. The Department of the Air Force recently expanded its policy on tattoos and body fat composition, opening service to those who would otherwise be ineligible to serve. Moreover, the Department of the Air Force has expanded waiver authorities for low-risk medical conditions that can be effectively managed. If confirmed, I will continue to keep the balance of those standards in the forefront.

If confirmed, what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for Air Force service without degrading the quality of recruits?

The quality of our accessions is crucial to ensuring we maintain a ready force postured to answer our nation's call. If confirmed I will continue to look for opportunities to reduce barriers to service and open the opportunity of serving in the Department of the Air Force to a diverse force representative of our citizenry without compromising the standards essential to our mission readiness.

What factors do you consider to be key to the Air Force's future success in retaining

the best qualified personnel for continued service in positions of greater responsibility and leadership in the Air Force?

The key to developing and retaining our personnel lies in fielding a continuum of training, education, and experiential development that fosters a professional, resilient, and highly technical force. If confirmed, I will collaborate with our force development and management experts as well as career field managers to ensure officer, enlisted, and civilian personnel across each community of practice is in the best position for future success.

Pilot Retention

Increases in commercial airline pilot hiring over the past few years have contributed to persistent and alarming pilot shortage and retention problems in all Military Services, but the Air Force most acutely.

What is your understanding of the Air Force's current efforts to address this critical problem? How would you assess their effectiveness?

I am aware that airline hiring is expected to grow by approximately 6% annually through 2031, challenging the Air Force's pilot ecosystem by drawing away its experienced pilots who are critical to providing experience in combat operations as well as producing and experiencing new pilots. Thanks to Congress, the Air Force can now offer its highest and most comprehensive pilot retention incentive in history. The bonus Demonstration Program, just recently rolled out, allows the Air Force to offer retention incentives and contracts to pilots up to 3 years before their pilot training service commitment expires. By releasing the FY24 program before the end of CY23 year, the Air Force hopes to get more contracts and better data on how successful this program will be going forward. If confirmed, I will pay close attention to the results of this program and work with Congress to make it even more effective.

In your view, what monetary and non-monetary incentives and initiatives implemented by the Air Force have yielded the most positive impacts on pilot retention?

I understand that Headquarters Air Force A1, in close coordination with Headquarters Air Force A3, focused on four critical areas to influence pilot retention. The four areas to better understand and adjust are: Compensation, Talent Management, Quality of Life, and Quality of Service. Currently the Air Force uses the annual Aviation Bonus program as the primary monetary incentive to retain many highly experienced combat aviators. Quality of life factors, such as stability, achieved through carefully managed assignment options, and increased assignment transparency are non-monetary efforts that are being exercised. Combining all incentives is critical for retention efforts to be effective. Failure to address any of these incentives, or to focus on just one or two of them, would be detrimental to overall retention efforts. If confirmed, I will monitor these efforts and

work with AF leaders to ensure they are addressed and sustained properly. The future force requires this attention.

If confirmed, what additional authorities, if any, does the Air Force need from Congress to address this shortfall definitively?

If confirmed, I will review whether and to what extent additional authorities may be required to address the pilot shortfall.

In March 2020, Air Mobility Command (AMC) ended its “flying-only” career track for pilots who were not interested in command.

In your view, was it prudent to disestablish the Air Mobility Command (AMC) “flying-only” career track? Please explain your answer.

I recognize the need to find innovative ways for valued rated force to serve. Based on my understanding, it appears prudent to have disestablished the program. Air Mobility Command launched the Aviator Technical Track, or “flying-only” career track in 2018 and concluded the program in 2020. Despite a nearly two-year trial period, I understand the program had a notable lack of interest from aviators with only two airmen joining the Aviator Technical Track. Based on the recency of the trial and its lack of interest from the force, the Air Force did not continue the program and has not considered reviving the effort at this time. I agree with this decision.

In your view, how will AMC’s Resource Driven Allocation Project contribute to pilot readiness?

It is my understanding that the Readiness Driven Allocation Process is the process by which AMC balances mission demand signals from USTRANSCOM with organic training requirements for pilots at home station. Like any force provider, AMC's ability to preserve aircraft at home station for pilot training and experiencing ultimately increases readiness for the force. Balancing ever-growing mission requirements and priorities with finite resources is critical to AMC’s ability to maintain and build readiness into the future. If confirmed, I will work with Air Force leadership to ensure that this program and all of our readiness efforts are optimized to meet our pacing challenge.

In your view, how has the Air Force increased pilot production capacity commensurate with the demands of the NDS?

The need for a sufficient, highly trained rated force is greater than ever, in light of the complex demands of today’s national security environment. I understand the Air Force has implemented numerous programs to increase production. Combining innovative programs like Undergraduate Helicopter Training-Next and Air Mobility Fundamentals, with a foundational competency-based training syllabus supports the integrity of the Air Force’s premier pilot training program while increasing production. I understand the Air Force continues to target a steady-state pilot production capacity of 1,500 pilots annually.

I know this has been challenging to achieve due to maintenance and supply issues for aging training aircraft, combined with low manning in the Civilian Simulator Instructor (CSI) force. If confirmed, I will work with Air Force leadership to address existing limitations while continuing to find innovative solutions.

As the Air Force prepares for competition with a peer-adversary, in your view, what should it take to increase quality standards within and screening rates for flight school, and the pipeline beyond?

The demands of training and preparing the force for competition and possible conflict in highly-contested environments against pacing threats have never been greater, or more important. I understand the Air Force maintains the highest quality screening and entrance standards for its flight training. These cannot be compromised. Each year the Air Force has double the number of highly qualified applicants for available training slots. The Air Force must continue to access and train to the highest standards. Going forward, the Air Force should continue to build on existing competency-based training and leading-edge learning engineering methodologies to ensure that the Air Force's flight training students have the ability to learn faster, while maintaining high quality outcomes. The Air Force's people are its advantage against a peer-adversary. If confirmed, I will work with Air Force leadership to ensure the Air Force maintains its standards while readying the force for the challenges of the future.

If confirmed, how would you implement the Air Force's Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) "Get Well" plan?

We must be willing to make tough choices as we engage in great power competition and execute the NDS by divesting legacy systems, low priority tasks, and activities which deliver less value in denied and contested environments. We need to adapt to the changing character of war and the anticipated environment in which we may have to fight, we must look at ISR through the lens of systems, rather than individual platforms. To be relevant, platforms must be able to be persistent, survivable, and connected to the larger combat information system. Only then can we have the ability to sense, make sense, and act at the speed of relevance. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure we develop and offer multi-domain RPA capabilities to meet NDS objectives in a contested environment.

Air Force Reserve Components

In your view, what is the appropriate relationship between the Active Air Force and the Air Force Reserve and Air Force National Guard?

The appropriate relationship between the Active Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard is one grounded in robust interoperability. The Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard are force multipliers providing immense strategic depth and decisive operational capacity across every mission set, domain, throughout the Total Force. Each

component plays a critical role, and their seamless integration enhances the overall mission capability and readiness of the Total Force. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force to evaluate and understand the current dynamics of this relationship. This will enable me to identify the best approaches to leverage the unique structure and strengths of each component.

What do you believe to be the appropriate roles and missions of the Air Force Reserve Components? If confirmed, what new objectives would you seek to achieve with respect to Air Force Reserve Component organization, force structure, and end strength?

The Air Reserve Component is a valued and foundational member of our Total Air Force team. No other nation in the world imbues their reserve components with such decisive and precise deterrent capability. The appropriate roles and missions of the Air Reserve Component should be aligned with the strategic requirements of the Air Force and the National Defense Strategy. The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve are crucial for providing strategic depth and operational capacity across all mission sets, domains, and capabilities of the Total Force. Readiness remains the Total Air Force's top priority. If confirmed, my objectives would align accordingly, ensuring an integrated, Total Force approach to organizing, training, and equipping Airmen.

Nuclear Enterprise

Do you agree that modernizing each leg of the nuclear triad and the National Nuclear Security Administration weapons complex is a critical national security priority?

Yes. A safe, secure, reliable, survivable, and effective nuclear triad is essential to deterring threats against the U.S. homeland and underpins every other military operation around the world. The Department of the Air Force operates two-thirds of the nuclear triad and seventy-five percent of the Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) system. The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) continued to make clear that deterring strategic attack and protecting the United States and our Allies is a national priority. To do that, there must be continued recapitalization of current systems whose operational lifetimes have been extended far beyond their original service lives. Modernization will ensure the continued provision of a credible nuclear deterrent for our Nation and extended deterrent for our Allies. Any delay in funding will put modernization efforts at risk, which could undermine the capability and credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

Do you believe the current Air Force program of record is sufficient to support the full modernization of the Air Force legs of the nuclear triad?

Yes. The Department of the Air Force has fully committed the resources necessary to modernize the air and ground components of the nuclear triad to include the Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) system, the B-21 bomber, the development of the Long Range Stand Off (LRSO) weapon to replace the AGM-86B Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM), and the LGM-35A Sentinel Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) weapon system as the replacement for Minuteman III (MMIII). The Air Force is synchronizing its efforts with the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), and the Navy to ensure successful delivery of warheads and platforms. In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 enacted budget, the Department of the Air Force invested \$15.7 billion dollars in the sustainment, modernization, and recapitalization of the nuclear enterprise. Those resources sufficiently fund sustainment efforts for MMIII, ALCM, UH-1 helicopter, and nuclear-capable bombers, as well as fighter Dual-Capable Aircraft, and all major recapitalization programs, including B-21, Sentinel, LRSO, and the MH-139 helicopter.

Do you support and intend to advocate for the funding, development, and fielding of the Sentinel ICBM program? Please explain your answer.

Outside of recent media reports on the challenges facing the program, I have not had the opportunity to review the status of the Sentinel program in detail. Maintaining a secure, sustainable, and effective nuclear deterrent is one of the Department of Defense's top priority missions. If confirmed, I will review the details and status of the Sentinel acquisition program.

Do you support and intend to advocate for the funding, development, and fielding of the Long-Range Stand-Off Weapon? Please explain your answer.

I have not had the opportunity to review the status of the LRSO program. Maintaining a secure, sustainable, and effective nuclear deterrent is one of the Department of Defense's top priority missions. If confirmed, I will review the details and status of the LRSO weapon acquisition program.

What are your ideas for working across the Military Departments to mitigate the risk that all three legs of the nuclear triad will be "aging out" simultaneously at the end of the 2020s?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Air Force works with Navy and other DoD Components to identify "age-out" issues as we transition from our current systems to our new nuclear weapon systems. I will also work with our mission partners to develop options across the Military Departments to mitigate transition risk across the DoD Nuclear Enterprise. I also agree with both the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff that the best way to reduce the risk of "aging out" is to ensure we effectively manage the end-of-life margin on our current systems while keeping current modernization efforts on track by maintaining stable funding for all three legs of the triad. Additionally, I will work in collaboration with the Nuclear Weapons Council and the Defense Acquisition Board to identify opportunities to partner with the Navy and when appropriate, jointly develop

technologies critical to the success of both of the missions. I will also ensure our respective research and development teams continue to leverage each other's technological accomplishments to minimize duplication of effort.

In your view, is the Air Force continuing to maintain appropriate focus on implementing the corrective actions recommended by then-Secretary of Defense Hagel's Nuclear Enterprise Review?

Yes. Since the 2014 Nuclear Enterprise Review, the Air Force restructured, streamlined authorities, and realigned organizational responsibilities across the Headquarters Air Force staff and Major Commands to oversee and monitor the health of the nuclear enterprise. These changes include elevating the Commander, Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC), to a four-star commander and the Strategic Deterrence & Nuclear Integration Directorate (AF/A10) from a two-star Assistant Chief of Staff to three-star Deputy Chief of Staff. Responsibility for nuclear acquisition and life-cycle management activities were consolidated under a single general officer, realigning nuclear operational and operational support missions from Air Force Material Command (AFMC) to AFGSC, while transferring authority for the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center operating location-Ramstein (maintenance mission) from AFMC to United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE). Most recently, in 2023, the Secretary of the Air Force established the Nuclear Oversight Council (NOC) to serve as the Department's dedicated 4-star forum for nuclear oversight and governance. The NOC brings the senior leadership and operational commanders from the Air and Space Forces together 3 times a year to address the most pressing nuclear and NC3 sustainment, modernization, readiness, and transition risk issues. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department continues applying sustained senior leader focus on the nuclear enterprise.

Patrols in the missile fields are accomplished using Humvees which are ill-equipped for the long duration patrols, extreme cold and road conditions resulting in accidents and tragic fatalities of missile field Security Forces. The use of Joint Light Tactical Vehicles as a replacement are also ill-suited to this mission, except in certain convoy operations.

Do you support efforts to review this capability currently underway by the Air Force Global Strike Command for a more commercial like replacement?

Yes, I support the efforts of Air Force Global Strike Command to review commercial replacement options. I support continued efforts to determine a suitable commercial replacement for daily site security in missile field operations.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force continues its efforts to improve the training, readiness, morale, welfare, and quality of life of the airmen charged to execute and support the Air Force's nuclear mission?

Currently, the Air Force nuclear enterprise is undergoing a \$490M modernization effort focused on improving the infrastructure and its Airmen are crucial to these modernization efforts.

If confirmed, I will prioritize the morale and welfare of the Airmen and their families charged with executing this mission. I pledge to work with Secretary Kendall and Chief Allvin to tackle resiliency and mental health for all Airmen and Guardians.

The Secretary of the Air Force has recused himself from the two largest ongoing Air Force acquisition programs – the Sentinel ICBM and the B-21 bomber. If confirmed, you will be the senior Air Force civilian responsible for overseeing these complex, critical programs.

Are you familiar with the current status of these programs and the primary hurdles each must overcome in order to successfully deliver modernized capabilities to the force?

I am aware of recent reports in the media on the challenges facing the Sentinel program. If confirmed, I will review the details and status of the Sentinel acquisition program. I am happy to see reports of the B-21s first flight in November and look forward to reviewing the full details and status of the B-21 program, if confirmed.

What specific steps will you take to best ensure these programs deliver on schedule and within budget?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Service Acquisition Executive and Defense Acquisition Executive to ensure proper action is taken to control the Sentinel program's costs and limit schedule impacts. I will also work closely with the Service Acquisition Executive and Defense Acquisition Executive to ensure the B-21 program executes within the cost, schedule and performance goals.

Cruise Missile Defense of the Homeland

Deputy Secretary Hicks designated Air Force as the DOD lead for developing a cruise missile defense architecture for the homeland in July 2022.

Where is Air Force on finalizing an architecture?

I understand that the Department of the Air Force, as the acquisition authority for air and cruise missile defense of the homeland (ACMD-H), has been working with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment to determine the appropriate acquisition and management activities necessary to integrate efforts across the DoD including through developing an architecture for this capability and is leading the ongoing Air and Cruise Missile Defense of the Homeland Analysis of Alternatives. If confirmed, I will work closely with OSD, Department of the Air Force leaders, and our counterparts in other Services to ensure that we are coordinating with the Joint Staff and Combatant Commanders to establish an effective defense against the emergent cruise missile threat to the Homeland.

Has the Unified Command Plan realignment of Space Command as the global integrator for missile defense caused a course correction in this process?

Our space capabilities are a key part of air and cruise missile defense of the homeland (ACMD-H). If confirmed, I would work closely with the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration to ensure that we are collaborating with the Space Command and leveraging their knowledge as we build the strategy for air and cruise missile defense of the homeland.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to expedite the completion of a final architecture and develop an acquisition and fielding strategy for the defense system, as well as for the associated domain awareness and missile warning and tracking modernization capabilities?

If confirmed, I would work closely with the OSD; the Services; the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics; and the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration to ensure that we have an executable strategy to acquire and field the programs of record identified as essential to air and cruise missile defense of the homeland.

Cyber

In your view, how well postured are the Air Force and Space Force to meet the goals outlined in the 2023 DOD Cyber Strategy? What actions would you take, if confirmed, to remediate any gaps between Air Force and Space Force capacity and capability and Cyber Strategy goals?

At this time, I do not have an adequate basis to assess the current posture of the Air Force and Space Force in meeting the goals. I understand our most important cyber capability is people and will work to improve the entire workforce. I understand the Air Force and Space Force must be resilient against malicious cyber activity and ready to operate in congested and contested cyberspace. Further, partnerships with interagency, allies, industry and academia are important to achieve the goals laid out. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Department of Defense leaders and Congress to achieve the 2023 DoD Cyber Strategy goals.

In your view, should the composition of the Cyber Mission Force be adjusted across the National Mission Teams, Combat Mission Teams, Cyber Protection Teams, and Cyber Support Teams, to address in a way to better address identified requirements?

The Cyber Mission Force is critical to the DoD's ability to defend key cyber infrastructure from malign cyber actors and support combatant commanders with their cyber requirements. With the evolving nature of near peer threats, the Department of the

Air Force has partnered with U.S. Cyber Command and the other Services to discuss the size and makeup of the Cyber Mission Force and will continue to support U.S. Cyber Command in their efforts to appropriately define the Cyber Mission Force. Additionally, at Congress' direction, the Department is reviewing cyber force development and generation, including examining alternative models. I look forward to the results of those studies as we consider the future composition of the Cyber Mission Force.

In your view, are the size and capabilities of the Air Force Component of the Cyber Mission Force and Air Force cybersecurity service providers sufficient to meet current and future cyber and information warfare requirements?

The Air Force continues to engage with U.S. Cyber Command on the appropriate size and design of the Cyber Mission Force. With respect to cybersecurity service providers (CSSP), the constant maturation of the cyber domain requires that the Department of the Air Force continually reassess overall cyber posture. The Department of the Air Force is pursuing a cybersecurity and defense strategy that will grow and strengthen the ability of its CSSP forces to see and respond to incidents that occur across its networks and systems.

In your view, should the Air Force expand acceptable professional qualifications for its cyber workforce to include non-traditional professional credentialing and schooling from so-called technology boot camps and massive online open courses (MOOCs) as an alternative to traditional education, provided candidates meet the necessary technical standards?

Exploring alternatives to traditional education and training avenues for recruiting talented individuals into the AF cyber workforce is a viable option; however, it is essential to establish standards these alternative methods must meet without compromising our standards. While alternative paths can be valuable, certain aspects of cyber workforce training, such as weapon system qualification for cyber operations are unique to Air Force mission requirements, therefore, may not be able to be substituted with education or professional credentialing.

If confirmed, what would you do to enhance Air Force and Space Force information dominance capabilities?

If confirmed, I would continue to support and build on the Department of the Air Force's progress in information warfare achieved in recent years. After the signing of the Air Force Information Warfare Strategy and the designation of Deputy Chief of Staff lead for Information Warfare in 2022, the Department also created an Information Warfare General Officer Steering Group and developed an Information Warfare Implementation Plan in 2023, which outlined actions needed to realize the aforementioned strategy. The plan has approximately 40 milestones to organize, develop and equip the force to achieve information dominance. I would work across the Department to identify and remedy roadblocks to achieving the plan's milestones and ensure synchronization between the Air and Space Forces, as well as the Joint Force, on these efforts.

If confirmed, what would you do to improve military cybersecurity career pathways to meet the present and future needs of the Air Force and U.S. Cyber Command?

Today's most significant challenge in the cyber domain is recruiting and retaining talent essential for future needs. The Air Force recently selected 21 officers for the new Technical Track program with expectations of growing the program in 2024. The Technical Track provides Communications and Cyber Operations officers an alternate career path to build technical depth, experience, and expertise. Additionally, the Air Force continues to expand on Cyber Assignment Incentive Pay and the Cyber Direct Commissioning Program. Lastly, from a total force perspective, the Air Force Reserve recently instituted a direct commissioning program for cyber personnel.

Section 1657 of the FY 2020 NDAA directed the appointment of an independent Principal Cyber Advisor (PCA) for each Military Department, to act as the principal advisor to the Secretary concerned on all cyber matters affecting that Department.

What do you see as the role of this position in the Air Force?

It is to provide the Secretary of the Air Force an independent perspective among Department of the Air Force senior staff on cyberspace readiness to deter and defeat threats impacting US national interests. This is accomplished by collaborating, integrating, and coordinating down through the Department of Air Force, among sister services, and with external partners, to include the Defense Industrial Base, and agencies. This helps ensure investments impacting organizing, training, and equipping the Department of the Air Force are prioritized to the threats and remain relevant for future engagements.

If confirmed, how would you plan to utilize the Air Force PCA as part of your leadership structure?

Keeping the PCA seamlessly integrated into the Department of the Air Force leadership structure enhances its capabilities and readiness in the cyber domain. The PCA collaborates closely across the senior leadership team, including the Secretary and the Chief of Staff, to ensure strategic planning and decision-making processes include cyber equities. The PCA provides expert advice on all cyber matters, including the recruitment, training, and readiness of cyber forces, cyber resilience and mission assurance, and oversight of the cyber budget. Additionally, the PCA plays a key role in fostering a culture of cybersecurity accountability and coordination with internal and external stakeholders. This integration strengthens the Department's overall cybersecurity posture and aligns with both the National and DoD Cyber Security Strategies effectively addressing the evolving nature of cyber threats facing the U.S. military and our nation.

What are Air Force's top three (3) Cyber Challenges, and how will you use the Principal Cyber Advisor to address them?

First, we must strengthen Department of the Air Force defenses against cyber attacks and espionage. Second, we must work to recruit, develop and retain skilled cyber professionals. Finally, we must continue to integrate and modernize technology within Air Force systems essential for cyber resilience and mission assurance. The Principal Cyber Advisor fulfills a critical role with each of these by advising senior leaders and by coordinating actions across the Department of the Air Force and with OSD and USCYBERCOM to develop strategies to drive action.

The Air Force merged the 24th and 25th Air Forces to better integrate cyber effects, ISR, electronic warfare operations, and information operations.

In your view, has the merger yielded the expected benefits? What challenges has the Air Force experienced in the context of this merger and how would you address those challenges, if confirmed?

The integration of 24th and 25th Air Forces resulted in 16 AF's ability to leverage the diverse set of authorities that were previously resident in those two commands and has empowered the Air Force to deliver information warfare outcomes more rapidly, efficiently, and with enduring operational impact to the joint force. 16 AF continues to press forward on maturing information warfare, not only by enhancing warfighting capability but also by crafting an operational construct that will consistently aid all air components and combatant commands globally. This more unified approach strengthens the Air Force's overall ability to respond to strategic advancements, challenges posed by adversaries, and evolving mission requirements.

Electronic Warfare (EW)

What is your vision for the future of Air Force EW capabilities?

My vision is one that is aligned with the National Defense Strategy and provides a credible force and asymmetric options to gain advantage. It is an Air Force with EW capabilities that are distributed, agile, software-defined, and increasingly leverage artificial intelligence capabilities such as machine learning to provide the flexibility and adaptability for all future high-end fights. The "Cross-cutting Operational Enabler" team commissioned by the Secretary of the Air Force is the right accelerant to move us in this direction.

During the confirmation of General Allvin to be Chief of Staff of the Air Force, he noted in his Advance Policy Questions (APQs) the unique DOTMLPF differences between electronic warfare and cyber. Do you support his views?

I do. EW and cyber operate in and through the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS), but each has specific purposes, requirements, and authorities so they are developed on separate paths. In both cases, the Department of the Air Force has a DOTMLPF plan focusing on Airmen, training, and tools that make both EW and cyber operationally effective.

Electromagnetic spectrum operations (EMSO) focuses on exploiting, attacking, protecting, and managing the physical EMS domain. In contrast, cyber is focused on the applications and the data contained within cyberspace and transmitted through the EMS.

Electronic Warfare, and in particular the 350 Spectrum Warfare Wing is aligned under Air Combat Command as it is considered a near real-time capability at the tactical edge. Do you support this organizational construct?

I do. The 350 SWW is developing, improving, and employing capabilities that support rapid reprogramming of EMS systems, advanced waveform development, and analysis of fielded systems to ensure lethality of the force. The 355 SWW has critical and direct linkage with System Program Offices and platform representatives that ACC oversees. Additionally, they maintain close relationships across the other MAJCOMs and communities requiring their expertise.

What is your assessment of the adequacy and efficacy of EW training that Air Force personnel receive in an Air Force environment in specific airframes? In a joint environment with other Military Services?

Any conflict today or tomorrow requires significant emphasis on training in contested and congested electromagnetic environments. Air Force personnel and their Joint and Coalition partners are presently able to train against replicated electromagnetic threats on a number of our training ranges. The AF is continuously seeking ways to train on a wider range of the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) that advanced technology makes usable for both the Air Force and its adversaries.

Spectrum

Electromagnetic spectrum plays a critical role in many DOD missions.

In what ways do the Air Force and Space Force rely on spectrum to support warfighter requirements? In your view, which warfighter spectrum requirements will be essential to competing with Russia and China on a future battlefield?

The Department of the Air Force views EMSO as a cornerstone to success in all domains of warfare. The mission requires the Department of the Air Force to protect, manage, exploit and attack using the EMS to gain tactical, operational, and strategic advantage. To do so their systems will operate on frequency bands across the entire spectrum as we expect our adversaries to attack across the entire spectrum.

In March 2023 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defense Austin stated that, with respect to losing “S-band” spectrum, “it [would] be devastating, ... it would take us somewhere north of 20 years to try to recover from – from the loss of that – that spectrum. Parts of that spectrum are vital to our national defense and the protection of the homeland. And – and, you know, in order to describe exactly – well,

you know what the – what the specific platforms are, but we would have to go to a classified session to speak in detail about this. But I would tell you that this is not something you can fix overnight once you break it. It'll take 20 years plus to recover from that.”

In addition, with respect to the Secretary’s statement, General Allvin stated in his APQs as part of his nomination to be Chief of the Air Force, “I agree with previous testimony that has been provided by Secretary Austin that this would take decades.”

Do you agree with the Secretary of Defense and the Chief of the Air Force?

I do. Before the commercial sector developed ways to operate in the S-band, the military was already established there. A great majority of radars, aircraft station keeping equipment, communications, and command and control rely on these specific frequencies, and altering these operational parameters would necessitate the development, testing, production, and integration of new systems.

Were DOD required to “vacate” or leave the “Mid-Band” spectrum instead of sharing, what are the potential operational and dollar costs to the Air Force and Space Force, in your view? How long would a move to a different area of the spectrum take, in your view?

The S-Band is critical to both homeland defense and current or future conflicts. We cannot feasibly vacate the band without significant compromise to national security. The physics-based characteristics of the band are critical to Department of the Air Force capabilities. Without having alternative technological solutions developed, it is challenging to provide a dollar figure or time frame that has merit. Air and space platforms have particular challenges due to their wide range of regard and movement across the ground that will affect ground commercial entities. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary of the Air Force and other Department of the Air Force leaders, who are already working with industry and DoD for sharing solutions.

Science, Technology, and Innovation

In your view, how have the Air Force and Space Force prioritized limited research and development funding across its technology focus areas? Specifically, where are the Air Force and Space Force either increasing or decreasing focus and funding?

I have not had the opportunity to assess the prioritization of research and development funding of the Air Force and Space Force across technology focus areas. In general, we should be prioritizing investments in the capabilities most needed to ensure that the Department of the Air Force is able to perform its operational mission. If confirmed, I will review the current investment strategy in technology focus areas to ensure we are adequately focused on key technologies for the future fight.

If confirmed, how would you improve efforts the Air Force and Space Force are making to identify new technologies developed commercially by the private sector and apply them to military and national security purposes?

I am supportive of working with the private sector to identify and incorporate commercial technologies for military and national security purposes. There is potential here for cost savings and accelerated delivery of needed capabilities to the warfighter. If confirmed, I would review the Air Force and Space Force's efforts to identify and incorporate commercial technologies for military application.

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How would you work to increase investments in research infrastructure through Air Force MILCON investments to match growing investments in China in research infrastructure in domains such as quantum science, hypersonics, and advanced materials?

If confirmed, I would review Air Force MILCON investments to understand the current priority and status of research infrastructure projects. As the Department of the Air Force invests in the research and development of advanced technologies, it is important to have adequate research infrastructure to support. Up-to-date research infrastructure not only ensures the timely development of needed capabilities, but also serves as a valuable tool in the recruitment and retention of technical talent.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that the limited Air Force science and technology budget is used for genuine science and technology technical challenges, and not to support more mature prototyping and development activities more appropriately addressed with other Air Force RDTE resources?

If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to review how the science and technology budget prioritizes and funds these technical challenges, and I will ensure activities are aligned with the intent of the funds appropriated as well as the Department of the Air Force needs.

In your view, would the Air Force benefit from authorities that enable it to make use of expert foreign national talent in appropriate capacities and in appropriate settings to support modernization priorities and better compete with peer adversaries?

As our peer and near-peer adversaries continue to advance, we must embrace talent where we find it. Our Nation has long history of utilizing foreign experts to outpace our adversaries. Immigrant scientists such as Einstein and Fermi were key to bringing our

Nation into the Atomic Age with effort from Von Braun and others blazing the trail to Space. If confirmed, I will ensure Department of the Air Force leverages the appropriate use of any talent that may further our capabilities.

What incentives should the Air Force provide to universities and researchers to develop domestic technical talent and counter opportunities for researchers in critical fields being offered by peer adversaries, including China?

Department of the Air Force has and continues to invest in partnerships to prepare our warfighters to thrive in contested environments. One example is the Space Force's University Partnership Program which is currently collaborating with 11 colleges and universities to develop students and Guardians into high-tech problem solvers. If confirmed, I will direct a comprehensive review of Department of the Air Force academic and research partnerships, enhancing and/or expanding any programs necessary to further prepare our forces for the high-end fight.

Operational Energy

The Department defines *operational energy* as the energy required for training, moving, and sustaining military forces and weapons platforms for military operations, including the energy used by tactical power systems, generators, and weapons platforms. Longer operating distances, remote and austere geography, and anti-access/area denial threats are challenging DOD's ability to assure the delivery of fuel. As the ability to deliver energy is placed at risk, so too is the Department's ability to deploy and sustain expeditionary Air Force units around the globe.

What are your ideas for future capabilities that would enable an expeditionary Air Force through the assured delivery of energy to the warfighter?

If confirmed, I will support technologies that improve our combat capability by increasing the efficiency of our current aircraft. I will also support efforts that seek to revolutionize efficiency in aircraft and engine designs to maintain our combat advantage and reduce our logistical risk in a near peer competition.

What are your ideas for reducing the risk associated with the Air Force's dependence on vulnerable supply lines?

I believe the Air Force should leverage data-driven analytic methods such as wargaming and modeling and simulation to identify and deliver solutions for vulnerable supply lines. Working within the Air Force, with sister services, and partners and allies, Department of the Air Force can explore scenarios and deliver technologies that minimize risk to critical supplies such as fuel, to maximize the combat capability of our forces.

Environment

If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force complies with environmental protection laws, regulations, and guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency?

If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the Department of the Air Force has policy and resources in place to comply with applicable environmental protection laws, regulations, and guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

What are your ideas for improving collaboration with the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to find cooperative ways to ensure military readiness while protecting the environment on and around installations?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of the Air Force continues to foster the long-standing collaborative relationship with the Department of Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in ways that support and enhance military readiness while at the same time protecting biodiversity and species conservation on and around installations.

If confirmed, how would you further efforts to identify and remediate PFOS/PFOA contamination on Air Force installations, including reserve component locations?

I am familiar with the impacts of PFOS/PFOA, or PFAS. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department addresses Department of the Air Force-caused PFAS impacts and complies with all applicable environmental laws, regulations, and guidance from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Defense. I am committed to ensuring the safety and health of our Airmen, Guardians, their families, and the communities in which they serve, enterprise wide.

If confirmed, what would be your approach to addressing the health concerns of service members and their families regarding alleged exposures to potentially harmful contaminants on Air Force installations and in the context of performing military duties?

Nothing is more important than the health and well-being of service members and their families. If confirmed, I will make sure health concerns reported are promptly reviewed, investigated, and mitigated, as necessary.

Infrastructure Challenges

Non-DOD funding mechanisms such as energy savings performance contracts, utility energy savings contracts, and power purchase agreements are excellent means by which the Air Force can improve infrastructure, increase resilience, reduced deferred maintenance, implement alternative energy resources, save taxpayer funds, and secure other benefits without upfront appropriated funds.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to streamline this process and how long would it take you to resume entering into contracts of this sort for the benefit of Air Force installations?

Due to my previous role, I have familiarity with some of these opportunities and programs. If confirmed, I will commit to ensuring that the Department utilizes all available resources, including third-party performance contracts, to strengthen energy resilience. I commit to working with all services, OSD, and the Department of Energy to search for any opportunities to streamline processes and expedite solutions.

Audit

In your view, what is the benefit to Air Force missions in achieving a clean audit opinion?

It is my understanding that the appropriated funding Congress has provided to the Department of the Air Force has not only improved Department of the Air Force financial statements, but it has also enabled the DAF to improve cybersecurity in multiple systems, enhance business analytics capability by having more reliable, transparent data, and supported the use of robotics to allow teams to do more without increasing headcount. The audit also allows for improvements to equipment and inventory management driving business reform within the Department of the Air Force.

If confirmed, what specific actions will you take or direct to help the Air Force achieve a clean audit opinion in the most efficient manner?

If confirmed, I will continue the effort to reduce manual processes by utilizing modern technology to deliver enterprise-wide solutions. The modernization of financial systems automates integration, improves fiscal compliance, and implements enterprise cybersecurity. I will prioritize Department of the Air Force functional communities' accountability for critical assets through judicious inventories that support mission readiness. A clean financial statement improves the reliability and timelines of critical financial information to decision makers and validates that the Department of the Air Force is effectively and efficiently managing and expending financial resources.

Do you support the Air Force investing significant resources including personnel, investments in IT modernization, and funding for audit activities and audit remediation activities in order to support the Air Force achieving a clean audit opinion in a timely fashion?

Yes. It is critical that the Department of the Air Force make the timely progress necessary to obtain a clean audit opinion. If confirmed, I will be committed to making sure that every resource the Department of the Air Force uses toward this effort is judiciously applied as efficiently and effectively as possible, and that Department of the Air Force business decisions are informed and help accelerate progress.

If confirmed, how would you hold Air Force leaders accountable and responsible to prioritize, support, and manage Air Force audit activities?

It is my understanding that the financial improvement and audit remediation goals for the Department of the Air Force are included in all senior leaders' performance appraisals which sets the tone that Department of the Air Force senior leadership considers the importance of obtaining clean, reliable financial records as a top priority. If confirmed, I will assess the Department of the Air Force's achievement of planned milestones and provide effective feedback and resolutions if necessary.

Air Force-related Defense Industrial Base

How would you describe the state of the industrial base that supports Air Force programs? If confirmed, what actions would you take related to the industrial base?

The Department of the Air Force relies on a complex and substantial industrial base to acquire and sustain the Department of the Air Force's capabilities. While the current industrial base is highly skilled, there is substantial opportunity to access additional talent, engender competition, and access emerging technology by expanding the industrial base to include additional suppliers. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force leaders to continue to foster interactions with the industrial base and to expand the Department of the Air Force's access to cutting edge technologies from all sources.

How should Air Force acquisition leaders consider impacts on the industrial base when addressing requirements for recapitalization or modernization of major defense weapons systems and munitions?

It is important to consider the state of the relevant part of the industrial base in key acquisition investment decisions including those involving recapitalization and modernization of major weapon systems and munitions. If confirmed, I would work with Department of the Air Force acquisition leaders to identify efforts that can revitalize and broaden the vendor base.

How should the Air Force use its procurement investments to support the maintenance and growth of the domestic industrial base in sectors critical for Air Force readiness and modernization plans?

I believe the Air Force should work to identify opportunities where acquisition programs can maintain and strengthen a nimble, responsive domestic industrial base, including transitioning promising demonstrated technologies from the lab into production and fielding through investing in procurement of the technologies. The Department of the Air Force can be a leader in technology transition for modernization programs as well as for

sustainment. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of the Air Force acquisition leaders to consider impacts to the industrial base and its ability to meet the needs of the Air Force and Space Force.

How should the Air Force use its research and manufacturing investment activities to support the maintenance and growth of the domestic industrial base in sectors critical for Air Force readiness and modernization activities?

I understand the Department of the Air Force is leveraging the Manufacturing Innovation Institutes as an effective way to support the maintenance and growth of the domestic industrial base by pulling in a large number of suppliers through public-private partnerships. If confirmed, I will work Department of the Air Force leaders to review this effort and identify ways to best leverage initiatives and partnerships such as this one.

Military Health Care Reforms

Do you support the purpose and implementation of section 702 of the FY 2017 NDAA, as clarified by sections 711 and 712 of the FY 2019 NDAA?

Yes, I support the direction of Congress to standardize administration and management of the MTFs under the Defense Health Agency (DHA). The Department of the Air Force has consistently been supportive and was the first service to complete the transfer manpower and centralized contracts to DHA. Additionally, Department of the Air Force follows FY20 NDAA, sec.712 by maintaining nearly 80% of Active-Duty medics within MTFs.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum on December 6, 2023, titled “Stabilizing and Improving the Military Health System” which issued specific directions to stabilize and improve readiness, capacity, and access to medical care for warfighters and beneficiaries of the Military Health System.

Do you agree with the Deputy Secretary’s views as reflected in this memorandum?

Yes, I support the Military Health System (MHS) Stabilization memo. The Air Force organizes medical capabilities in an integrated fashion to balance readiness requirements as a force provider and the delivery of the medical entitlement to its 1+ million beneficiaries. The Air Force Medical Service (AFMS) fully supports the intent of the Military *Health* System Executive Review (MHSER): achieving a medically ready force, ready medical force, integrated medical force, and supporting healthcare delivery.

Do you have any concerns about any of the Secretary’s directions?

I fully support the Secretary’s direction and share his commitment to the success of the Military Health System in support of the Joint Force and 9.5 million DoD beneficiaries. I know the projected shortfall in the Defense Health Program presents significant risk to

the Department and the resources available to Department of the Air Force missions and its support of the warfighter. Failure to address the DHP shortfall will result in year-of-execution “must pay bills” to each MILDEP, thereby increasing fiscal and operational risk to the DoD. The Department of the Air Force’s efforts remain focused on mission effectiveness in the context of Great Power Competition and finding innovative ways to achieve greater efficiencies with the resources it has available.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the Air Force implements the requirements contained in this memorandum?

Yes, I will support the Deputy Secretary of Defense’s intent. I know Department of the Air Force is actively shaping business rules and implementation of the memo as we speak. I look forward to a more formal process to identify medical personnel requirements across the Department and the goal of ensuring we leverage military medical personnel in the most effective way possible to support the warfighter.

Military Compensation

What is your assessment of the adequacy of military compensation and benefits?

If confirmed, I look forward to a detailed review to better understand which, if any areas may need revision to allow for a more targeted approach to improvement in the overall compensation package.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to control the rising cost of military personnel?

If confirmed, I will review the current cost of Department of the Air Force military personnel, what has led to growth across the board, as well as disproportionate growth in certain areas, and areas we may be able to achieve cost savings while maintaining our ability to attract and retain talent.

Suicide Prevention

The number of suicides in each of the Services continues to concern the Committee. Starkly, this includes the U.S. Air Force Academy which continues to experience a very troubling number of suicides.

What is your assessment of the efficacy of suicide prevention programs at the U.S. Air Force Academy?

Even one suicide is a critical reminder to remain diligent in suicide prevention efforts and to continue to look at the latest research to inform the Department’s efforts. If confirmed, I will review the latest USAFA-internal assessments of its suicide prevention programs

and work with USAFA leaders to understand where improvements may be made. I understand that Secretary Austin has directed actions at the Military Service Academies to address harmful behaviors to include suicide. If confirmed, I will work with Department of Air Force leadership to continue to implement those directed actions.

Has the Air Force conducted a comprehensive review of the recent suspected Academy suicides to determine whether there are any common causal factors? If so, what did the Air Force find and how will those findings be applied to suicide prevention efforts going forward?

If confirmed, I will ensure review of all suspected Academy suicides and apply any lessons learned to the Department's suicide prevention efforts.

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to maintain a strong focus on preventing suicides in the Active Air Force and Space Force, in the Reserve Components, and in Air Force and Space Force families across all Components?

I am not able to answer this question, because I am not fully aware of all of the prevention resources available across the Total Force. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to review the state of those programs and potential modifications for those Airman and Guardians in specialties and/or assigned to locations with higher rates of attempted and/or reported suicides. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to ensure commanders and supervisors are aware of the mental health and behavioral health resources available to the Total Force.

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to enhance the reporting and tracking of suicide among family members and dependents of airmen and members of the Space Force across all Components?

If confirmed, I will remain fully committed to preventing suicides across the Total Force, to include among family members and dependents. I have not had the opportunity to review how the Department reports and tracks suicides amongst family members and amongst the components. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leadership to evaluate and implement research-based prevention methods to ensure the Total Force and their families receive the support and resources they need.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Despite significant efforts by the Military Services over the past decade to enhance their response to sexual assaults, including measures to care for victims and hold assailants accountable, the current data continues to show increasing prevalence of sexual assault and unwanted sexual conduct, primarily for female service members aged 17 to 24. These findings echo reports this year of increases in the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault at the Military Service Academies.

Do you believe the policies, programs, and resources that the Department of the Air Force have put in place to prevent and respond to sexual assault, and to protect airmen who report sexual assault from retaliation, are working? If not, what else must be done?

If confirmed, I will review current policies, programs and resources for effectiveness, and work with Department of the Air Force and OSD leaders to implement directed and necessary change to prevent and respond to sexual assault to protect Airmen and Guardians who report sexual assault from retaliation. Prevention and accountability go hand in hand, and if confirmed I will focus equally on prevention and accountability, as well as support Department efforts to care for victims.

The most recent report on the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment at the Military Service Academies revealed disturbing levels of sexual harassment in particular, placing the Service Academies among the poorest performing military units in incidents of harassment, suggesting an environment conducive to sexual assault and other misconduct.

What is your reaction to this report, and what actions would you propose to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment at the Service Academies?

The Military Service Academies must represent the highest standards of military trainings, from leadership development and academic excellence to the healthiest campus climate which supports, nurtures, and develops our military leaders. If confirmed, I will ensure full understanding of the report on the Military Service Academies and, work with OSD and Department of the Air Force leaders to implement directed and necessary changes to make the Service Academy a model institution for military education and leadership development. I understand that Secretary Austin has directed actions at the Military Service Academies to address harmful behaviors to include sexual harassment. If confirmed, I will work with Department of Air Force leadership to continue to implement those directed actions.

If confirmed, what specific role would you establish for yourself in preventing sexual harassment in the Air Force, including within the civilian workforce?

If confirmed, I will review all current policies and tracking methods for preventing sexual harassment in the Air Force, and work with Department of the Air Force leaders to implement any necessary changes to ensure adequate tools and resources are available to all Airmen and Guardians, including the civilian workforce to prevent sexual harassment.

Do you perceive that you need additional authorities from Congress to improve the Air Force programs to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault?

I do not have the information and data to answer this question at this point, however if confirmed, I will work with OSD and Department of the Air Force leaders to fully understand this issue and identify any gaps needing further authorities from Congress. If

confirmed, I will review whether and to what extent additional authorities may be required to improve the programs to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault.

The Air Force Civilian Personnel Workforce

DOD is the federal government’s largest employer of civilian personnel. The vast majority of DOD and Air Force civilian personnel policies comport with requirements set forth in title 5 of the U.S. Code, and corresponding regulations under the purview of the Office of Personnel Management. Over the years, the annual defense bill has included numerous extraordinary hiring and management authorities applicable to specific segments of the DOD and Air Force civilian workforces.

In your judgment, what is the biggest challenge facing the Department of the Air Force in effectively and efficiently managing its civilian workforce?

As with the Active Duty, recruitment, and retention of talent in the civilian workforce is one of the biggest challenges. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to develop appropriate incentives and professional growth opportunities to ensure we can continue to attract top talent into the civilian workforce, and work to ensure they are well managed and have enough resources to meet mission needs.

In your view, do Air Force supervisors have adequate authorities to divest of a civilian employee whose performance of duty fails to meet standards or who engages in misconduct?

If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leadership to ensure supervisors have the adequate authorities to address civilian employees’ failure to meet performance standards or who engage in misconduct. If any additional authorities are needed, I commit to working with the Secretary in advocating for and resourcing those authorities.

If so, are Air Force civilian and military supervisors adequately trained to exercise of such authorities? If not, what additional authorities or training do Air Force supervisors require?

If confirmed, I will review all civilian and military supervisor training requirements to ensure they are adequately trained to exercise granted authorities. I commit to working with Department of the Air Force leadership on ensuring training is reinforced, and all supervisors have the necessary advocacy and resources to adequately execute their supervisory authorities.

Air Force Senior Executives

Given that competent leadership is one of the most significant and relevant levers available to shape a high-performing Department of the Air Force civilian

workforce, what factors and characteristics would be most important to you in selecting a candidate for appointment to the Senior Executive Service (SES) in the Department?

If confirmed, I will ensure our executives are selected based on demonstrating strong and strategic executive leadership qualities with a consistent professional track record. SES members should possess the needed level of technical expertise, be passionate about serving, and have the ability to persevere and adapt, especially in these challenging times.

If confirmed, how would you go about ensuring that SES personnel under your authority are held accountable for both organizational performance and the rigorous performance management of their subordinate employees?

If confirmed, I will assess current SES performance management policies, ensuring goals and expectations of the Department are clear and communicated throughout the process. SES members will be held accountable for their performance and that of their subordinate workforce based on meaningful and measurable performance objectives. I will also ask SES members to nurture and lead inclusive organizations by embracing diversity of thought and backgrounds as the foundation for far more effective decision-making and problem solving.

What role should mobility requirements play in the Department of the Air Force SES program, in your view?

Geographical mobility is a mandatory requirement for all Department of the Air Force SES appointments and considered a key tenet in developing SES members and generally a key to advancement. If confirmed, I will evaluate whether the Department of the Air Force is effectively leveraging mobility requirements to achieve its strategic goals and best meet Agency mission needs.

Are you satisfied with the subject matter and rigor of SES professional development programs currently available across DOD? If not, what changes would you make to these programs, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I will assess the current Senior Executive Talent Management and Development processes and ensure executives are equipped to lead the Department of the Air Force in a complex strategic environment. Currently, the Department of the Air Force has a robust formal development SES program structured to help SESs strengthen critical competencies and if confirmed, I will ensure the goals of SES professional development are in sync with the Secretary of the Air Force's priorities, particularly the technical competence we will need in Great Power Competition.

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Military Families

Incidents of domestic and child abuse in military families continue to concern the

Committee. What is your understanding of the extent of this issue in the Air Force and Space Force, and if confirmed, what actions would you take to address it?

Any case of domestic abuse or child abuse is unacceptable. Last year, the Secretary of the Air Force directed a Domestic Violence Cross-Functional Review Team to assess Department of the Air Force's domestic violence resources, processes, and response. I fully support this review and will be an advocate for continued support, increasing education and awareness on the prevention, and improvements to systems and processes to not only protect and support victims, but to do everything we can to stop domestic violence and child abuse.

The service must hold abusers accountable and aligning disposition of these offenses under the Office of Special Trial Counsel, which stood up last month, will further the Department of the Air Force's efforts. The Office of Special Trial Counsel has exclusive authority over domestic violence offenses, as well as additional serious victim-related offenses.

If confirmed, I will support these initiatives and any others that help protect our Airmen and Guardians and their families.

In your view, how effective are Air Force and Space Force programs in responding to and reducing incidents of domestic violence and child abuse?

The Department of the Air Force programs are effective at helping victims, but with the Department of the Air Force's Domestic Violence Cross-Functional Review Team, we can do better, and we will. Until domestic violence and child abuse are eliminated no program will be fully effective. The Department of the Air Force engages with those who are at the highest risk of child abuse and neglect or domestic and intimate partner violence. Those prevention efforts must continue to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors that cross multiple forms of violence. We must also endorse positive coping skills and assistance to those at risk of engaging in such behavior, so they seek help rather than resort to violent, abusive, or neglectful behaviors.

Do you believe that the Department of the Air Force's Family Advocacy Program strikes the right balance between healing families and holding individuals accountable for acts of domestic violence and child abuse? Please explain your answer.

The Family Advocacy Program focuses on providing families with appropriate preventative and support resources. That's critical so victims have the support they need to heal, but the other side is accountability for abusers. The military justice system, including the Office of Special Trial Counsel and the chain of command, holds those who commit domestic violence and child abuse offenses accountable.

Last month, the disposition of domestic violence and child sexual abuse offenses shifted

to align under the exclusive authority of the Office of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC). This is a continued step in the right direction of managing and maintaining the delicate balance between prevention, support, and holding abusers accountable.

Last year, the Secretary of the Air Force directed a Domestic Violence Cross-Functional Review Team to assess Department of the Air Force's domestic violence resources, processes, and response. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the implementation of the recommendations.

Military Quality of Life

If confirmed, what quality of life and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs would you consider to be a priority?

MWR programs are a necessity and go a long way towards improving quality of life for military members and their families. Fostering resilient and ready families directly impacts recruitment, retention, and readiness of military members. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to understand which programs are high in demand, and where new programs may need to be introduced based on community needs.

What metric would you apply in determining which MWR and quality of life programs should be sustained or enriched and which should be eliminated or reduced in scope as ineffective or outmoded?

If confirmed, I will review current methodologies that assess and determine which MWR programs should be sustained and/or enriched, and which should be eliminated or reduced, to ensure they are effective, sustainable, and meet the current and future needs of our Airmen, Guardians, and their families.

Military Family Readiness and Support

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for service members and their families?

I do not have all the data I would need to answer this question at this point. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to understand the most important family readiness issues, the Department of the Air Force's current ability to address those, and researching and developing a way to improve those programs and advocating for resources.

If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that military families are provided with accessible, high-quality childcare, at an appropriate cost?

Military families have unique childcare needs. Providing military families with accessible, high-quality, and affordable childcare is a critical factor in military family's assessment of quality of life. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders, Airmen and Guardians, and their family members to understand what efforts are already under way to meet the demand and explore how to expand the comprehensive network of childcare solutions to include non-traditional and community-based options.

I understand that accessible, high-quality, and affordable childcare is a critical enabler of the Department's mission and that the DoD is committed to leveraging current resources and ensuring families can obtain the child care services appropriate for their family needs. If confirmed, I will work with Department leaders and families to understand what efforts are underway to meet the demand and how we might improve doing so.

Support for Military Families with Special Needs

What is your view of the overall effectiveness of the exceptional family member program (EFMP)?

It is important that exceptional family members receive the care they need, and if confirmed, I will commit to ensuring this is the case. I will prioritize this program and ensure all Department of the Air Force leaders know the full suite of EFMP resources, and how best to communicate that with the Total Force.

If confirmed, how would you incentivize service member enrollment in EFMP?

If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to review enrollment, understand potential barriers to enrollment, and identify ways to ensure EFMP is fully utilized with ease of access for those who need it.

If confirmed, how would you eliminate or reduce the bureaucratic administrative burdens currently experienced by EFMP participants, and ensure that EFMP services are consistent across services?

If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to review enrollment, understand any bureaucratic administrative burdens that may exist, and reduce those barriers to utilization for EFMP families so they can fully use the system intended to support them.

If confirmed, what role would you establish for yourself in ensuring that Military Housing Privatization Initiative partners and military commanders consider the needs of service members with an exceptional family member in making assignments to privatized military housing?

I do not have access to internal Department of the Air Force data that would assist me in understanding challenges that are currently facing service members with an exceptional family member and the availability of housing that meets their needs. If confirmed, I will

commit to working with Department of the Air Force leaders to understand the breadth of the challenges and ensure that our Military Housing Privatization Initiative partners work to meet the housing needs of service members with an exceptional family member in accordance with the privatized housing project legal agreements, the Fair Housing Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, reports, records (including documents and electronic communications) and other information from the Department.

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

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records (including documents and electronic communications), and other information as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

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

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer yes or no.

Yes