

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Mr. Andrew Hunter
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for
Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics

Duties

Section 8016 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of the Air Force may prescribe, and that the principal duty of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (ASAF(AQ)) shall be the overall supervision of acquisition, technology, and logistics matters of the Air Force.

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the ASAF(AQ)?

My understanding is that the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics serves as the Service Acquisition Executive (SAE) and the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) for the Department of the Air Force. The position serves as the SAE for the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Space Force until such time as a separate SAE is confirmed for the U.S. Space Force, per the direction in the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act. It is the senior position authorized to exercise, on behalf of the Secretary, overall responsibility for acquisition functions within the Department of the Air Force to include enforcing all relevant acquisition regulations, policies, and procedures; serving as the Milestone Decision Authority for programs delegated to the SAE; and managing the Department of the Air Force science and technology program. Additionally, the Assistant Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics is responsible for leading the acquisition workforce.

What recommendations, if any, do you have for changes in the duties and functions of the ASAF(AQ) as set forth in section 8016 of title 10, United States Code, or in Department of Defense regulations pertaining to functions of the ASAF(AQ)?

I have no recommendations for changes in the duties and functions of the position at this time; however, if confirmed, I will continually evaluate the need for any modifications to the duties and functions of the position and will keep Congress apprised of my findings.

If confirmed, what additional duties, if any, do you expect the Secretary of the Air Force to prescribe for you?

I am not aware of any additional duties likely to be assigned to the position at this time. If confirmed, I will diligently perform the duties of the ASAF(AT&L) and I will be ready to execute any additional duties as directed by the Secretary of the Air Force.

Major Challenges and Priorities

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

If confirmed, I anticipate confronting several major challenges in this position. The

Department of the Air Force is a critical part of the United States efforts, along with our allies, to promote and maintain open and free political and economic systems in a strategic competition with peer competitors. Success in this competition requires making and managing a range of key investments which will serve as major challenges for the ASAF(AT&L) position. Modernizing the capabilities of the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Space Force are national priorities, particularly the core elements of the U.S. nuclear deterrent. In addition to managing individual modernization programs, the Department must structure and manage its acquisition processes to enable sustained innovation, which requires improvements in the acquisition of software and software-intensive systems as well as related enabling investments in the acquisition workforce. In addition, the Department is a leading element of the U.S. research and development enterprise which must invest wisely to ensure that it continues to underpin U.S national security and economic vitality over the long term.

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

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's leadership and the Congress to ensure sound management of Department of the Air Force acquisition programs by actively managing programmatic risks and working closely with the operational community to focus on addressing key warfighters requirements and fielding capability at pace with operational needs. To enable sustained innovation, I would work to leverage the tools Congress has provided to accelerate the fielding of new capabilities from both traditional and non-traditional partners and ensure effective acquisition of software through adapting acquisition processes to enable best practices in software development and cybersecurity, along with developing related skill sets in the acquisition workforce. To ensure effective investment in research and development, I would work closely with Department leadership to resource this area and extend and enhance ongoing Air Force efforts to align this investment with national and Departmental priorities, effectively leveraging related private sector investment and encouraging the development of innovative firms.

If confirmed, what management actions and timelines would you establish to address each of these challenges?

If confirmed, I will engage immediately in assessing the current acquisition programs of the Department of the Air Force, the state of the Department's efforts to adapt its processes and workforce for sustained innovation, and the Department's management of its research and development investment. I will focus on ensuring that the SAF/AQ and SAF/SQ organizations are actively engaged with the Air and Space Staff organizations to ensure efforts critical to our national security are correctly prioritized and delivering needed capabilities. I will work with industry to ensure effective and accountable relationships that leverage and develop world leading capabilities with secure and resilient supply chains, and also work with Congress to understand and align our efforts according to our common priorities. Once I have completed these assessments, I would work closely with Departmental leadership to direct efforts to address the plans I've articulated as well as effectively implement direction from the Congress, the President, and the Secretary.

If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish and how would you measure progress in achieving these priorities?

If confirmed, I will establish my priorities in alignment with the plans and initiatives outlined in the previous questions as well as those of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Air Force. I will ensure these priorities are communicated to the acquisition community to ensure its efforts align with my objectives. If confirmed, I will work with Department leadership and the Congress to measure progress from clear, objective, and realistic metrics that emphasize the delivery of operational improvements and new capabilities along with demonstrated process improvement. The effectiveness of government research and development investments is very evident over longer time frames, but is often hard to measure in the short term. If confirmed, I would work with Department leadership and Congress to identify and monitor useful metrics for this investment.

Relations with Congress

If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the Office of the ASAF(AQ)?

If confirmed, first and foremost, I will establish and maintain open lines of communication with members of the Congressional Defense Committees and their staff. Frequent and timely updates on the Department of the Air Force programs are paramount to executing the acquisition mission and ensuring proper oversight. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress on all matters of acquisitions.

Budget

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

If confirmed, I will routinely assess the programs under my purview to ensure they are appropriately funded to deliver needed capabilities and manage programmatic risk. I will work closely with the Air Force and Space Force system commands to ensure that we are investing appropriately in the workforce to deliver the near term and long-term capabilities that nation requires. And, for overall acquisition funding, I will ensure appropriate balance across near term investments that can sustain and transform the current force and longer-term advancements for the future force.

Acquisition

If confirmed, what would be your plan for improving Air Force acquisition activities?

If confirmed, improving Department of the Air Force acquisition will be my central priority. I will approach all working relationships with Department leadership, the USD(A&S), the USD(R&E), the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Chief of Staff of the Space Force, and the Air Force acquisition workforce with the ‘one team, one fight’ mindset. Establishing strong working relationships with these organizations is an important first step. From there, if confirmed, I will work with to adapt our acquisition process to identify, support, and enable best practices in the acquisition enterprise,

including relevant best practices from the private sector. There is a clear need today to adapt our processes to enable better software acquisition and cybersecurity. There is also a need to work with industry to ensure secure and resilient supply chains for our key capabilities. If confirmed, these areas would be among my top initial priorities.

What do you perceive to be the recent successes and shortfalls in Air Force acquisition activities?

I believe that the Department of the Air Force has a number of major acquisition programs that are built on solid foundations of good analysis, prudent planning, and effective risk management, especially those which are currently modernizing the nation's nuclear deterrent. There are many newer programs which are seeking to leverage rapid prototyping and new approaches to rapidly demonstrate capability and aggressively identify and address programmatic risks. If confirmed, I will assess these programs to ensure that they are being effectively managed to deliver needed capabilities. I am encouraged to see the Department embracing digital acquisition principles and taking steps to develop adaptable systems with the ability to evolve capabilities at the speed of relevance. I see effective sustainment of existing Air Force and Space Force capabilities as a clear area of challenge. As part of this, effective management of contracts and contractors is needed to improve the outcomes the acquisition system is providing to warfighters.

If confirmed, what steps would you take specifically to improve oversight in the requirements determination, resource allocation, and acquisition management processes?

If confirmed, I will work with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Chief of Space Operations to establish cost effective and achievable requirements for future programs with a focus on meeting current operational needs and preparing for future operational needs as part of a sound concept of operations. A key part of this effort will require being able to articulate and effectively engage over time with clearly identifiable units and organizations that represent the user community. I will team with Air Force financial management and strategic planning leaders to ensure the budget is allocated and managed to deliver the right solutions to Department of the Air Force requirements. I will work closely with the Program Executive Officers and the System Commands to ensure effective acquisition management by improving the skills of the acquisition workforce and providing sound, consistent, and appropriate acquisition policy direction. The Department also needs to work with industry, academia, and our warfighters to develop solutions to problems using careful problem definition that informs requirements. If confirmed, I will ensure the requirements are achievable on a reasonable timeline and I will advocate for and use improved modeling and simulation capabilities, digital tools, and experimentation/ prototyping to reduce risk and inform concept development.

How can the Department of Defense and the Air Force better access and integrate commercial and military technology to remain ahead of potential adversaries?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary and military leadership to identify technologies that can make a difference in the Department of the Air Forces performance of its missions and enable effective concepts of operations. When relevant technologies

are identified, I will work to enable their acquisition. For many commercial and military technologies, especially those that are software-intensive, timely acquisition will require the development of new business models that enable more rapid development and adaptation of technologies while effectively aligning industry's incentives with meeting the Department's needs. It is my understanding that AFWERX, along with several of the Department's other elements and offices such as the Defense Innovation Unit, have pioneered several promising new business models designed for this purpose. If confirmed, I will work closely with the leaders of these organizations to further foster and develop these efforts.

What roles do you see for developmental planning, prototyping, and experimentation in the fielding of future Air Force capabilities?

I believe that both commercial and military technology must be understood as key enablers for military missions that are carried out to advance the national defense strategy and must integrate into concepts of operations designed to meet challenges from a wide range of potential adversaries. The most stressing of these potential adversaries are peer competitors with aggressive modernization programs. The United States is challenged to effectively integrate and adapt the technologies needed to address advances made by these competitors. If confirmed, I would look to accelerate technology maturation and demonstration through prototyping and experimentation to allow the Air Force to take advantage of innovations from the commercial realm, defense industry, or academia at a faster pace.

How would you propose the Air Force better plan and prepare for weapon system sustainment as part of its acquisition activities?

Effective sustainment requires good planning and it is one of the Department of the Air Force's key challenges. If confirmed, I will work with the Air Force sustainment community, industry, and other services to review the current methods for sustainment planning and ensure data-driven updates to sustainment methods. I believe sustainment is an area where digital engineering can play a large role in improving outcomes.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 created the Senate-confirmed position of Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration. Under that provision, beginning in FY 2022, this new Assistant Secretary will assume responsibilities of the Service Acquisition Executive (SAE) for the Space Force.

What is your vision for the transition of appropriate SAE responsibilities to the newly established Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration?

If confirmed, I would serve as the Service Acquisition Executive for the Department of the Air Force and support work to stand-up the new office. Once a Space Service Acquisition Executive is confirmed, I will ensure a seamless transition of responsibility and applicable authorities.

If confirmed, what role would you play in Space Force acquisition activities until such transition occurs?

If confirmed, I will perform the responsibilities of the Service Acquisition Executive for space programs within the Department of the Air Force until there is a confirmed Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration.

Cost and Schedule Estimates

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has reported that the Air Force's use of unrealistically optimistic cost and schedule estimates is a major contributor to cost growth and program failure.

What do you perceive to be the adverse effects of the Air Force's use of unrealistically optimistic cost and schedule estimates?

Historically, poor cost and schedule estimation has resulted in damaging churn in the Air Force's modernization portfolio and has sometimes led to shortfalls in operational capability and waste. If confirmed, I would assess the Department of the Air Force's cost and schedule estimates for its acquisition programs, including GAO's review of these programs, and make necessary and/or appropriate adjustments.

If confirmed, how would you propose to counter or mitigate these adverse effects?

I understand that unrealistically optimistic cost and schedule estimates lead to unachievable expectations, as well as eventual program performance issues. If confirmed, I would ensure appropriate cost and schedule analysis is being conducted and that programs that are off course are reevaluated.

What steps do you believe the Air Force can and should take to ensure that cost and schedule estimates are fair and independent, and that such estimates provide a sound basis for decision-making on Air Force programs?

If confirmed, I would abide by the policies adopted by the Department of Defense for Major Defense Acquisition Programs, which require the development of an Independent Cost Estimate by a cost agency external to the Service to be considered as part of program milestone reviews and when establishing program baselines. For other programs, I will ensure program managers are providing the Milestone Decision Authority (MDA) cost estimates at the necessary confidence level at decision reviews, pulling in Air Force Cost Analysis Agency for estimates, where needed. These cost estimates must identify the total ownership cost and major cost drivers so the MDA can make an informed decision before proceeding.

Software Activities and Acquisition of Information Technology (IT)

What is your understanding of the role of the ASAF(AT&L) with respect to IT acquisition and software activities of the Air Force?

If confirmed, I will be the Service Acquisition Executive for all Department of the Air Force IT acquisition programs and I will play a key role in transforming the software activities of the Department. I would work to enable adoption of innovative software best practices, cyber security solutions, artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies across programs, while lowering barriers to agile software development and

IT innovation.

If confirmed, how would you plan to address systemic and persistent cultural, process, and technical barriers to improving the Air Force's treatment of software activities and IT acquisition?

If confirmed, I will make it a priority to understand where the Department of the Air Force stands in terms of software activities and IT acquisition. I will work across the acquisition and IT communities to address cultural, process, and technical barriers to IT innovation, as this is integral to providing warfighting capability.

If confirmed, how would you work with the research and testing community, the Air Force's Chief Information Officer, and with the other Military Services—including their Chief Information Officers—in the development and deployment of Air Force business IT systems?

Development and deployment of IT systems is of great importance to every Service and Department and there is much to be learned from and leveraged by each other. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of the Air Force Chief Information Officer, and those of the other Services, to collaborate on ways to harness software development innovation, including institutionalizing DevSecOps to address security issues early on in the development life cycle of our systems.

If confirmed, what major improvements would you make in the Air Force's development and deployment of major IT systems?

If confirmed I will quickly seek to understand the current Department of the Air Force practices for development and deployment of IT systems, with the intent to optimize efficiency and to meet the changing needs of its mission and objectives. If confirmed, I will encourage the continued use of modern business methods, as they apply in a Department of the Air Force context, to better leverage both Government and industry best practices to help the Department reduce cost, exceed performance expectations, and meet schedule goals.

If confirmed, what would be your highest priority IT and software-related initiatives?

Working to adapt the Department of the Air Force's policies and practices to enable better acquisition of software and IT would be one of my highest priorities, if confirmed. The Department of the Air Force's approach to the acquisition of software and software-intensive systems must enable the regular upgrade of these systems in weeks and months, not years. I would carefully assess the status of the Department's the IT and software-related initiatives so I have a full understanding of the landscape. Where there are potential gaps or there is a lag in progress I would make it a priority to address that challenge.

In your view, what is the appropriate relationship between the Air Force's efforts to implement enterprise IT programs and supporting computing services and infrastructure to support Air Force missions, and the efforts being undertaken by the Defense Information Systems Agency?

I understand the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) conducts Defense Information Network operations for the joint warfighter to enable lethality across all warfighting domains. If confirmed, I will learn more about the touch points and synergistic work between DISA and the Department so I can make an assessment on the appropriate relationship between the Department and DISA.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that appropriate business process reengineering is undertaken and accomplished before initiating new business systems, IT program development, and deployment?

During an age in which technology disruption is the norm and business models must constantly change to adapt, business process reengineering is a journey of continuous reinvention. If confirmed, I would partner with the DAF CIO and Chief Management Officer to ensure that business models are adaptable and support continuous business transformation.

If confirmed, how would you coordinate the development or procurement of cloud computing services within the Air Force with other Department of Defense and federal government cloud computing initiatives?

If confirmed, I would assess the Department of the Air Force's cloud computing initiatives as well as related initiatives across DoD to ensure that the Department of the Air Force is appropriately coordinated and leveraging the work of other entities.

In your view, what is the appropriate role for cloud computing capabilities in Air Force acquisition, research, testing, and logistics programs and activities?

I expect that cloud computing will be a key enabler for Department of the Air Force acquisition, research, testing, and logistics program and activities. Acquisition is a highly complex undertaking and cloud computing offers access to scalable processing power, massive data storage and information sharing, and access to innovative algorithmic capabilities. These attributes are necessary for digital engineering and sophisticated modeling and simulation. If confirmed, I will examine this area and determine the appropriate role for cloud computing capabilities in the Department of the Air Force.

Where do you believe the best opportunities for collaboration and joint execution between the Air Force and Defense Digital Service (DDS) might exist?

I understand the Defense Digital Service (DDS) team includes software developers, engineers, data scientists, designers, product managers, and digital experts from the private sector and within Government. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the work of DDS and finding opportunities for collaboration and joint execution.

Contracting

What are the major challenges facing the Air Force with respect to contracting activities?

I understand that the Air Force has a robust contracting capability, one that was leveraged by the nation to great benefit to acquire life-saving vaccines, medicines, and PPE to combat COVID-19. At the same time, I understand that there have been challenges with

Air Force contract management, including with long-term fixed price contracts that have sometimes delivered subpar performance and hindered solving warfighter problems. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department's leadership, including the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Contracting, to analyze the challenges, develop options, and execute solutions.

If confirmed, how would you drive greater use of flexible contracting authorities while also ensuring appropriate oversight of such use?

If confirmed, I will engage with the Heads of Contracting (HCA) for the Air Force and Space Force to assess current use of flexible contracting authorities available and identify opportunities for improved use. Additionally, I would work with the Committee to identify and scope additional authorities that may enhance the effectiveness of acquisition.

What additional flexible contracting authorities might you recommend the Congress enact?

At this time, I do not have any recommendations regarding additional authorities. However, if confirmed, I will engage with Program Executive Officers and the HCA for the Air Force and the HCA for US Space Force to assess any additional authorities that may be needed in the future to enhance the effectiveness of acquisition. Additionally, I would work with the Committee to identify and scope additional authorities that may be of benefit.

In what instances do you believe the Air Force should use fixed price contracts for development programs?

If confirmed, I will assess the maturity of a program, technology risk within a program, and other factors to determine the appropriate contract type for that program. This is a decision that is unique for each program. A fixed-price development contract should only be used if there is appropriate program maturity and risk, which is rare.

Do you perceive that the Air Force is making appropriate use of non-FAR-based contracting approaches, such as Other Transaction Authority (OTA)? If confirmed, how might you modify the Air Force's efforts to and processes for the use of these approaches?

In addition to a solid policy foundation for using these instruments, which I believe the Department of the Air Force has established, success with these contracting approaches depends critically on a skilled workforce with experience using these non-traditional instruments. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the development of the necessary capacity to use these approaches to bolster business agility across a broader DoD and economic spectrum.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that Air Force personnel are properly trained in the use of non-FAR-based contracting methodologies?

If confirmed, I will ensure Department personnel are properly trained in non-FAR-based contracting methods through organic training programs for organizations likely to benefit most, leverage use of Defense Acquisition University to provide training on Other

Transactions, and leverage other tools like the Periodic Table of Acquisition Innovations that provides examples of use.

In your view, what are the general advantages and disadvantages of FAR and non-FAR based contracting approaches, respectively?

Other Transactions can offer less barriers for non-traditional vendors and small businesses, as well as providing flexibilities necessary to adopt and incorporate business practices that reflect the broader commercial industry standards, best practices, and norms. It also allows for sole source follow-ons to enable continuity and reduce time for production contracts following prototyping.

Multiyear Procurement Contracts

Section 2306b of title 10, United States Code, establishes the criteria that are prerequisite to a Military Department’s exercise of multiyear contract authority.

What types of programs are appropriate for the use of multiyear contracts, in your view?

When a present value analysis shows that a multiyear contract will result in a significant savings to the Government over annual contracts and the program promotes the national security of the United States, exercising this authority is appropriate. When the criteria at 10 U.S. Code § 2306b(a) are met, multiyear contracts have the potential to generate not only savings to the Government but they can present strong incentives to industry to reduce negotiated amounts through long-term agreements with suppliers, enhance facilities investment, increase production capacity, and reduce risk through production process improvements.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force fully complies with the requirements of section 2306b?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Air Force fully complies with the requirements of section 2306b.

What is your understanding of the requirement that a multiyear contract result in “significant savings,” as compared to the cost of carrying out a program through annual contracts?

Although section 2306b and the Federal Acquisition Regulation do not quantify “significant savings,” the Government must seek maximum savings when pursuing multiyear procurements. As outlined in House Conference Report 114-270, a 10 percent savings over the cost of an annual contract is a key evaluation threshold. However, each program must stand on its own merits and the present value analysis should be evaluated based on the circumstances surrounding the immediate acquisition to determine the benefits to the Government and industry.

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

Proposed multiyear contract costs must be provided with the President's budget submission or as a budget amendment. A multiyear procurement contract may not be initiated if the contract would exceed \$750 million unless authority for the contract is specifically provided in an appropriations act and also authorized. The Department of Air Force and Congress must be committed to ensuring sufficient funds are provided to complete the multi-year contract at planned production rates.

The Navy budget request for fiscal year 2022 included insufficient funding to avoid breaking a multiyear contract for the DDG-51 destroyer program. The committee views this action as breaking a moral commitment from the Department to fully fund multiyear procurement programs for the duration of the contract. Such an action should only be taken in the direst of circumstances. The Air Force is also managing a number of multiyear contracts.

Can you assure the committee that you intend to fully fund all multiyear contracts within the purview of the Air Force in future budget request and that you would only recommend a budget request that fails to do so in a dire emergency?

Yes, if confirmed, my intent is to work with Department of the Air Force leadership to fully funding multiyear contracts in budget requests.

Middle Tier Acquisition

Section 804 of the FY 2016 NDAA authorized DOD to employ an acquisition approach ("Middle Tier Acquisition") that was intended to support the rapid delivery of new capability to meet emerging operational needs.

In your view, what benefit has the Department of the Air Force derived from its use of Section 804 authorities?

In my view, Section 804 authorities have provided a toolset that has enabled a wide variety of rapid prototyping efforts with the potential to meaningfully reduce risk and establish new pathways toward the fielding of needed capabilities. Like any powerful tool, the key determinant of Section 804's utility is how this toolset is used. If confirmed, I would anticipate leveraging Section 804, working with Department leadership and the Congress, to ensure we deliver capabilities to the warfighter at the speed of relevance.

What risks have accrued and been accepted by the Air Force as a consequence of the use of these authorities?

If confirmed, I will ascertain how these authorities are being used and ensure programs are properly mitigating associated risks.

If confirmed, what processes would you put in place to ensure appropriate oversight of the Department's use of 804 authorities? Please explain your answer.

If confirmed, I will assess the oversight applied to these authorities and work with Department leadership and the Congress to implement any needed changes.

What best practices can the Air Force employ to generate realistic and technically achievable specifications, particularly in sophisticated, rapidly-evolving technical areas such as cybersecurity, hypersonics, and artificial intelligence?

The areas identified are all areas where the work of the acquisition community must be tightly coupled with the operational community to ensure we are correctly prioritizing our efforts and solving the most acute operational problems. I believe that digital acquisition practices such as digital engineering, open systems architecture, and agile software development are best practices in these areas. They enable acquisition agility and adaptation in rapidly-evolving technical areas such as cybersecurity, hypersonics, and artificial intelligence. If confirmed, I will ensure the acquisition community is closely engaged with operators in pursuing technology and continues to employ best practices as we develop capability to meet evolving threats.

Test and Evaluation

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

Rigorous independent test and evaluation is one of the Department's most critical capabilities. It is essential that the Department's leaders have access to the findings and recommendations of the test community to use in making key operational and investment decisions. It is also important that this information is shared with Congress. If confirmed, I would work closely with the test and evaluation community to ensure this vital capability is maintained and resourced, and that the work of the test and evaluation community is shared with all the relevant stakeholders.

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?

Developmental and operational test and evaluation communities play a crucial role in streamlined acquisition processes. These communities serve as the bridge between ideation and fielding of capabilities to the warfighter. They also can signal when it is time to consider off ramps for programs that are unable to meet requirements and, therefore, ensure the best use of taxpayer dollars.

In your view, does the Department of the Air Force have adequate test and evaluation capabilities? In which areas, if any, do you feel the Air Force should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?

Ensuring that the test and evaluation community is able to provide the capability that the Department of the Air Force and the nation needs will require continuous investment. I believe that additional investment in test and evaluation capability may soon be required to foster the development of artificial intelligence and autonomous systems. If confirmed, I will review the test and evaluation capabilities of the Department of the Air Force and work with Department leadership and the Congress to make any necessary changes.

Technology Transition

The Department of Defense continues to struggle with the transition of new technologies into existing programs of record and major weapons systems and platforms. Further, the Department also has struggled with moving technologies from the Department's programs rapidly into the hands of operational users.

What impediments to technology transition do you perceive to exist within the Air Force?

It has been historically challenging to overcome the proverbial “valley of death” between emerging technology solutions and acquisition programs of record. Recent attention and increased emphasis on prototyping and experimentation, as well as digital engineering and open architecture designs, have provided opportunities to improve technology transition. One of the challenges the DoD faces is a lengthy budgetary process. The Department of the Air Force needs resources, an adaptable planning process, and authorities to take immediate advantage of emerging technological advances or initiate a rapid acquisition in response to an emerging threat.

To what extent could and should the Air Force Research Laboratory and other Air Force systems engineering commands play a greater role in enabling the transition of promising technologies from a successful initial demonstration to a program-of-record, which may include working with industry and the desired program executive officer (PEO) to develop and assist with a systems engineering plan necessary to achieve transition to the PEO?

If confirmed, I will assess the Air Force's recent efforts to hasten technology transition and work to identify opportunities for collaboration between the Department of the Air Force and industry stakeholders to address and overcome barriers.

If confirmed, what steps, if any, would you take to enhance the effectiveness of technology transition efforts?

The Department of the Air Force must define as early as possible those technologies that will provide the greatest advantage against our peer competitors. If confirmed, I will employ prototyping and experimentation to identify technologies from multiple sources, including the Air Force Research Laboratory, academia, industry, and DoD and agency partners. This approach supports the requirements process, getting operationally relevant capability to the field faster, while reducing acquisition risk and costs.

In your view, what can be done from a budget, policy, and organizational standpoint to facilitate the transition of technologies from science and technology programs and other sources, including small businesses, venture capital-funded companies, and other non-traditional defense contractors, into acquisition programs?

It is my understanding that ensuring access to technologies from small businesses, venture backed companies, and non-traditional contractors was the impetus behind the Department of the Air Force's decision to established AFWERX with its AFVentures division, focused on technology capture and connection with warfighter needs. I confirmed, I will assess AFWERX's efforts and work with the Department's leadership

and the Congress to implement any needed changes. Further flexibility in acquisition programming and budgeting could accelerate technology transition.

Air Force-Related Defense Industrial Base

What is your understanding and assessment of the systems and processes for identifying, evaluating, and managing risk among the entities that form the Air Force industrial base and supply chain?

The industrial base is a critical national asset and ensuring that supply chains for Department of the Air Force systems are secure and resilient is a top priority. Executive Order 14017, the supply chain work carried out by the Congressional Defense Committees, and the recent announcement of a supply chain resiliency working group DoD should further the Department's understanding of the risks and provide mechanisms to address identified issues. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with the Department's leadership and Congress in that effort.

What is your view of the current health of the industrial base that supports the Air Force?

I have seen great resiliency from the industrial base as it has recovered from and adjusted to the impacts of COVID-19. At the same time, there are significant warning signs that indicate we cannot take the health of the industrial base for granted. There has been a long-term decline in the dynamism of the defense industry base as measured by the entrance and advancement of new suppliers who bring added innovation to solve national security problems. There is fragility among some key DoD suppliers that must be effectively managed. And there is a significant and growing risk to the industrial base from cyber threats. If confirmed, I will work with acquisition leaders to consider impacts on—and continue to grow—the industrial base to meet growing warfighter readiness requirements, reduce sustainment costs, increase supply chain resiliency, address cyber threats, and posture for the future.

How should Air Force acquisition leaders consider impacts on the industrial base when addressing requirements for recapitalization or modernization of major end items such as aircraft, munitions, or key repair parts?

Impacts on the industrial base must be understood and considered in making key investment decisions for recapitalization and modernization as well as in making investments in science and technology. If confirmed, I would work closely with Department leadership so that they understand and carefully consider the industrial base implications of their decisions. If confirmed, the industrial base would also be a key consideration for me and those I would supervise in making important acquisition decisions.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you pursue in systems and processes to improve identification, monitoring, and assessment of actions to ensure that risk in Air Force-relevant sectors of the defense industrial base is adequately managed?

If confirmed, I look forward to assessing the Department of the Air Force's systems and processes for evaluating the industrial base to determine where improvements may be

made in reducing risk to the Department of the Air Force-relevant sectors of the defense industrial base. I would work with the Department's leadership and Congress to address any needed improvements.

In your view, what actions should the Air Force take to maintain access to critical elements of the defense industrial base?

The Department of the Air Force should continue to assess risks to the industrial base and pursue mitigations collaboratively with the other Military Departments and OSD. I believe additional steps may be needed to prevent stagnation or sole source vendors, such as providing opportunities to and supporting innovation from new entrants and non-traditional suppliers. Additionally, the Department needs to engage carefully and constructively with traditional suppliers to ensure key industrial capabilities are maintained and innovation in core defense systems continues. The Department of the Air Force has a particularly important role to play in advancing market shaping capabilities such as digital engineering in the industrial base which provide a foundation for future innovation and economic competitiveness. If confirmed, I will work with Department leadership and Congress to pursue these actions.

If confirmed, what would you see as your office's role in working with or supporting efforts of the Air Force Office of Small Business Programs?

I believe in the power of small businesses as part of the U.S. defense industrial base and programs like the Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) programs are especially important. If confirmed, I look forward to working with and supporting the efforts of the Air Force Office of Small Business Programs to strategize together how to leverage the innovation resident in U.S. small businesses.

If confirmed, what would you see as the relationship between your office and DIU?

I understand DIU and AFWERX have a very close relationship, as well as with other innovation organizations. I am supportive of continued collaboration, and believe AFWERX provides complementary scale and organic warfighter engagement to transition technologies that DIU might identify. I understand this has been the case with the AFWERX Agility Prime program as a transition partner from DIU.

Science and Technology

What is your understanding and assessment of the role that science and technology programs have played and will play in developing capabilities for current and future Air Force systems?

The Department of the Air Force has historically been an avid developer and integrator of advanced technology for military advantage with significant benefits also flowing to the U.S. economy. If confirmed, I look forward to identifying and investing in a portfolio of emerging and transformational technologies to enhance Air Force and Space Force systems and ensure U.S. technological leadership.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that successful Air Force science and technology programs will transition to operational warfighting capabilities?

The Department of the Air Force must define as early as possible those technologies that will provide the greatest advantage against our peer competitors. If confirmed, I will employ analysis, experimentation, and prototyping to identify technologies from multiple sources, including the Air Force Research Laboratory, academia, industry, and DoD and agency partners. This approach reduces risk, shortens the requirements process, and transitions operationally relevant capability to the field faster.

Laboratories and Test Centers

What experience do you have in working with the Air Force's labs and test centers?

I have had limited opportunity to work directly with the Air Force Research Laboratory and Test Centers, but I am familiar with these organizations from my time working in the Department of Defense, in the private sector, and on the staff of the House Armed Services Committee. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging more deeply with the labs and test centers to ensure they continue to provide the military and economic edge the nation requires.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to assess and enhance the interaction between Air Force labs and test centers and with the acquisition community?

Cooperation and collaboration across technology, requirements, and acquisition organizations is key to the modernization of our Department of the Air Force. If confirmed, I will ensure these activities are aligned to strategic priorities and outcomes, and look to enhance the relationships between these key sectors of the acquisition ecosystem.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the Air Force's labs and test centers can attract and retain a technical workforce with the necessary skills and capabilities?

If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force acquisition and talent management leaders to better understand and address the challenges to recruiting and retaining a highly-skilled technical workforce as well as resourcing necessary education and training to ensure critical skills development.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the Air Force's labs and test centers have the resources they need to acquire and maintain research and testing infrastructure and equipment?

If confirmed, I will conduct a full assessment of the Air Force's labs and work with test and evaluation leaders to best support the vital work of the research labs and testing centers.

Senior Military and Civilian Accountability

If confirmed, what steps would you take to improve individual and organizational

accountability in acquisition management?

Accountability must be directly tied to authority and resources. If confirmed, I will continue to improve accountability and discipline in acquisitions by first ensuring program managers have the appropriate authorities to execute their missions, and second, to ensure transparency in how they execute those authorities.

If confirmed, how would you propose to hold acquisition officers accountable for failing to follow acquisition laws and regulations?

Delegation of responsibility for performance and execution is paramount to the successful development of the next generation Air Force and Space Force. If confirmed, I will keep my Senior Military and Civilian Leaders accountable for their programs and emphasize the importance of training to ensure the acquisition workforce is equipped to make decisions in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations.

What are your views regarding the appropriate standard of accountability for senior civilian and military leaders of the Air Force with regard to acquisition program failures?

Senior leaders expect to be held accountable for their decisions and actions and it is appropriate that they are so treated. Acquisition often presents the challenge that the full implications of decisions become apparent only after several years, at which point decision makers may have moved to other programs and/or duties. However, it is still important for accountability to identify and address bad or improper decisions that lead to program failures. If confirmed, I will work with the Department's leadership to ensure effective accountability in the acquisition system.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that senior leaders of the Air Force under your supervision and oversight are properly held accountable for their actions and performance?

Accountability begins with setting clear performance expectations, ensuring open communication for managing issues as they arise, and then addressing performance that does not meet expected standards. If confirmed, I will work closely with the leaders under my supervision to ensure that expectations are clear and channels of communication are open. I would also hold myself accountable for setting realistic expectations and for enabling those under my supervision in the effective performance of their jobs. I would remain in close communication with the Defense Committees on what programs have been effective and ineffective, as well as corrective actions taken.

Management and Development of the Air Force Acquisition Workforce

The transformation of the armed forces has brought with it an increasing realization of the importance of efficient and forward-thinking management of the acquisition workforce.

What is your vision for the management and development of the Air Force acquisition workforce, including the scientific and technical fields?

A highly-skilled acquisition workforce is critical for managing swift-moving technology and highly technical warfighting system portfolios. If confirmed, I will work with the acquisition workforce leadership to continue emphasizing the pivot to digital engineering and modern software development by leveraging commercial practices and standards.

Do you believe that the Air Force has an appropriately sized acquisition workforce, with the proper skills, to manage into the future? If not, please describe the gaps you perceive to exist and how you would address them.

If confirmed, I will review the current Department's acquisition workforce, including both size and skill composition. A properly sized workforce of appropriately trained and capable civilian and military acquisition professionals is essential to effective acquisition execution.

If confirmed, would you recommend any changes to the statutes, regulations, or policies regarding the Air Force's acquisition workforce? If so, what changes would you recommend?

The key to successful acquisition, technology development, and delivery of capability to the warfighter is ensuring the ability to attract, hire, and retain the best people, particularly highly-skilled technical and acquisition experts. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of the Air Force takes full advantage of the multiple workforce authorities it has been afforded through legislation to date. I understand many of these authorities are temporary or considered pilot programs, and I will work with Congress to extend those which prove their value.

If confirmed, how would you work with the Defense Acquisition University and other educational institutions to improve the education and training of all members of the Air Force acquisition workforce?

If confirmed, I plan to work closely with the Offices of the Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, the Defense Acquisition University, and the Department of the Air Force acquisition leadership to continue to improve the training and development provided to the acquisition workforce at all levels. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's Director, Acquisition Career Management, who manages the Air Force Acquisition Professional Development Program, to ensure the Department of the Air Force's training resources are fully leveraged.

In your judgment, how should decision-makers determine which acquisition tasks are best accomplished by government employees, military personnel, and support contractors?

Government civilians, military personnel, and support contractors all bring different expertise and advantages to the fight. The Department relies heavily on the diversity of perspectives and acumen of the total acquisition workforce. If confirmed, I will ensure that responsibilities and tasks are appropriately assigned based on authorities required and subject matter expertise.

Air Force Defense Capabilities

What is your opinion of the necessity of modernizing Air Force weapons systems in light of current and emerging threats?

I believe the Department must continue to prioritize modernization of capabilities to ensure we as a country keep pace with technological developments and maintain the advantage over potential adversaries, especially peer competitors. If confirmed, I will ensure all modernization efforts are aligned with our strategy and executed in a cost-effective manner.

If confirmed, how would you plan to balance Air Force readiness for today's conflicts and modernization for future conflicts?

Readiness and modernization are both compelling priorities that place significant demands on Department of the Air Force resources. It is my understanding that the Air Force has worked to balance its force structure and properly resource these priorities by identifying its core platforms along with a plan to consolidate around them. If confirmed, I will work to understand the Department's plans to balance its force structure and resource modernization as well as the acquisition system's role in executing these plans. In the role of ASAF(AT&L), if confirmed, I would be an advocate for the modernization resources needed to compete with potential adversaries including peer competitors.

What are the most critical capabilities the Air Force needs to prioritize over the next 10 years in your view?

Nuclear modernization stands out as an essential priority for Air Force acquisition over the next ten years, but there are a wide range of other critical needs. If confirmed, I look forward to taking stock of the core functions the Nation expects of its Air Force and Space Force, relative to threat assessments provided by the intelligence community, and focus efforts on the programs that close the capability gaps. I believe that improving the Department's ability to acquire software and software-intensive systems is a major imperative.

If confirmed, how would you contribute to keeping Air Force acquisition costs under control and schedules on time to ensure the U.S. taxpayer receives the best defense capabilities for their precious and scarce defense dollars?

Program performance is greatly shaped by the key decisions made at the initiation of system development. If confirmed, I would exercise milestone decision authority to ensure that acquisition programs are built upon solid technical and programmatic foundations. If confirmed, I would also work closely with the Program Executive Officers to ensure all acquisition programs are on track to meet cost, schedule, and performance criteria, and take appropriate actions where needed when this is not the case.

If confirmed, how would you plan to meet both Air Force capability and capacity requirements consistent with the Defense Planning Guidance?

I share Secretary Kendall's 'one team, one fight' mindset. If confirmed, I will work with Department of the Air Force leaders to ensure the work of my office is consistent with the National Security Strategic Guidance and National Defense Strategy when issued by the Secretary of Defense.

Nuclear Enterprise

The Air Force is responsible for maintaining and operating two legs of the Nation's strategic nuclear Triad, as well as most U.S. tactical nuclear capabilities and much of the global command, control, and communications architecture needed to direct these forces. The two previous Administrations recognized the importance of modernizing aging U.S. nuclear capabilities, and prioritized investments to support the replacement and recapitalization of Air Force nuclear capabilities.

What is your understanding of the condition of existing Air Force nuclear deterrence capabilities, including delivery systems, command, control, and communications systems, and infrastructure?

It is my understanding that several systems, including the current ground-based leg of the nuclear triad, the Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, are operating decades beyond their initial design life. If confirmed, I will thoroughly review all legacy systems as well as the recapitalization and modernization efforts to replace them.

Do you agree that modernizing all aspects of the nation's nuclear forces is a critical national security priority?

Yes. As Secretary Austin, Secretary Kendall, and Admiral Richard have noted, it is critically important to modernize our nuclear deterrent to ensure it remains credible and secure. In order to properly maintain a nuclear deterrent posture, the United States must continue its efforts to modernize and maintain all the critical elements of the nuclear enterprise. In addition to the issues created by the aging of U.S. systems, the significant investments of potential adversaries in nuclear modernization also drive the needs for modernization of the Department of the Air Force's nuclear capabilities.

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

If confirmed, I will review all of the nuclear modernization programs and work with the Combatant Commands to ensure all efforts are in accordance with national priorities.

Do you support the current program of record for the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent?

I support the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) program. If confirmed, I will carefully review the status of the GBSD program to ensure that it is postured to deliver the deterrence capability that the nation needs on schedule and at affordable cost.

Do you support the current program of record for the Long Range Standoff Weapon?

I support the Long Range Standoff (LRSO) weapon program. If confirmed, I will carefully review the status of the LRSO program to ensure that it is postured to deliver the deterrence capability that the nation needs on schedule and at affordable cost.

Do you support the current program of record for integrating nuclear dual-capability into the F-35A fighter?

I support the plan to integrate nuclear dual-capability into the F-35A fighter. If confirmed, I will carefully review the status of this effort to ensure that it is postured to deliver the deterrence capability that the nation needs on schedule and at affordable cost.

Do you support the current programs of record for modernizing the full range of Air Force nuclear command, control, and communications systems, including the Survivable Airborne Operations Center?

Nuclear Command, Control, and Communication (NC3) is the essential nervous system that connects the nuclear triad. I support modernizing the nation's NC3 system and if confirmed, I will carefully review the NC3 portfolio and status, to include the Survivable Airborne Operations Center, to ensure that we are postured to deliver the NC3 capability that the nation needs on schedule and at affordable cost.

Do you support the current programs of record for modernizing Air Force nuclear force enabling capabilities and supporting infrastructure, such as replacing the Vietnam War Era intercontinental ballistic missile security helicopters and Weapons Generation Facility construction?

I support modernizing the Air Force's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) security helicopters and other support facilities. If confirmed, I will carefully review the ICBM security helicopter replacement program to ensure that it is postured to deliver the security capability that the nation needs on schedule and at affordable cost.

If confirmed, would you continue to prioritize resources for these programs in a manner consistent with importance of the nuclear deterrence mission, which Secretary Austin has stated is "the Department of Defense's highest priority"?

Overhauling the nuclear forces is critical for our national security. As the Secretary Austin and Secretary Kendall have stated, maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent is a top Department of Defense priority. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize resources for these programs in line with the priorities and guidance of Department leaders.

What do you view as the most appropriate contracting strategy for the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent and the Long Range Standoff Weapon?

If confirmed, I will review the contracting strategies for these efforts and share my findings with Department leadership and Congress when requested.

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter

If confirmed, you may be the SAE responsible for the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program.

In your view, does the current management structure of the JSF program provide the optimal alignment of accountability and responsibility? Why or why not?

I am aware Congress has directed the Secretary of Defense to submit a report on potential alternative management structures for the F-35 program. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the analysis conducted in support of this report.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to the current management structure?

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the pros and cons of any potential changes to the F-35 Program Office management structure and would share my views on this matter with Department leadership and with Congress when requested.

What is your view of the proposed strategy for Follow-On Modernization (FOM), dubbed Continuous Capability Development and Delivery (C2D2)? In your view, is the strategy achievable and affordable? Why or why not?

I believe the F-35, as with most other defense systems, will need to be continually adapted to meet emerging threats and evolving operational requirements over its lifecycle. If confirmed, I will work closely with OSD, Air Force, Navy, and F-35 Program Office leaders to determine the best overall strategy for improving the capabilities of the F-35 fleet at affordable cost.

In your view, how will the Air Force afford the sustainment of its planned fleet of 1,763 F-35As?

Sustainment costs are a significant challenge across the Air Force and are particularly important for a relatively new platform like the F-35 where key operational data is only now becoming robust and operations routine. I am aware the Air Force is currently reviewing the estimated sustainment costs of the projected F-35A fleet and, if confirmed, I will emphasize the need, and work hard, to reduce the sustainment costs of the program.

The F-35 is one of the most inexpensive aircraft in the current inventory to operate, but the Air Force continues to publicly question its ability to operate and sustain the planned fleet.

If confirmed, how would you balance Operating and Sustainment costs with the required capability needed to meet the requirements of the National Defense Strategy?

Achieving a balance between capability and cost is important as the Department looks at the threats the U.S. faces today and in the future. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Air Force pilots, maintainers, and commanders to understand the key drivers of F-35 Operating and Sustainment costs and the Department's plans for managing these costs. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the current and proposed F-35 sustainment strategy to ensure the Department is striking the appropriate balance.

What changes would you recommend to the current JSF sustainment strategy to ensure the F-35 is affordable to operate and sustain?

I do not have recommendations regarding the F-35 sustainment strategy at this time. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the current and proposed F-35 sustainment strategy with OSD, industry, and other Services to ensure that the Air Force employs best practices in operating and sustaining the Air Force's F-35 fleet.

B-21 Long Range Strike Bomber

In June 2021, the Acting Secretary of the Air Force reported that the B-21 bomber was an exemplary acquisition program.

If confirmed, what would be your role in the management of the B-21 bomber program to ensure cost, schedule, and performance remain on track?

If confirmed, I will perform active and close oversight of the B-21 program, a critical capability in the Department's nuclear modernization effort, to ensure the B-21 program cost, schedule, and performance stays on track. Also, as the Air Force Service Acquisition Executive and a member on the Department of the Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office Board of Directors, I would support the B-21's Milestone Decision Authority, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, in all major decisions and milestone reviews pertaining to the B-21 Raider program.

The NDAA for FY 2017 directed enhanced reporting of B-21 program cost, schedule, and performance data to GAO for more frequent assessments and focused oversight.

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to assess and implement proactive approaches to increase the transparency of the B-21 program to the American public?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Air Force and the Department of the Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office continue to work closely with the intelligence community to appropriately balance protecting national security information with providing as much transparency as possible to the American public, understanding that the B-21 program classification was established to protect vital technologies and capabilities. If confirmed, I would commit to communicating program progress to Congress and the American public.

Presidential Aircraft Replacement (PAR)

The Air Force's total cost estimate for PAR program development is \$4.8 billion in fiscal year 2021 dollars. After President Trump stated, "[PAR] costs are out of control, more than \$4 billion," the Boeing CEO stated his company will, "get it done for less than that... we're going to make sure that he gets the best capability and that it's done affordably."

If confirmed, how would you ensure the Air Force keeps PAR development costs "less than that," especially as the Air Force signed a development contract with a cost-plus reimbursement structure?

If confirmed, I will review the PAR program in detail, to include its contract and cost structure, working closely with the Defense Acquisition Executive and Air Force leadership, to ensure the program is, and remains, on track to meet cost, schedule, and performance criteria.

Advanced Battle Management System

The Air Force is currently developing its Advanced Battle Management System through a number of short-term efforts to rapidly field capabilities.

What is your view on the approach the Air Force is taking to the development of this essential system?

I understand the importance the Department of the Air Force has placed on leveraging emerging technology to enable significant advances in command and control. I support the ABMS program's objective to lead the way in developing the Department's push toward Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2) in coordination with programs in the other services. I believe it makes sense to leverage the rapid prototyping tools that Congress has provided as part of this effort. I concur with the comments that Secretary Kendall has made about focusing the ABMS program on providing significant capability to operational commanders. There can be no system where it is more essential to serve the needs of operational forces than a command-and-control focused system such as ABMS. If confirmed, I will assess the progress that the ABMS program has made to date and work with Secretary Kendall, the Department's military leadership, and Congress to ensure the program is appropriately focused, resourced, and managed.

In your view, does the Air Force approach properly balance the need for rapid development with the key elements of a business case?

If confirmed, I will assess the ABMS program and evaluate the program's acquisition approach and business case. I would inform the Congress of my conclusions and work with Congress in ensuring the program is well executed.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to the program, if confirmed?

At this time, I do not have recommendations to make on the ABMS program but if confirmed, would keep Congress regularly informed on the program's plans and progress.

If confirmed, how would you ensure integration of the program with the efforts of the other Military Services and Joint Staff efforts to further Joint All Domain Command and Control?

I understand the importance and challenge of integration in any effort across other Military Services and the Joint Staff to fielding warfighting capability. If confirmed, I would work closely with colleagues in the other services to ensure the necessary integration.

Replacement of the E-4B National Airborne Operations Center (NAOC)

The E-4B will be reaching end of life in the late 2020s. This is a unique asset for performing the full range of the Secretary of Defense's title 10 responsibilities, including nuclear command, control, and communications. There is concern that a possible split of the missions of the NAOC among separate future aircraft could cause a loss of functionality

in the E-4B's current mission sets.

What are your views on the current approach to the E-4B replacement program?

It is essential that we continuously modernize and upgrade our nuclear command and control capabilities even as we modernize the other elements of our nuclear deterrent. I understand E-4B serves as the National Airborne Operations Center and is a key component of the National Military Command System for the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If confirmed, I will assess plans to replace this system and work with Department leadership and the Congress to ensure we field all needed command and control capabilities.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that any replacement program retains the capability to perform the full E-4B mission set, now and in the future?

I understand the importance of these nuclear command, control, and communications capabilities, and if confirmed, I will ensure they are modernized and upgraded.

Will you commit that, if confirmed, should you determine at any time that the acquisition of the E-4B replacement will not meet all combatant commander requirements, you would promptly inform the congressional defense committees of your determination?

If confirmed, I will do the required capability analysis of the replacement plan and will inform the Congressional Defense Committees accordingly.

Munitions

Air Force munitions inventories, particularly those of precision guided munitions, have declined significantly due to high operational usage, insufficient procurement, and a requirements system that does not adequately account for the ongoing need to transfer munitions to our allies and for operations short of major combat.

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

If confirmed, I will work to ensure our Combatant Commanders are supported and equipped to meet both current and future threats. I will work with the Secretary and military leadership to ensure that the Department has a robust requirements process for munitions that supports both national interests and those of close international partners.

How would you accelerate the development and production of 5th Generation Weapons to meet the requirements of the National Defense Strategy?

If confirmed, I would work with Congress and Department of the Air Force leadership to ensure the acquisition of the weapons capabilities needed to support the Department's mission including leveraging allied technology contributions where possible. To keep pace with near peer adversaries, I would also support effective management techniques to accelerate acquisition including the use of consolidated program elements where it makes sense to do so.

If confirmed, what steps would you recommend to bolster the munitions industrial base's depth and surge capacity?

The ability to effectively and affordably develop and produce munitions is a core capability of the U.S. industrial base. It is often the case that munitions procurement is cyclical, rising during periods of intense conflict and decreasing when operational tempo slows. If confirmed, I will work to mitigate the impacts such cycles have on industry and develop working solutions that sustain the industrial base while increasing the nation's ability to field innovative new weapon capabilities.

Space

What is your view on the desirability and efficacy of greater competition for the launch of Department of Defense payloads?

I believe competition is critical for affordability and encourages innovation in industry. If confirmed, I expect to continue the DoD's strategy of fostering competition as appropriate, which includes within the launch industrial base.

The NDAA for FY 2017 prohibits the use of Russian rocket engines after December 31, 2022. In your view, how soon could U.S. dependence on the use of Russian rocket engines be ended? Could this dependency be ended even before December 31, 2022, in your view?

It is my understanding that the DoD has already procured its last Atlas V launch service using the Russian RD-180 engine. If confirmed, I will assess launch requirements in order to ensure our dependency ends on time or before, if possible.

In your view, how should the two SAEs in the Department of the Air Force acquisition structure function so as to promote efficacy, while minimizing duplication of effort?

It will be essential for the two SAEs in the Department of the Air Force to work in close partnership to ensure effective acquisition and integration of needed warfighter capabilities. It is my understanding that current planning for the two organizations is postured to promote a close partnership that leverages common functional capabilities to promote efficiency. If confirmed, I will ensure the ASAF(AT&L) organization supports the Space SAE and its organizational construct.

Cyber and Electronic Warfare

Cyber operations cut across many departments and agencies of the Federal Government, from the intelligence community to the Department of Defense, the FBI, Homeland Security, the State Department, the Justice Department, and so on. The cross-cutting nature of these operations, coupled with the complexities associated with the cyber domain, severely challenge the ability of the interagency effort to integrate and collaborate effectively.

Do you believe the Air Force is organized and postured appropriately to address the

full spectrum of cyber threats to the Air Force's air, space, and cyberspace operations?

In general, I believe the Department of Defense needs improvement in its ability to effectively acquire cyber capabilities along with other software-intensive capabilities. If confirmed, I will assess the current posture of the Air Force to address cyber threats and carryout cyber operations, and the effectiveness of the acquisition system in supporting these efforts. I would work with Department leadership and the Congress to implement needed improvements.

What are your recommendations for improving Air Force acquisition of offensive and defense cyber capabilities?

Central to improving the acquisition of cyber capabilities is the ability to work closely with cyber operators to understand their needs and continuously update acquisition efforts to keep pace with those needs. If confirmed, I will review current efforts and work with cyber leaders across the Department to ensure warfighters are armed with the cyber capabilities necessary to compete in this dynamic and ever evolving threat environment.

The Defense Department recently released its electronic warfare (EW) strategy. The Air Force has relied more heavily on Navy and Marine Corps EW capabilities since retiring the EF-111 Raven aircraft in 1998.

In your view, what should be the appropriate Air Force contribution to U.S. EW capabilities?

EW is a vital mission area for U.S. operations and a clear area of focus for potential adversaries. If confirmed, I will assess the Air Force's EW capabilities to ensure they are adapting to meet adversary threats and enable U.S. forces to effectively operate across the electromagnetic spectrum. I would work with colleagues across the Department to integrate Air Force and Space Force EW capabilities to enable joint operations. I would work with the Congress to implement any needed changes in the Air Force's EW capabilities.

Future Tanker Requirements

A high-intensity conflict in INDOPACOM would severely tax the existing Air Force tanking capacity, given the need to maintain simultaneous support to nuclear deterrence operations. In addition to requiring more capacity, pacing threats imply the need for greater survivability of tanker aircraft than converted commercial airliners can readily provide.

What are your views on the priority and affordability of increasing the capacity and survivability of the strategic tanker force?

The tanker force enables the United States to project power, particularly in the Indo-Pacific theater. I understand that recapitalizing the aging tanker fleet has been a priority for the Department of the Air Force to enable continued force projection in an increasingly demanding operational environment. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary and the Air Force Chief of Staff to deliver the tanker capabilities needed by the

warfighter to operate in a complex anti-access/area denial threat environment demanded by the pacing threat.

Are there other missions requiring heavy lift aircraft, such as cargo transportation, that would benefit from a modernized and more survivable platform?

I believe emerging capabilities pose a risk to logistics efforts, including to cargo aircraft. Modern and survivable aircraft are important to maintaining a credible military deterrent. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary and the Air Force Chief of Staff to deliver the airlift capabilities needed by the warfighter to operate in a complex anti-access/area denial threat environment.

Sustaining Air Power and Logistics Support in Great Power Conflicts

The People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) anti-access/area denial strategy includes deploying massive numbers of long-range ground attack missiles and formidable long-range air defense systems and capabilities. The PRC’s ground-attack missiles are intended to threaten the airfields and carriers from which fixed-wing aircraft are launched and recovered, and thereby limit the effectiveness of U.S. 5th generation fighters and limit our ability to conduct re-supply operations using existing transport aircraft.

Broadly speaking, what technical and operational approaches do you think are viable to operate from locations that are within PRC missile ranges?

At this time, I do not have the access required to assess the Department’s analysis of potential technical and operational approaches to these challenges. If confirmed, I will work with Air Force leadership and the Combatant Commands on the required capabilities to ensure the effectiveness of military forces operating within range of adversary forces.

What relative priority and importance do you ascribe to these approaches?

If confirmed, I will work to assess the Department’s approach to these operational challenges and properly prioritize responses.

In your view, should the Air Force examine the potential of runway-independent vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) approaches to resupplying forward forces along the island chains in INDOPACOM?

It is my understanding the Air Force is collaborating with technology start-ups and investing to develop electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft through AFWERX Agility Prime. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this effort and commit to providing information to the Committee on possible applications of this emerging technology.

Energy and Acquisition

How can our acquisition systems better incorporate the use of energy in military platforms, and how, if at all, are assessments of future requirements taking into account energy needs as a key performance parameter?

The Department of the Air Force of the future must lean on commercial industry and emerging technologies to maximize energy in new platforms. I understand existing platforms have historically looked at performance as a parameter and not energy efficiency. If confirmed, I will ensure energy efficiency is considered as a Key Performance Parameter. This not only ensures maximum performance of systems but also reduces the operating costs of our systems. Therefore, this is a critical item when evaluating systems.

Sexual Harassment

In responding to the 2018 DOD Civilian Employee Workplace and Gender Relations survey, 17.7 percent of female and 5.8 percent of male DOD employees indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment and/or gender discrimination by “someone at work” in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.

What is your assessment of the current climate regarding sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the office of the ASAF(AQ)?

I find the results of the 2018 survey, and other related surveys of the Department’s workforce on these issues that I have seen discussed in the media, troubling. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to review the organization’s most recent climate survey and develop an informed assessment of the current climate. I also will ask for an overview of policies and practices in place to foster a safe, inclusive, and professional work environment. If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Austin and other relevant members of Department leadership to ensure that our efforts are fully engaged in all efforts to combat sexual harassment and gender discrimination. I can assure you there will be no tolerance for any form of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind.

If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from an employee of the Office of the ASAF(AQ)?

If confirmed, I would follow the Department of the Air Force reporting guidelines in instances of sexual harassment or discrimination and would take appropriate action based on the findings of any resulting investigations.

Congressional Oversight

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

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 with a simple 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 with a simple 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 with a simple 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 with a simple 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 with a simple 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 with a simple 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 with a simple yes or no.

Yes

