

Advance Policy Questions for Jo Ann Rooney
Nominee for Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the combatant commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the Military Departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the combatant commanders.

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

Not at this time.

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

N/A.

Qualifications

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

My broad professional experiences, educational credentials and lifelong commitment to service provide a solid background for me to recognize and contribute positively to myriads of formidable challenges and tasks facing the DoD and, in particular, Personnel and Readiness. During my eight years as president of a doctoral level university, we successfully addressed not only difficult financial challenges, enabling the institution to realize significant operating surpluses after years of deficits, but developed an innovative educational model that directly impacted retention, graduation rates and student success. By offering courses in a variety of variety of delivery modalities, including blocks sessions, accelerated, low residency and traditional semesters, we were able to deliver a unique, sustainable solution to the educational needs of traditional, non-traditional, and graduate students while at the same time creating a new business and human resource model for the university. My work on the JHSMH health care system Board of Trustees in a leadership role, has allowed me to be directly involved in developing policies and procedures impacting patient care, safety, operating efficiencies and human resource policies across a system encompassing ambulatory, community hospitals and tertiary care facilities, an inpatient psychiatric hospital, a comprehensive rehabilitation facility and clinical research. My current work as president of Mount Ida College and being a member of the Board of Trustees of Regis University have given me additional opportunities to lead an organization through a period of significant transition and be at the forefront of educational innovation. Other corporate and civic engagements have enabled me to lead organizations through dynamic structural and financial changes enabling them to better serve their constituents.

My many years of experience outside of post secondary education in tax law, business and finance provide me with a solid foundation and breadth of knowledge to deal with complex legal, financial and policy issues.

Major Challenges

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness?

There are a number of challenges facing P&R to insure the human resource systems for civilian and military personnel, active and reserve , provide the level of training and high level skills needed to support current as well as potential future engagements. This includes evaluating and providing appropriate compensation and personnel policies commensurate with the skills and sacrifices being made by those in service to our country; ensuring quality, world class health care, including mental health support, to ill and injured service members; and, providing comprehensive support services to families of service members. In addition, there needs to be ongoing evaluation of current policies and procedures to identify opportunities for enhanced efficiencies without impacting service delivery.

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

Although I do not have specific recommendations at this time, if confirmed, I would review the plans currently in place to address these challenges and determine what modifications, if any, need to be made. I would look for opportunities to enhance communication and collaboration with my colleagues throughout the DoD to improve effectiveness in delivering programs supporting Personnel and Readiness.

Duties

Section 136a of Title 10, United States Code, provides that the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall assist the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in the performance of his or her duties.

Assuming you are confirmed, what duties do you expect to be assigned to you?

If confirmed, I expect the Secretary of Defense to assign me my duties, through the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, functions, and responsibilities currently mandated by law and specified in the Department's directives for the position of Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

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

- **The Secretary of Defense**

If confirmed, I would serve the Secretary as his advisor and advocate for the management of human resources in the Department.

- **The Deputy Secretary of Defense**

If confirmed, I would serve the Deputy Secretary as his advisor and advocate for the management of human resources in the Department.

- **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs**

If I am confirmed, ASD(HA) would be my principal advisor for all DoD health policies, programs, and force health protection activities.

- **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs**

If I am confirmed, ASD(RA) would be my principal advisor for all Reserve component matters in the Department of Defense.

- **The Department of Defense General Counsel**

If confirmed, I would anticipate regular communication, coordination of actions, and exchange of views with the General Counsel and the attorneys assigned to focus on personnel and readiness policy matters. I would expect to seek and follow the advice of the General Counsel on legal, policy, and procedural matters pertaining to the policies promulgated from the USD(P&R).

- **The Department of Defense Inspector General**

The DoD Inspector General is in charge of promoting integrity, accountability, and improvement of Department of Defense personnel, programs, and operations to support the Department's mission and serve the public interest. If confirmed, I would fully assist in any investigations or issues that relate to personnel and readiness.

- **The Service Secretaries**

If confirmed, I would work closely with the Secretaries of the Military Departments on all matters relating to the management and well-being of military and civilian personnel in the DoD Total Force structure.

- **The Chief of the National Guard Bureau**

The Chief, National Guard Bureau is a principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on matters involving non-federalized National Guard forces and on other matters as determined by the Secretary of Defense. If

confirmed, I would work through ASD(RA) to ensure effective integration of National Guard capabilities into a cohesive Total Force.

- **The Assistant Secretaries for Manpower and Reserve Affairs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force**

If confirmed, I would work with these officials as partners in carrying out the human resource obligations of the services.

- **The Deputy Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force for Personnel, the Chief of Naval Personnel, and the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs**

If confirmed, I would work closely with these officers to ensure that DoD attracts, motivates and retains the quality people it needs.

- **The combatant commanders**

If confirmed, I would foster mutually respectful working relationships that translate into providing the Total Force capabilities needed to complete combat missions.

- **The Joint Staff, particularly the Director for Manpower and Personnel (J-1)**

If confirmed, I would seek a close coordinating relationship and open channels of communication with the Joint Staff regarding personnel and readiness policy issues.

Systems and Support for Wounded Warriors

Service members who are wounded and injured performing duties in Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn deserve the highest priority from their Service for support services, healing and recuperation, rehabilitation, evaluation for return to duty, successful transition from active duty if required, and continuing support beyond retirement or discharge. Yet, as the revelations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in 2007 illustrated, the Services were not prepared to meet the needs of returning wounded service members. Despite the enactment of legislation and renewed emphasis, many challenges remain.

What is your assessment of the progress made to date by the Department of Defense and the Services to improve the care, management, and transition of seriously ill and injured servicemembers and their families?

While I do not have enough information at this time to make a full assessment, I am aware that medical, benefit and transitional assistance improvements have been made since 2007 to ensure our wounded, ill and injured Service members receive the care and support necessary to either return to active duty or to civilian life. However, it is a

continually evolving process with ever increasing demands and the Department must regularly evaluate its wounded warrior programs and constantly strive to improve.

What are the strengths upon which continued progress should be based?

A significant strength, in my opinion, is the highest level priority the Department has placed on caring for our wounded warriors and their families. The sustained focus and assessment of the needs of the wounded, ill and injured Service members will allow the Department to continue its progress in caring for these members.

What are the weaknesses that need to be corrected?

The Department should better identify opportunities for improvement by putting in place a proactive assessment and evaluation process that corrects weaknesses.

If confirmed, are there additional strategies and resources that you would pursue to increase support for wounded service members and their families, and to monitor their progress in returning to duty or to civilian life?

Although I do not have any specific recommendations at this time, if confirmed, I would ensure that current programs and policies are regularly evaluated and outcome assessments conducted with adjustments made, as needed, to ensure necessary resources are in place to take care of our recovering Wounded Warriors and their families.

Studies conducted as a result of the revelations at WRAMC pointed to the need to reform the disability evaluation system (DES). A DES pilot program, and now an Integrated DES program, has been established to improve processing of service members.

What is your assessment of the need to further streamline and improve the Integrated DES?

There are always opportunities for improvements. I believe the Department has an obligation to our Service members participating in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (DES) to proactively evaluate the program and proactively apply lessons learned.

If confirmed, how will you address any need for change?

The Integrated DES is a collaborative effort between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs. If confirmed, I would work in close collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs to continually evaluate the process and apply unified solutions to correct identified deficiencies.

Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Collaboration

Secretary of Defense Gates and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Shinseki have pledged their support for improving and increasing collaboration between the respective departments to support military service members as they transition to veteran status, in areas of health and mental health care, disability evaluation and compensation.

If confirmed, what role would you expect to play in ensuring that the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs achieve the Administration's objectives in DoD and VA collaboration?

If confirmed, I will be intimately involved in the collaborative efforts between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs. I share the vision of a model interagency partnership that delivers seamless, high quality and cost-effective services to beneficiaries and value to our nation. I will do my utmost to provide leadership that enables the interagency effort and facilitate the completion of those goals. Together with USD(P&R), I will ensure that DoD continues to work closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that transitioning Service members receive the benefits, care and transition support they deserve.

Disability Severance Pay

Section 1646 of the Wounded Warrior Act, included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, enhanced severance pay and removed a requirement that severance pay be deducted from VA disability compensation for service members discharged for disabilities rated less than 30% incurred in the line-of-duty in a combat zone or incurred during the performance of duty in combat-related operation as designated by the Secretary of Defense. In adopting this provision, Congress relied on the existing definition of a combat-related disability contained in 10 U.S.C. 1413a(e)). Rather than using the definition intended by Congress, the Department of Defense adopted a more limited definition of combat-related operations, requiring that the disability be incurred during participation in armed conflict.

If confirmed, will you reconsider the Department's definition of combat-related operations for purposes of awarding enhanced severance pay and deduction of severance pay from VA disability compensation?

Although I do not know the details, it is my understanding that a review of the policy implementing Section 1646 of the Wounded Warrior Act is currently underway. If confirmed, I would look into the status of this review to ensure that any policy change relating to the definition, if warranted, meets the intent of Congress and is consistent with the governing statute.

Homosexual Conduct Policy

The current Homosexual Conduct Policy, commonly referred to as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” went into effect in February 1994 after months of congressional hearings and debate resulting in the enactment of a Federal statute. Although there have been some changes in how this policy has been implemented, the basic policy has not changed. President Obama made it clear that he intends to work with the military and with Congress to repeal the policy. Following their February 2, 2010 testimony recommending repeal of the policy, Secretary of Defense Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen, initiated a high-level, comprehensive review of the impact of repealing the current law.

What is your view on repealing or changing this policy?

If confirmed, I would assist the USD(P&R) to work closely with the Military Department Secretaries and the Service Chiefs to provide the Secretary of Defense the best advice possible on the way forward regarding this issue.

If confirmed, what role, if any, would you anticipate playing in efforts to repeal or change this policy?

If Congress changes the law and if confirmed, I would assist USD(P&R) in leading the implementation of the change in the policy within DoD. I would work closely with the Services to ensure the revising of this policy is done in a way that maintains our highest state of military readiness.

Religious Guidelines

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

The Department does not endorse the establishment of religion, but it does guarantee its free exercise. The Department and the Military Services ensure Service members may observe the tenets of their respective religions, including the right to hold no specific religious conviction or affiliation.

In your view, do these policies appropriately accommodate religious practices that require adherents to wear particular articles of faith?

My understanding is that wearing particular articles of faith are permissible so long as the articles are neat and conservative; do not negatively impact the readiness, good order or discipline of the unit; and the mission is not jeopardized. If confirmed, I would continue to monitor and evaluate this issue.

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

Yes.

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

It is my understanding that the military chaplaincy has done an admirable job in ministering amidst the pluralistic environment of the military. Even as chaplains express their faith, they and their commanders also are asked to be as inclusive as possible when ministering to an interfaith group. I believe that as a group, military chaplains work to balance these responsibilities well.

The Independent Review Related to Fort Hood observed that "DOD policy regarding religious accommodation lacks the clarity necessary to help commanders distinguish appropriate religious practices from those that might indicate a potential for violence or self-radicalization." Recommendation 2.7 of the Final Recommendations urged the Department to update policy to clarify guidelines for religious accommodation and Recommendation 2.8 urged the Department to task the Defense Science Board to "undertake a multi-disciplinary study to identify behavioral indicators of violence and self-radicalization...".

What is your view of this recommendation?

I cannot make an assessment at this time, but if confirmed, evaluating the adequacy of current policies concerning the safeguarding of our Service members would be a top priority.

Will you work to ensure that a scientific fact-based approach to understanding radicalization will drive the Department's relevant policies on this topic?

If confirmed, I would review the plans that are currently in place to address these challenges, and determine what, if any, changes should be made to them to address this critical issue. I would intend to collaborate with my colleagues in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the military services, and the Joint Staff in charting the right course for the Department.

Protection of U.S. Forces Against Internal Threats

One year ago, 13 people were slain and scores wounded during a shooting rampage allegedly carried out by a U. S. Army medical corps officer. A Department of Defense review of the attack released in January 2010 concluded that the Department was poorly prepared to defend against internal threats, including radicalization among military personnel.

What is your assessment of the lessons learned from the tragedy at Ft Hood?

It is my understanding that while the first responders and initial response teams were well prepared to react to this incident, the proceeding warning signals were not properly recognized and therefore, this tragedy was not prevented. If confirmed, I would work with the USD (P&R) to gain a comprehensive understanding of the lessons learned, corrective actions taken and the plan moving forward in order to increase our force protection on our installations.

If confirmed, what strategies would you advocate to prevent and mitigate such threats in the future?

If confirmed, I would work closely with DoD leadership to strengthen the areas identified by the Ft Hood Independent Review to include mitigating violence in workplace, ensuring commanders/supervisors have access to appropriate personnel records, and integrating and strengthening force protection policies, Furthermore, I will work closely with our medical community to give commanders a better understanding of how to identify violence indicators.

Muslims in the U. S. Military

Are you concerned that the attack at Ft. Hood could lead to harassment or even violence against Muslims in the military?

Every Service member has a right to practice their religious faith without fear of persecution or retribution. If confirmed, I will review policies to ensure that they are adequate to provide physical and emotional safety from religious harassment and will take appropriate action if needed.

If confirmed, what strategies would you advocate to address the potential for harassment or violence against Muslims in the U. S. military?

In order to safeguard the rights of Service members, there must be both formal and informal feedback procedures that quickly identify and assess any harassment, should it occur. Responses to grievances, or any identified shortcomings in command climate assessments, must be quick, thoughtful, and effective. If confirmed, I would review the viability of these feedback systems, and take measures to correct them as appropriate.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

The Department has in recent years developed comprehensive policies and procedures to improve the prevention of and response to incidents of sexual assaults, including providing appropriate resources and care for victims of sexual assault. However, numerous incidents of sexual misconduct involving military personnel in combat areas of operation are still being reported. Victims and their advocates claim that they are victimized twice: first by attackers in their own ranks and then by unresponsive or inadequate treatment for the victim. They assert that their command fails to respond appropriately with basic medical services and with an adequate investigation of their charges followed by a failure to hold assailants accountable.

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

It is my understanding that the Department has put considerable effort into the development of policies and programs designed to address sexual assault. If confirmed, I would review those policies to ensure the Department provides the appropriate care to victims and hold offenders accountable.

What problems, if any, are you aware of in the manner in which this new confidential reporting procedure has been put into operation?

I have not been informed of any specific problems in the implementation of the confidential reporting option, called restricted reporting. I am aware that the restriction of no investigation when a victim chooses restricted reporting has concerned commanders responsible for the actions of their unit members. I believe that the Department must find a balance between victim care and offender accountability but of the utmost importance is that victims come forward and obtain support they need following an assault.

What is your view of the steps the Services have taken to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in combat zones, including assaults against contractor personnel?

I do not have enough information to make a detailed assessment at this time, but I am aware the Department has focused on educating service members deploying to combat zones about how to prevent sexual assault and what to do should it occur. That said, it has been made clear to me that if anyone shows up at a military treatment facility following a sexual assault, he or she will receive care.

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

I know that all Services have been directed to establish guidelines for a 24-hour, 7-day per week sexual assault response capability for all locations, including deployed areas.

At this time, I cannot make an assessment of the effectiveness of those guidelines, but if confirmed, evaluating the adequacy of training and resources allocated to sexual assault investigation and response would be a top priority.

What is your view of the willingness and ability of the Services to hold assailants accountable for their acts?

I strongly believe that anyone who commits a sexual assault in the military needs to know that they will be held accountable. That is how the DoD removes perpetrators from our ranks and, at the same time, show victims that taking the difficult step of assisting with an investigation will help their fellow Service members. I understand that the Services are working towards increasing the subject matter expertise of those investigating and prosecuting sexual assaults. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that accountability remains a key priority.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to ensure senior level direction and oversight of efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assaults?

Sexual assault reaches across the Department, and as such, outreach and accountability efforts need to have the same reach. If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department has the correct structure in place to engage the Departmental leadership, and the leadership of other agencies such as the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, and Justice, in planning, guiding, and evaluating our efforts.

Service Academies

What do you consider to be the policy and procedural elements that must be in place at each of the service academies in order to prevent and respond appropriately to sexual assaults and sexual harassment and to ensure essential oversight?

I believe the Department's sexual assault and sexual harassment policies provide a foundation for combating sexual misconduct at the service academies. There must be policies and procedures that encourage victims to come forward and that hold offenders accountable, as well as effective training programs. It is my understanding that the academies have institutionalized prevention and response programs. I further understand that the Department reviews the efforts of the academies annually. If confirmed, I would continue that oversight and determine whether additional measures need to be taken.

What is your assessment of measures taken at the service academies to ensure religious tolerance and respect, and to prevent sexual assaults and sexual harassment?

Regarding religious tolerance, I do not have enough information to make an assessment at this time. I believe it is imperative that leaders, at all levels, must continue to ensure

that every member of the DoD respects the spirit and intent of laws and policies surrounding the free exercise of religion.

On the topic of sexual assault, it is my understanding that the academies have institutionalized prevention and response programs. I further understand that the Department reviews the efforts of the academies annually. If confirmed, I would continue that oversight and determine whether additional measures need to be taken.

Women in the Military

The Navy recently opened service on submarines to women and the Marine Corps recently expanded service opportunities for women in intelligence specialties. The issue of the appropriate combat role of women in the armed forces is a matter of continuing interest to Congress and the American public.

Do you believe additional specialties should be opened up for service by women?

In my opinion, the Department of Defense has sufficient flexibility under current law to make assignment policy for women if needed. The DoD should continue to monitor combat needs as Services recommend expanding deployment roles for women.

Do you believe any changes in the current policy regarding women in combat are needed?

I am not aware of any changes necessary at this time. It is my understanding that Department policy and practices are reviewed on a recurring basis to ensure compliance and effective use of manpower. If confirmed, I would take my responsibility to review each proposed policy change very seriously and ensure changes to existing policy move forward only when accompanied by a thorough plan for implementation.

Rising Costs of Medical Care

In testimony presented to Congress in February, 2009, the Assistant Director of the Congressional Budget Office asserted that “medical funding accounts for more than one-third of the growth projected for operations and support funding between 2009 and 2026.” In April, 2009, Secretary Gates told an audience at Maxwell Air Force Base that “health care is eating the Department alive.”

What is your assessment of the long-term impact of rising medical costs on future Department of Defense plans?

I am informed that government estimates indicate these costs could rise to over 10 percent of the DoD budget in just a few years. If confirmed, I would research means to

ensure that DoD provides quality care, and it does so in the most cost-effective way that provides the best value for our service members and their families.

If confirmed, what actions would you initiate or recommend to the Secretary of Defense to mitigate the effect of such costs on the DOD top-line?

I cannot make specific recommendations at this time. However, if confirmed, I would work closely with our healthcare leadership in DoD to examine every opportunity to assure military beneficiaries are provided the highest quality care possible while managing cost growth and to provide that advice to the Secretary of Defense.

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

I believe that to control the costs of military health care, DoD needs to research all possibilities. If confirmed, I would examine the costs of the direct care facilities, determining where efficiencies can be gained and investing wisely in infrastructure requirements. I would look at the efficiencies in procuring health care services in the civilian market, and, I would evaluate the benefit structure to see where reasonable changes could occur. In the long term, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and prevention among our beneficiaries will also help greatly reduce the demand for health services.

Personnel and Entitlement Costs

In addition to health care costs, personnel and related entitlement spending continues to grow and is becoming an ever increasing portion of the DOD budget.

What actions do you believe can be taken to control the rise in personnel costs and entitlement spending?

I am aware that personnel-related costs are consuming an increasing proportion of the Department's finite resources. At the same time, I believe DoD cannot fail to adequately provide for and support our all-volunteer-force and their families. This includes maintaining a sufficient rotation base for both our active and reserve personnel. If confirmed, I know achieving a "right-sized" mix of active duty, reserve, civilians and contractors is imperative. A key part of this challenge will be striking the optimum balance between personnel, recapitalization, and operational and support costs, while ensuring that related entitlements are appropriate and well-reasoned.

In your view, can the Department and the Services efficiently manage the use of bonuses and special pays to place high quality recruits in the right jobs without paying more than the Department needs to pay, or can afford to pay, for others?

Although I do not have a detailed knowledge of the Department's and the Services' special pay programs at this time, I believe the use of targeted pays and bonuses can be effectively and efficiently used in recruiting and retaining specific skills and specialties.

Mental Health

Senior military leaders, including the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, increasingly recognize the need to reduce the stigma for military personnel and their families and veterans in seeking mental health care.

If confirmed, what role would you expect to play in expanding breadth of this message to military personnel and their families?

If confirmed, I would continue to ensure that existing DoD efforts to combat stigma toward help-seeking behavior among Service members be supported and, if necessary, would expand the breadth of the outreach efforts. I fully support the Department's efforts to improve health and mental health care services, and reduce the stigma of mental health care.

Suicide Prevention

The numbers of suicides in each of the services has increased in recent years. The Army released a report in June 2010 that analyzed the causes of its growing suicide rate and examined disturbing trends in drug use, disciplinary offenses, and high risk behaviors.

If confirmed, what role would you play in shaping Department of Defense policies to help prevent suicides both in garrison and in theater and to increase the resiliency of all service members and their families?

I believe DoD must support a culture to promote health and resiliency, and reduce high risk behavior in the force. This requires both military and civilian leaders to be active participants in this effort and have essential roles in providing the requisite support. If confirmed, I will assure that proper emphasis on suicide prevention is placed through training, reducing stigma, increasing resilience, and increasing access to care. I will focus on providing standardization, integration of best practices, and general oversight, serving as a change agent and providing guidance from which the Services can operate their suicide prevention programs.

What is your understanding of the action that the Office of the Secretary of Defense taking in response to the June 2010 Army report, and the data in Chapter 3 in particular?

The Army released a report in June 2010 that analyzed the causes of its growing suicide rate and examined disturbing trends in drug use, disciplinary offenses, and high risk behaviors. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Army is enforcing existing regulations and

policies and has implemented risk mitigation strategies in suicide prevention for the substance abuse and behavior issues (disciplinary and high risk) they identified. In addition, I would support ongoing assessment and monitoring of the impact of these policies and regulations on the suicide rate.

Readiness Responsibilities

Section 136 of title 10, United States Code, gives the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness certain responsibilities for military readiness. Some important issues that affect military readiness, however, such as logistics and materiel readiness, have been placed under the jurisdiction of the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics.

What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in ensuring military readiness?

I view the responsibilities of the USD(P&R) as to advise the Secretary on all matters related to readiness. These include oversight of civilian and military training and education, personnel and medical readiness, and the analysis of broad mission assessments from the Combatant Commanders regarding the readiness of key units in support of the Secretary's deployment decisions. As for readiness responsibilities across the Department, if confirmed, I will work collaboratively with my colleagues in OSD, the Joint Staff and the Services to ensure our forces are ready to execute the National Military Strategy, and I will sustain the readiness synergism and linkages that exist today across the Department, the other Federal Agencies, our coalition partners and local governments and communities.

What are the most critical objectives to improve readiness reporting and monitoring of the military forces, and if confirmed, how would you work with the Military Departments as well as other Office of the Secretary of Defense offices to achieve them?

I believe the Department needs accurate and timely readiness assessments of our military forces. These are the gauge by which DoD should measure our ability to execute the missions assigned by the President and Secretary of Defense. Accurate assessments allow the Department to effectively plan and manage its forces, and signal where there are capability shortfalls or assets are needed. It is my understanding that the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS) provides the means to capture these assessments from our military commanders, and provides a holistic and important view of the Department's readiness to the senior leadership. If confirmed, I would personally review DRRS implementation to ensure the Department is meeting the needs of the senior leadership and a unity of effort across the Department to drive this important effort to a fully operational capability.

Active-Duty End Strength

In the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, Congress authorized higher active duty end strengths for all the services.

In your view, what is the appropriate active duty end strength for each of the Services?

While I cannot make an informed assessment at this time, I believe strongly that our forces, both active and reserve, must be large enough to not only satisfy deployed demands, but also have a rotation base that recognizes the personal needs of our volunteers and their families. If confirmed, I would devote considerable attention to this important issue.

What challenges will the Services face in maintaining these higher end strengths?

The foremost challenge will be monitoring and responding to retention and recruiting trends, especially as the economy improves.

Medical Personnel Recruiting and Retention

The Department of Defense continues to face significant shortages in critically needed military medical personnel in both the active and reserve components. The Committee is concerned that growing medical support requirements will compound the already serious challenges faced in recruitment and retention of military medical, dental, nurse, and behavioral health personnel.

What is your understanding of the shortages of health care professionals currently being experienced in the Department of Defense and the sufficiency of the plans to meet recruiting and retention goals?

Regarding military healthcare service members, it is my understanding the current overall manning of the health professions is at or above manning requirements. If confirmed one of my goals will be to improve the recruitment and retention of health professional specialties which currently fall below manning requirements. To retain our health professionals, Congress has provided the Department of Defense broad authority to provide special and incentive pays for all health professional officers. I believe there is an increased need for civilian healthcare providers and DoD must remain competitive to recruit from the civilian labor market.

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

In regard to legislative and policy initiatives for the military services, I do not have any specific recommendations at this time. However, I believe there may be a need for more flexible recruiting and retention strategies such as the recently granted authority to use bonuses and special pays as needed to recruit, hire and retain medical specialties.

Dwell Time

Even though dwell time is improving as our forces draw down in Iraq, many active duty military members are still not experiencing the ideal dwell time of 2 years at home for every year deployed.

In your view, when will the active component dwell time goal be met?

From my perspective the largest impact to dwell time will come from the balance of the drawdown in Iraq and the President's decisions regarding Afghanistan. Increases in end-strength for the Army, the Marine Corps, and Special Operations forces over the past several years should translate into dwell times increasing.

The Iraq drawdown will also serve to increase the dwell time for our units as fewer forces will need to be deployed. How much this will increase dwell time depends on the level of forces needed for Afghanistan. In all cases, however, DoD must carefully manage our forces across the Department. This involves careful assessment of where and when military forces are needed, and how to structure the force to best meet the projected demands.

In your view, would additional Army end strength in 2011 or 2012 improve dwell time ratios and reduce stress on the force, and if so, what numbers of active and reserve component members would be necessary?

I do not have enough information to make an assessment at this time. I defer to the analysis of the Quadrennial Defense Review as to whether current end strength increases are sufficient in light of anticipated strategy and projected needs

Mobilization and Demobilization of National Guard and Reserves

Over the past 9 years, the National Guard and Reserves have experienced their largest and most sustained employment since World War II. Numerous problems arose in the planning and procedures for mobilization and demobilization, e.g., inadequate health screening and medical readiness, monitoring, antiquated pay systems, limited transition assistance programs upon demobilization, and lack of access to members of the Individual Ready Reserve. Reserve force management policies and systems have been characterized in the past as "inefficient and rigid" and readiness levels have been adversely affected by equipment stay-behind, cross-leveling, and reset policies.

What is your assessment of advances made in improving reserve component mobilization and demobilization procedures, and in what areas do problems still exist?

It is my understanding that the Department has focused on increasing the alert and mobilization times prior to mobilization; DoD needs to ensure that we provide predictability to service members, their families and employers. If confirmed, I would continue the efforts of the Department to monitor this issue closely, as we know that predictability is a major factor for all those affected, and I believe strongly that National Guard and Reserve personnel deserve first-class mobilization and demobilization procedures, health screening, and transition assistance programs.

What do you consider to be the most significant enduring changes to the administration of the reserve components aimed at ensuring their readiness for future mobilization requirements?

It is my understanding the most significant enduring changes are in the implementation of service force generation plans, which have been created to provide a defined cycle to prepare reserve component units for employment as an operational force. This enables units to train for a mission prior to mobilization and deploy and redeploy on a predictable time line.

Do you see a need to modify current statutory authorities for the mobilization of members of the National Guard and Reserves?

If confirmed, I would review existing authorities and proposed legislation to ensure that the Department has appropriate authorities in light of the role of the Guard and Reserves in our force deployment plans.

Medical and Dental Readiness of the Reserves

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

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

It is essential for DoD and all the Service components to have a single repository of data which accurately reflects the medical and dental readiness of the Reserve components. If confirmed, I will work with the Assistant Secretaries of Defense for Health Affairs and Reserve Affairs in bringing the appropriate parties, including information management, medical, and line personnel, together to examine the reporting processes in detail, to agree on the necessary definitions of what and who should be monitored, and to fill any gaps in the reporting processes.

How would you improve upon the Department's ability to produce a healthy and fit reserve component?

If confirmed, I will closely examine the significant progress in improvement that I understand has been made in medical and dental readiness for the Reserve component and identify what still needs to be accomplished to achieve the goal of a healthy and fit Reserve component force.

Military Quality of Life

In January 2009, the Department published its second Quadrennial Quality of Life Review, which focused on the importance of key quality of life factors for military families, such as family support, child care, education, health care and morale, welfare and recreation services.

How do you perceive the relationship between military recruitment and retention and quality of life improvements and your own top priorities for the armed forces?

Quality of life efforts impact the recruitment and retention of military personnel and are key to maintaining the all-volunteer-force. A service member's satisfaction with various aspects of military life as well as the service member's family experience influences members' decision to reenlist. If confirmed, I would review how effectively our programs meet the needs of service members and their families, and ensure that they are contributing positively to recruitment and retention.

If confirmed, what further enhancements to military quality of life would you consider a priority, and how do you envision working with the Services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress to achieve them?

I would aggressively pursue the Department's priorities to promote the well being and resilience of Service members and their families. I would focus on understanding the needs of our force and their families and expand assistance such as access to counseling, fitness opportunities, and child care support to help minimize stress on the force. The Department leadership should work together with advocacy groups and Congress to efficiently close gaps and reduce overlaps in programs and to communicate effectively to ensure that families know how to access available support when they need it.

Family Support

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

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for service members and their families, and, if confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced?

If confirmed, I would make family readiness issues one of my top priorities. I would support, prioritize and appropriately resource quality physical and mental healthcare, spouse career assistance, childcare, other elements of dependent support, and education needs.

How would you address these family readiness needs in light of global rebasing, BRAC, deployments, and growth in end strength?

If confirmed, I would continue the Department's current approach to identify and address family readiness needs, to gather information from the Services, commands, Service members and families, professional organizations, and researchers about how to best prepare families for rebasing, BRAC, deployments and other stressful aspects of military life.

If confirmed, how would you ensure support to reserve component families related to mobilization, deployment and family readiness, as well as to active duty families who do not reside near a military installation?

If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department's Yellow Ribbon Program is properly focused and funded to address the issues faced by members of the Active, Guard, and Reserve, and their families. The program should provide information, access, referrals, and outreach to military members and their families. This needs to be underwritten by a coordinated, community based network of care encompassing DoD, VA, state, local, non-profit and private providers. My goal would be to provide a full range of services for Active, Guard, and Reserve members and their families.

If confirmed, what additional steps will you take to enhance family support?

If confirmed, I would encourage the implementation of flexible family support programs that meet the needs of our service members and their families, whether they live on military installations, near military installations, or far from military installations.

Access to Health Care

One of the major concerns for military family members is access to health care. Military spouses tell us that the health care system is inundated, and those stationed in more remote areas may not have access to adequate care.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure complete access to health care for the families of service members?

I agree that access to care for family members is an important concern and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure appropriate access to care is a key feature of our TRICARE program and will continually explore ways to ensure all beneficiaries are provided the appropriate level of care within the established TRICARE Access to Care Standards.

Office of Community Support for Military Families With Special Needs

In the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (section 563), Congress required the establishment of an Office of Community Support for Military Families With Special Needs within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. The purpose of this office is to enhance and improve Department of Defense support for military families with special needs, be they educational or medical in nature.

In your view, what should be the priorities of this Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs?

I believe the priorities of this office include medical and educational programs to strengthen military families with special needs. If confirmed, I would support the critical efforts of this office to establish consistent policy and monitor its implementation across the services. I would identify programs, already in existence that can provide special services to military families.

If confirmed, how would you ensure outreach to those military families with special needs dependents so they are able to get the support they need?

If confirmed, I would ensure increased communication efforts to reach families with special needs through the use of webinars, social media outlets, base newspapers, commissaries and exchanges, childcare centers and youth facilities, DoD schools and a variety of DoD and services websites. In addition, I would emphasize collaboration with civilian community resources.

MyCAA Program

The Department established the MyCAA program, a demonstration project that provides military spouses with funds through “career advancement accounts” to help enable them to pursue portable careers. In February of 2010 the Department became overwhelmed by the numbers of program applicants, subsequently ran out of funds, and then temporarily halted the program. The program has now re-started, but the funds, as well as the number of spouses who would be eligible for the program, will be more limited.

What is your understanding of the current focus and objectives of the program?

I believe the objective of the MyCAA program is to ensure that military spouses have opportunities to pursue and sustain a career while supporting their Service members. It

is my understanding that the current MyCAA is available only to spouses of active duty members in the pay grades of E1-E5, W1-W2, and O1-O2. MyCAA is restricted to \$4000 per eligible spouse and must be used over a three-year period for an Associate's degree, a license or a credential leading to a portable career. I believe these financial parameters will allow the Department to sustain the program. It is my understanding that DoD continues to offer robust career counseling programs to all our spouses.

If confirmed, what would be your objectives for the MyCAA program and other spouse employment initiatives or programs?

My objective would be to assist, support and empower them in making informed decisions through offering them an opportunity to obtain comprehensive information on high-growth, high-demand, portable occupations that can move with them as they relocate. This would include occupational information on education, license and credential requirements, how to access other Federal, state and private opportunities for financial assistance in achieving these requirements, as well as understanding earnings potential. I would also promote the outstanding pipeline of talent that military spouses represent to America's employers. Military spouses are talented, diverse, motivated and bring strong values to the workplace

Medical Research Programs

What do you see as the highest priority medical research investment areas for the Department of Defense?

I believe the highest priorities are to address critical research capability gaps related to the treatment and recovery of wounded warriors, such as the diagnosis and treatment of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other elements of combat related stress, development of improved prosthetics, treatment of eye injury, and other deployment and battlefield-related injuries.

How will you assess the amount of investment made in these research areas to determine if they are sufficient to meet DOD goals and requirements?

If confirmed, I would review the current research portfolio to ensure it prioritizes and resources research appropriate to the requirements of the Department.

How will you ensure that DOD medical research efforts are well coordinated with similar research programs within the private sector, academia, the Services, DARPA, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Institutes of Health?

If confirmed, I would support coordination efforts to ensure that research is being conducted jointly, building on, and partnering with industry, academia, and other government agencies to ensure the greatest return to our warfighters. I am aware that

joint program committees have been established to engage with federal partners to ensure that our research reflects the best interests of our service personnel.

How will you ensure that new medical technologies (including drugs and vaccines) are independently and adequately tested before their use by DOD organizations and personnel?

If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department applies the highest standards of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure new medical technologies, drugs, and vaccines are safe and effective before they are adopted for use in the Department.

There have been growing privacy and security concerns raised about the use of on-line social networks for medical research purposes.

How will you ensure that the increasing use of social networking media for medical research purposes will protect the privacy and security of patients?

If confirmed, I would ensure active application of the Department's policy, which states that the rights and welfare of human subjects in research supported or conducted by the DoD components will be protected. This protection is based on the ethical principles of respect for persons and beneficence, and encompasses requirements to obtain informed consent and to do no harm. In implementing this policy, the Department will adhere to the applicable statutory provisions for human protections in research as well as supporting Department policies.

What are your biggest concerns related to the DOD medical research enterprise?

Although I do not have detailed knowledge of the entire research portfolio, I am especially interested in ensuring the responsiveness of the research program to medical readiness and our warfighters' medical needs. This will be accomplished by assuring that DoD has a balanced investment in medical science and technology and in medical advanced development leading to timely incorporation into clinical practice in the Military Health System.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs are critical to enhancement of military life for members and their families, especially in light of frequent and lengthy deployments. These programs must be relevant and attractive to all eligible users, including active duty and reserve personnel and retirees.

What challenges do you foresee in sustaining MWR programs (particularly in view of the Secretary's efficiency initiative) and, if confirmed, what improvements would you seek to achieve?

It is my understanding that the benefits of strong MWR programs are critical to esprit de corps, stress reduction, and personal health and well-being. Although there are very extensive installation MWR facilities and programs, I believe there is an immediate challenge in ensuring that MWR programs for our deployed forces meet their needs, especially free access to the Internet to communicate with family and friends back home and fitness and recreation activities to keep forces fit to fight. Recreation support for our wounded warriors is also critical. In the longer term, I believe the Department needs to understand what programs are valued by service members and their families in order to make wise investments. In addition, the MWR customers need to be involved in expressing their needs and satisfaction with our programs and policies; I understand the Department will conduct the 2nd MWR Customer satisfaction survey in FY 2011. If confirmed, these are all areas I would aggressively pursue.

Commissary and Military Exchange Systems

Commissary and military exchange systems are significant quality of life components for members of the active and reserve forces and their families.

What is your view of the need for modernization of business policies and practices in the commissary and exchange systems, and what do you view as the most promising avenues for change to achieve modernization goals?

I understand that commissary and exchange programs and policies must continue to evolve to meet the needs and expectations of our changing force and a changing marketplace. I believe efforts should be aimed at reducing overhead and pursuing new avenues to reach our military families who do not live on military installations. The commissary system should deliver customer savings and also achieve high satisfaction ratings. The military exchange resale community must continue to work, individually and collaboratively, to adapt marketing and selling practices, invest in technologies, and improve merchandise availability to be more responsive to military customers.

In the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, Congress required the Secretary of Defense to establish an executive governing body for the commissary and exchange systems to ensure the complementary operation of the two systems.

What is your understanding of the purpose and composition of the executive governing body?

I am aware the Department established the DoD Executive Resale Board as the governing body to provide advice to the USD(P&R) regarding the complementary operation of the commissary and exchange systems. I have been informed that the Board works to resolve issues and has been instrumental in pursuing matters of mutual benefit to the elements of the military resale system. The Board is chaired by the PDUSD(P&R), and

members include both the senior military officers and civilians who oversee and manage the commissary and exchanges systems.

If confirmed, what would your role be with respect to the governing body, and what would your expectations be for its role?

The Secretary designated the PDUSD(P&R) as the chairperson of the Executive Resale Board. If confirmed, I would ensure the Board would continue to meet regularly to review operational areas of mutual interest to the commissary and exchange systems.

Civilian Personnel Systems

Section 1113 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 repealed the statutory authority for the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), and required that all NSPS employees be converted to other personnel systems by no later than January 1, 2012.

What is your understanding of the Department's progress in converting its civilian employees from NSPS?

I understand during FY 2010, 172,000 employees representing approximately 76 percent of the NSPS population were transitioned from NSPS to the Government-wide General Schedule system. I also understand the transition of all remaining NSPS employees to the appropriate statutory pay and personnel system will be completed by the statutory deadline of January 1, 2012.

Section 1113 also provides DOD with extensive personnel flexibilities for its civilian employees that are not available to other agencies. In particular, section 9902(a) of title 5, U.S. Code, as added by section 1113, directs the Department to establish a new performance management system for all of its employees. Section 9902(b) directs the Department to develop a streamlined new hiring system that is designed to better fulfill DOD's mission needs, produce high-quality applicants, and support timely personnel decisions.

Do you agree that DOD's civilian employee workforce plays a vital role in the functioning of the Department?

Yes, DoD's civilian employee workforce plays an instrumental role in the functioning of the Department.

What is your view of the personnel flexibilities provided by section 1113?

I understand Congress provided these flexibilities to allow the Department to better meet mission requirements. If confirmed, I will support the work that I understand is under way to develop the flexibilities.

If confirmed, will you make it a priority to implement these flexibilities in a manner that best meets the needs of the Department and promotes the quality of the Department's civilian workforce?

Yes.

Section 1112 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 directs the Department to develop a Defense Civilian Leadership Program (DCLP) to recruit, train, and advance a new generation of civilian leaders for the Department. Section 1112 provides the Department with the full range of authorities available for demonstration programs under section 4703 of title 5, U.S. Code, including the authority to compensate participants on the basis of qualifications, performance, and market conditions. These flexibilities are not otherwise available to the Department of Defense.

Do you agree that the Department needs to recruit highly qualified civilian personnel to meet the growing needs of its acquisition, technical, business, and financial communities?

Yes.

In your view, has the existing civilian hiring process been successful in recruiting such personnel and meeting these needs?

Although I believe the Department currently has a highly talented workforce, I wholeheartedly support the initiatives to streamline and reform the civilian hiring process. There is much work to be done in this area, and if confirmed, I would ensure that the Department actively engages in the Government-wide initiative to reform civilian hiring and aggressively pursues improvements within the Department.

If confirmed, will you make it a priority to implement the authority provided by section 1112 in a manner that best meets the needs of the Department and promotes the quality of the Department's civilian workforce?

Yes.

Human Capital Planning

Section 115b of title 10, United States Code, as added by section 1108 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2010 requires the Secretary of Defense to develop and annually update a strategic human capital plan that specifically identifies gaps in the Department's civilian workforce and strategies for addressing those gaps. Section 115b requires that the plan include chapters specifically addressing the Department's senior

management, functional, and technical workforce and the Department's acquisition workforce.

Would you agree that a strategic human capital plan that identifies gaps in the workforce and strategies for addressing those gaps is a key step toward ensuring that the Department has the skills and capabilities needed to meet future challenges?

Yes.

Do you see the need for any changes in the requirements for a strategic human capital plan under section 115b?

At this time, I have no recommendations. If confirmed, I would review the strategic human capital planning that the Department has conducted over the past years against the section 115b requirements to determine if any changes may be needed to improve the Department's overall workforce planning effort.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the Department of Defense fully complies with these requirements?

Yes.

Balance Between Civilian Employees and Contractor Employees

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

Do you believe that the current balance between civilian employees and contractor employees is in the best interests of the Department of Defense?

I support the Secretary's initiative announced with the FY 2010 budget to reduce the Department's reliance on contracted services contractors. I believe the desired outcome

of the Department's in-sourcing initiative is a balanced total workforce of military, government civilians, and contracted services that appropriately align functions to the public and private sector, and results in the best value for the taxpayer.

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

If confirmed, I would support the Department's on-going efforts to critically examine currently contracted functions. Striking a balance between government and contractor performance that ensures uncompromising government control of critical functions, while providing best value to the taxpayer, is imperative.

Secretary Gates' Efficiency Initiative

In May of 2010, Secretary Gates launched an initiative to strengthen and modernize our fighting forces by eliminating inefficient or duplicative programs. In an August 16, 2010 memo to DoD components, the Secretary directed twenty specific initiatives, many involving military and civilian personnel and DoD contractors.

What is your assessment of the efficiencies announced by the Secretary to date, and if confirmed, what criteria would you use to identify and justify additional opportunities for efficiency in programs within the purview of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness?

I understand that Secretary Gates is attempting to identify efficiencies and redundancies within DoD and, if confirmed, I would support the implementation and continuation of this effort. I would use the Secretary's criteria to divest the Department of missions that are not appropriate or part of our core mission. I would also build on the SECDEF's work of finding greater efficiencies, with the goal of applying those resources toward higher priority efforts within the Department. From shared services to other process improvements, I would strive to ensure Personnel and Readiness is on the leading edge of efficiencies while still maintaining effectiveness for the Department.

Acquisition Workforce

Over the past 15 years, the Department of Defense has dramatically reduced the size of its acquisition workforce, without undertaking any systematic planning or analysis to ensure that it would have the specific skills and competencies needed to meet current and future needs. Since September 11, 2001, moreover, the demands placed on that workforce have substantially increased. Section 852 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 established an Acquisition Workforce Development Fund to help the Department of Defense address shortcomings in its acquisition workforce. The fund would provide a minimum of \$3 billion over six years for this purpose.

Do you believe that DOD acquisition workforce is large enough and has the skills needed to perform the tasks assigned to it?

While I cannot make an assessment of the size of the workforce at this time, I fully support the Secretary's goals of increasing the capacity and capability of the acquisition workforce through reducing reliance on contracted services in key acquisition support functions.

Do you support the use of the DOD Acquisition Workforce Development Fund to ensure that DOD has the right number of employees with the right skills to run its acquisition programs in the most cost effective manner for the taxpayers?

Yes.

Laboratory Personnel Demonstration Program

The laboratory demonstration program founded in section 342 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995 as amended by section 1114 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, section 1107 of the National Defense Authorization act for Fiscal Year 2008, section 1108 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, and section 1105 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, paved the way for personnel management initiatives and new flexibilities at the defense laboratories. These innovations have been adopted in various forms throughout other DOD personnel systems.

If confirmed, will you fully implement the laboratory demonstration program and the authorities under these provisions?

Yes.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the directors of the defense laboratories are provided the full range of personnel flexibilities and authorities provided by Congress?

Yes.

Foreign Language Proficiency

A Foreign Language Transformation Roadmap announced by the Department on March 30, 2005, directed a series of actions aimed at transforming the Department's foreign language capabilities, to include revision of policy and doctrine, building a capabilities based requirements process, and enhancing foreign language capability for both military and civilian personnel.

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

The priorities of the Federal Government to expanding the foreign language skills of civilian and military personnel and improving coordination between foreign language programs and activities among the Federal agencies should be an integrated, holistic, whole of nation approach to developing these skills beginning in pre-school and continuing through high school and college graduation. The shortage of language and cultural skills is a national shortfall, not just an isolated DoD problem. If confirmed, I will support and build upon DoD efforts to ensure the education of a broader pool of Americans with skills in critical languages. Early education and skill development in critical foreign languages is paramount and must begin in pre-school and continue through the high school and college years. Educating our children beginning in pre-school and continuing throughout their educational journey in critical languages will result in globally competitive citizenry from which DoD, other Federal Government agencies and the private sector can recruit.

GI Bill Benefits

Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act in 2008 that created enhanced educational benefits for service members who have served at least 90 days on active duty since 9/11. The maximum benefit would roughly cover the cost of a college education at any public university in the country.

What unresolved issues related to implementation of the post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (e.g., coverage of additional military personnel) do you consider most important to be addressed?

It is my understanding that there are two technical fixes needed in the current statute. First, the original statute inadvertently left out some of National Guard active duty as qualifying time for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. Second, although the statute authorized the Services to offer a supplemental payment for enlistments in critical skills (commonly called “kickers”), it did not include the specific language required to allow the Services to use the Education Trust Fund to pay for these “kickers.” Both of these provisions are rectified in the current version of S 3447, recently introduced in the Senate.

Military Retirement

The 10th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) proposed a new defined benefit retirement plan that more resembles the benefits available under the Federal Employee Retirement System than the current military retirement benefit;

increasing TRICARE fees for retirees; and the adoption of dependent care and flexible spending accounts for service members. The head of a Defense Business Board Task Force has criticized military benefits as “GM-style benefits” describing the military retirement system as a “pre-volunteer force retirement system” and criticizing “taxpayer-subsidized grocery chains and low out-of-pocket healthcare costs”.

What is your view of the adequacy of the current military retirement benefit?

I have not yet formed an opinion on the adequacy of the current military retirement benefit. However, it is only one component of the entire military compensation system. I believe it will be important to consider the impacts of making changes to one part of the system so that DoD maintains their current high quality military force.

How might it be modernized to reflect the needs of a new generation of recruits, while easing the long-term retirement cost of the government?

I don't have a recommendation at this time but, if confirmed, I would review this issue carefully.

Do you share the Defense Business Board Task Force view of military benefits?

I have not reviewed this report in detail, but I know that one of its major recommendations was changing the military retirement system.

It is my understanding that the Defense Business Board is considering alternatives to the current military retirement system and alternatives for the Department to consider. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing these and other proposals with the Military Departments.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness?

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.