

Advance Policy Questions for Robert Wilkie
Nominee for Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Department of Defense Reforms and Oversight Concerns

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 included the most sweeping reforms since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

Do you support these reforms? Yes

What other areas for defense reform do you believe might be appropriate for this Committee to address?

Continued reform of civilian workforce management should be on the table for both the DOD and the Committee--focusing on training and education required to keep pace with developments in technology, including cyber, and as important, in human resource management.

Section 214 of the FY 2017 NDAA, already authorizes both DAU and the National Defense University to enter into cooperative agreements with universities and non-profit research institutions to support their missions. However as the Chairman has stated that is only a first step.

Senior civilian workforce higher education requirements do not match those of senior military leaders. With a civilian workforce of over 700,000 it might be profitable to establish advanced education guidelines particularly in the field of human resource management and in line with Secretary Mattis' vision to imbed and educate our senior civilian leadership at cutting edge companies and leading universities.

Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 required that the Secretary of Defense establish cross-functional teams to address critical objectives of the Department.

What are your views on the potential focus areas and uses for future cross-functional teams?

Cross-functional teams that report directly to the Secretary of Defense, as stipulated in Section 911, are essential to delivering and implementing valuable recommendations on priority issues and opportunities facing the Department. Within the purview of the USD(P&R), and given the complexity, scope, and importance of the Military Health System, I believe ample opportunities exist in the system for the targeted use of Secretary of Defense-empowered cross-functional teams. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to engage with DoD partners to identify areas where cross-functional teams provide the

greatest potential for increased efficiencies that result in substantially enhanced care for Service members and their families, as well as the more effective allocation of resources.

What is the role of the Under Secretary and Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness in overseeing the personnel-related defense agencies?

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness currently has the authority and control over four defense agencies, namely the Defense Health Agency (DHA), Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA), Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), and Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA). The role of the Under Secretary and Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness is to ensure the policies and programs of these four agencies are designed and managed to improve the standards of performance, economy and efficiency, and to strengthen the agencies' responsiveness to the requirements of their organizational customers, both internal and external to DoD.

Are further authorities or resources required for effective oversight of these agencies?

I believe the authorities for oversight are adequate.

Duties

Section 136 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of Defense may prescribe in the areas of military readiness, total force management, military and civilian personnel requirements, military and civilian personnel training, military and civilian family matters, exchange, commissary, and non-appropriated fund activities, personnel requirements for weapons support, National Guard and reserve components, and health affairs.

If confirmed, what duties do you expect to be assigned to you?

Secretary Mattis has been clear that his priorities are the lethality and deployability of the force—which means that total force management and personnel training will be at the top of the list.

I expect the other responsibilities to feed into those priorities. Readiness is holistic—it includes the family. In the all-volunteer force, if the family is not happy, the soldier walks.

Qualifications

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

I come from a family with military service going back over 175 years. I was raised at Fort Bragg.

I have been privileged to see military life from every imaginable angle, as a dependent; as the dependent of a gravely wounded combat soldier; as an officer (in both the Navy and Air Force); as an officer on active duty with a family in the military health care system; as a senior staff member in the United States Senate and as a senior leader in the White House and the Pentagon. I have advanced through every level of professional military education.

In the private sector, I was part of senior corporate teams managing complex military and engineering projects overseas for one of the world's preeminent engineering and program management firms.

Major Challenges and Priorities

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next USD(P&R)?

The priority is continuing to improve warfighter readiness begun in FY 2017, filling in the holes from trade-offs made during 16 years of war, and six years of continuing resolutions and Budget Control Act caps.

The Secretary's first budget request, as directed by the National Security Presidential Memorandum "Rebuilding the U.S. Armed Forces" issued on January 27, 2017, identifies and improves shortfalls in readiness, specifically in training, equipment, maintenance, munitions, modernization, and infrastructure. The 30-Day Readiness Review, completed as part of the development of the FY 2017 Request for Additional Appropriations, identified significant challenges to recovering readiness, including budget uncertainty, high operational tempo, and the time required to rebuild readiness properly. As a result of this review, the Department submitted the FY 2018 budget request to enable the Joint Force to counter national security threats, fulfill steady-state demand, and implement readiness recovery plans

If confirmed, what broad priorities will you establish?

My priorities would include increasing the readiness of our force, including family readiness, and ensuring its effective employment in accomplishing the missions directed by Secretary Mattis. I intend to work closely with the Deputy Secretary of Defense to bring business-management reforms to the Department, ensuring that we gain the greatest possible return for our tax dollars.

Relations with Congress

What are your views on the state of the relationship between the USD(P&R) and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

USD P&R is the one DOD Under-Secretariat with the most immediate and visible relationship with the entire Congress.

The defining experiences of my professional life have been in the United States Senate, including five years as the Counsel and Advisor on National Security Affairs to the Senate Majority Leader, Trent Lott. In addition, as a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, I take Article 1 sec. 8 of the Constitution seriously and consider the Armed Services Committee to be the Senate's foundational committee. It is my belief that the Department of Defense cannot accomplish its mission unless it maintains a symbiotic relationship with this Committee.

Upon returning to Senate with Senator Tillis in 2015, it was apparent that the relationship between the Committee on Armed Services and USD P&R and OSD (in general) was at best strained in addition to OSD P&R having an indifferent relationship with the individual services.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the USD(P&R)?

I am in the unique position of having a close professional relationship with the Chairman of the SASC Personnel Subcommittee as well as with the professional staff and will maintain that.

My first decision will be to ensure that OSD LA is integrated into all operations of P&R. The current ASD LA was my deputy when I held that position under Secretaries Rumsfeld and Gates.

Torture and Enhanced Interrogation Techniques

Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated August 19, 2014, and required by section 1045 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92)?

I fully support using the Army Field Manual as the single standard for all U.S. military interrogations. I am in full agreement with the Chairman and Ranking member of the Committee and the Secretary of Defense as to the prohibition on the use of torture.

National Security Budget Reductions/Sequestration

The original discretionary caps imposed by the Budget Control Act (BCA) will be in effect for Fiscal Years 2018 through 2021, unless there is agreement to change budget levels.

In your assessment, what would be the impacts of continued implementation of the BCA discretionary caps through 2021 on the Department of Defense and national security?

I agree with Secretary Mattis' assessment, made before the House Armed Services Committee in June: "For all the heartache caused by the loss of our troops during these wars, no enemy in the field has done more to harm the readiness of our military than sequestration."

The impacts weaken the military. As the Secretary has stated, "We have a strategic mismatch between the political ends we espouse and the military means we have available to confront and deter threats. While our military remains the best fighting force in the world, these cuts have created damage that will take time to repair". Unless the Department of Defense receives funds above the caps imposed by the Budget Control Act, it will not be able to achieve the readiness, modernization, and force structure required to meet emerging threats.

Do you believe that any future budget agreements must maintain parity between non-defense and defense discretionary funding?

If confirmed, I would be responsible for a large portion of the DOD budget—any comment beyond my duties within the Department and the national security arena would be beyond my competency as those are policy determinations made by the Congress and White House.

In your view, what is the impact on the Department of Defense and on the nation's ability to meet national defense requirements if these budget caps continue to be imposed on non-defense security agencies, such as the Department of State, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and the non-defense elements of the intelligence community?

I agree with Secretary Mattis that the military must be a hand that fits in the glove of American diplomacy. Underfunding of the agencies listed above increases pressure on our troops and increases the likelihood that they will be forced into action and perform duties that would otherwise be undertaken by separate federal agencies.

If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of personnel and readiness funding?

Secretary Gates in testimony before this Committee, was correct that annualized real defense budget increases and efficiencies of two to three percent above inflation are needed to sustain the All-Volunteer Force in a way that keeps personnel, modernization, and readiness accounts in balance. In the six years since the passage of the Budget Control Act, a period of declining, flat, or modestly increasing budgets, the balance has not been kept.

Overall Readiness of the Armed Forces

How would you assess the current state of readiness?

Inadequate. We are seeing the impact of sixteen years at war. We are short 1500 pilots in the Air Force. On any given day 14%-20% of the Army is medically unable to deploy. General Milley states that only three brigade combat teams are fully combat ready and some BCTS are at 80% strength. Marine Corps combat units are down to a dwell time of 1:1.4 years. The all-volunteer force performs miracles but it is under tremendous strain often exacerbated by sequestration.

How would you plan to restore full spectrum readiness and under what timelines?

I pledge to work with the Secretary and this committee on a budget that restores full spectrum readiness, ensuring that our military's size and composition are adequate to the tasks at hand. Even sitting with this Committee for the last two years, I am unable to provide a detailed timeline without access to readiness data held by the services. I agree with Secretary Mattis that "...the military must look at every week as its last week of peace if it is going to be sufficiently prepared for the unexpected".

Additionally, how would you enforce those timelines to ensure that goals are met?

I will enforce any timelines set by the Secretary.

Financial Management and Audit Readiness

The Defense Department is the only federal agency that cannot present auditable financial statements showing where and how it spends its annual budget. It has also been at high risk for waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement by the Comptroller General. Despite much effort and billions spent to fix these problems, they have remained for decades.

What actions would you take or direct that will achieve a better outcome than past actions and initiatives for financial auditability in organizations under the authority of the USD P&R?

I support the Department's audit readiness goal. If confirmed, I commit to doing everything possible to contribute to Department wide audit in FY 2018. Achieving a clean audit opinion is dependent upon having a range of incentives in place to build and sustain Departmental support. I am not aware of the incentives currently used or how effective they are.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

What is your assessment of the Department of Defense's sexual assault prevention and response program?

Sexual assault is a crime – and the only acceptable outcome is zero. If confirmed, I will examine the adequacy of the training and resources currently in place to get the Department to zero.

What is your view of the provision for restricted and unrestricted reporting of sexual assaults?

I intend to examine the provisions and assess whether further improvements are needed.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources the Department has in place to prevent and respond to sexual assaults?

If confirmed, I will examine the adequacy of the training and resources currently available, and I will work with the Congress to address this or any problem that affects the readiness of the force.

What is your view of the adequacy of the Department's oversight of military service implementation of the Department and service policies for the prevention of and response to sexual assaults?

I have not been privy to the Department's inner workings on oversight. However the incidence of sexual assault cases is still too high and thus the problem continues to be serious and threat to readiness.

What is your assessment of the potential impact, if any, of proposals to remove the disposition authority from military commanders over violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including sexual assaults?

I will take proactive steps to ensure the Services hold leaders accountable at all levels of the military chain of command for carrying out their responsibilities to investigate and adjudicate any potential violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

I was raised in the military world. I believe in a principle enunciated by Admiral Nimitz

when addressing a meeting of new destroyer commanders—“if you can’t point to the man in charge then no one is in charge”. Military law invests responsibility for good order and discipline and for leading the fight with the commander. If any of his responsibility is re-moved and given to those outside of his command that in long run will diminish command authority.

That said, I agree with efforts by Senators McCaskill, Ernst and Gillibrand to create specialists within the JAG Corps to investigate and prosecute sexual crimes and abuse. This will also give commanders another tool to address this matter.

What is your assessment of the Department’s protections against retaliation for reporting sexual assault?

The military’s protections against retaliation are not completely effective or sufficient.

The Department must do more to ensure Service members can report any crime, including a crime involving sexual assault, without fear of retaliation. If confirmed, I intend to examine the early implementation of the Department’s efforts in this area and assess whether improvements are needed.

What is your view of the role of the chain of command in maintaining a command climate where sexual harassment and sexual assaults are not tolerated?

Vital. Commander’s attitudes permeate the entire chain.

In your view, do military and civilian leaders in the Department have the tools and resources needed to hold commanders accountable for these issues? If not, what additional authority do they need? Yes

Abusive Online Conduct

Recently, this Committee considered testimony on reports that certain members of Marines United, an unofficial Marine Corps Facebook group, were found to be posting degrading comments and sharing nude photos of female service members. Members of the group included a number of active-duty service members, former military members, and military retirees.

Do you believe that the behaviors typified by these events, and the attitudes and beliefs they represent, are confined to the Marine Corps?

I have not been privy to any studies or investigations on this matter within the other services.

What is the current Department of Defense policy for use of social media by civilian

employees and service members?

For civilian members, Title VII Equal Employment protections may apply, depending on the issue. For Service members, it is my understanding there are existing DoD policies that provide guidance on online social media misconduct. Specifically, it is my understanding the Department updated its Sexual Harassment and Response policy in 2014, and updated its Hazing and Bullying Prevention and Response policy in 2015, which discusses the prohibition of unacceptable electronic communications.

In your view, are these policies adequate to address abuses such as what occurred in the Marines United incident?

I have not reviewed all of the Department's policies and plans that address social media conduct. However, I believe the Department's policies are designed to address problematic behaviors and, if confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to adapt policies to emerging social trends. The actions of this committee by placing such incidents within the purview of the USMJ is an important step.

If confirmed, what action would you take to ensure that civilian employees and service members are not subjected to abusive online conduct?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to adapt policies to emerging social trends. In addition, I will hold senior leaders accountable and make sure they place emphasis on this issue.

In your view, do the Department and the services have sufficient legal authority to hold offenders accountable for such misconduct?

It is my understanding there are several Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) Articles that could address social media conduct. In addition, I believe the Department is currently in the process of reviewing Article 134 offense involving the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images.

What legislative authorities, if any, do you believe are necessary to address this problem?

I am unaware of any additional legislative authorities needed at this time. Currently for civilian members, Title VII protections may apply, depending on the issue. Likewise, for Service members, it is my understanding there are several Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) Articles that could address social media conduct. The Department is currently in the process of reviewing Article 134 offense involving the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images.

Do you believe the Department needs to make policy or regulation changes in order to facilitate the investigation and accountability process?

I believe it is important leaders are held accountable in these cases. I am unaware of any changes needed at this time but if confirmed, I will ensure action is taken if changes are needed.

Sexual Harassment

Department of Defense annual sexual assault reports consistently document that sexual assaults are more common in units where sexual harassment is prevalent. Section 579 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 required the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive policy to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the armed forces and to submit a report to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives no later than one year after January 2, 2013, setting forth a comprehensive policy. This Committee still has not yet received this report.

Do you agree with the premise that units with a command climate that tolerates sexual harassment is more likely to have increased incidents of sexual assault?

Yes, and that applies to all levels and offices within the DOD.

What is the reason the Department has not complied with the requirement to develop a comprehensive sexual harassment policy?

I have not been privy to the deliberations within the Department or the reasons for not complying with the provisions of the 2013 NDAA.

If confirmed, will you assure this Committee that the Department will promptly promulgate a comprehensive policy to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the armed forces and to submit this policy to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives, as directed in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013? Yes

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?

Zero tolerance is the Departmental policy and what is expected of the military by the American people. The same standard applies to all ranks—cadets, recruits, enlisted,

officers, and senior leaders. That said, rates of assault at Service Academies are disconcerting.

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?

I would have to review such policies if confirmed to make a judgement.

What is your assessment of the suicide prevention programs at each Military Service Academy?

I have not been privy to the programs at the Service Academies.

Selective Service Act

Some have suggested that the success of the All-Volunteer Force has reduced the need for the United States to have a continuing authority and capability to conduct a draft. Further, a future national emergency may require that the military have the ability to identify citizens with unique and specialized skills to fill critical combat support requirements, both within the military and in the civilian sector. Currently, the Selective Service System does not identify individuals with such skills, and does not address the need for critical skills among the civilian workforce.

Do you believe the Selective Service Act should be repealed? No

Do you believe Congress should amend the Selective Service Act to require the registration of women? Yes

Do you believe the Selective Service system, with its focus on supplying large numbers of replacement combat soldiers, meets the needs of today's military and the type of personnel that would likely need to be drafted in a future conflict, including skilled personnel in the medical, linguistic, cyber, and other specialist fields?

No. The current Selective Service is in many ways an electronic version of the system that has been in place since World War I. It provides little information beyond age and name.

If not, what changes should Congress consider to the Selective Service system to meet the needs of today's national defense and security agencies, military and civilian?

We should look to a process that at least gives us basic information as to a young American's language skills, athletic ability, computer skills, and science background.

The Congress might look to providing access for registrants to the ASVAB to provide DOD with a more tangible database.

Managing the Cost of Health Care

In the President's Fiscal Year 2018 budget request, the Department of Defense requested \$53.5 billion in operation and support funding for the military health system, about 9% of the total funding requested for the Department's base budget. CBO has calculated that those costs will reach \$64 billion by 2030 if their growth reflects anticipated national trends in health care costs.

In your view, what is the greatest threat to the long-term viability of the military health system?

It would be the inability to transform the military health system into a much leaner and more efficient organization that still meets the warfighters' and beneficiaries' needs.

What is your assessment of the long-term impact of the Department's health care costs on military readiness and overall national security?

We need to remember we have health professionals in uniform to ensure we can meet our battlefield requirements for medical care. Also our military health care system provides medical care to those in uniform, their families, and retirees. Once we ensure our operational requirements are met, every opportunity for reform and efficiency must be pursued in the delivery of the health benefit, lest we divert essential resources from military readiness.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to mitigate the effect of the Department's medical costs on the Department's budget top-line while simultaneously implementing programs to improve health outcomes and to enhance the experience of care for all beneficiaries?

I believe we need to look at all options to managing the cost of DoD health care. It is my understanding that we are essentially running four separate health care systems within the Department of Defense and have for many years. The potential for greater efficiency and effectiveness is substantial. It also includes looking at how the Department buys health care from the civilian sector to emphasize outcomes and promoting healthy life styles among our beneficiaries to reduce the demand for health services. If confirmed, I will work both within and outside of the Department to eliminate duplication, increase productivity, and set goals, standards and incentives that emphasize medical readiness, excellent outcomes and exceptional return on investment.

If confirmed, what would you do to create a value-based military health system – a system that creates value for beneficiaries and the Department by ensuring the delivery of quality health care and improving health outcomes for beneficiaries at reasonable costs to beneficiaries and lower costs to the Department?

We must be responsive to our beneficiary population, which includes the warfighter and all other eligible members. If confirmed I would work closely with military health system leadership to improve the experience of care and re-focus our attention on the customer. Additionally, I would capitalize on successes in the commercial health care industry that focus on successful outcomes rather than simply paying in a fee-for-service model.

If confirmed, what reforms in medical infrastructure, benefits, benefit management, contract acquisition, military provider productivity, military-civilian provider mix, and medical personnel strengths would you implement to help control the per capita costs of health care provided by the Department?

I would re-double efforts to consolidate management, overhead, and support services from at least four separate medical entities into one. I would dramatically increase the standardization of operations across the system and put into place aggressive yet achievable production and efficiency targets. I would carefully scrutinize what is needed for operational requirements versus what is a pure benefit and determine the most cost effective strategy to provide those services. Finally, I would look at the benefit structure to see where reasonable changes could occur. In the long term, the promotion of healthy life styles and prevention among our beneficiaries will also help reduce the demand for health services.

Medical Provider Productivity

The military services have established a very low provider efficiency (productivity) standard for military physicians – 40% of the Medical Group Management Association median. This measure assesses provider currency and capacity, determining the readiness potential of providers. The most current data provided to this Committee show that only 39% of the Department’s providers exceeded the goal in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2017. In other words, most of the Department’s providers failed to achieve an already very low efficiency standard.

If confirmed, what would you do to ensure that the Department’s medical providers become more productive?

I will review the data to determine if this measure is the right measure for assuring a ready medical force and a force that is medically ready. Moreover, I will ensure that we develop policies and procedures to ensure that we are meeting our critical readiness

mission along with providing for our robust health care benefit in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

If confirmed, who would you hold accountable for the low productivity of the Department's medical providers?

I will review the data to determine the appropriate productivity standards for our providers given our readiness mission. I will communicate that both leaders and providers throughout our Department are responsible to provide quality and safe care to our beneficiaries with maximum efficiency and productivity.

An independent study by the Institute for Defense Analyses showed that it costs the Department about 50% less to purchase health care services in the private sector than to provide the same care in military medical treatment facilities.

In your view, how does low provider productivity contribute to the higher relative costs to provide medical care in those facilities?

If confirmed, I will review the data related to the relationship between provider productivity, cost of maintaining providers' military readiness, and any higher relative costs to provide medical care in MTFs to determine the relationship and any actions that may need to be taken.

Military Health System Reorganization

Section 702 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 transferred direct oversight and management of military hospitals and clinics from the military services to the Defense Health Agency (DHA). In March and again in June, the Committee received the Department of Defense's interim reports on section 702, which described the Department's intent to develop a component model to administer and manage military treatment facilities. Under this component model, the Department would establish service intermediary medical commands, and those commands would be subject to two separate lines of authority – the DHA and the services.

Do you believe that a component model, with establishment of new intermediary medical commands under two separate lines of authority, would make the military health system flatter, more agile, and more efficient?

Presently, the three Service Medical Departments and the Defense Health Agency (DHA) have four separate headquarters functions dedicated to the administration and management of the Military Treatment Facilities. It is my understanding that Department's proposed component model centralizes the Services' headquarters

functions under DHA, which will be the single organization responsible for the Military Treatment Facilities in the specific areas identified in the FY 2017 NDAA.

If confirmed, would you reevaluate the Department's decision to proceed with a component model to implement section 702?

I will review the actions of the Department and in conjunction with the Deputy Secretary of Defense evaluate the efficacy of the component model.

If confirmed, would you urge the Secretary of Defense to reevaluate the Department's decision to proceed with a component model to implement section 702?

It would be premature, at this stage, to comment as to whether the Department's decisions should be reevaluated. However, if confirmed, I will remain open to reevaluating the Department's approach, if it is warranted.

If confirmed, would you ensure that military services reduce their medical headquarters staffs and infrastructure (including both regional command staffs and infrastructure) to reflect the more limited scope and size of their health care missions?

Yes—the goal with all headquarters reductions is to streamline decision making and get more people into the field.

In your view, would a component model streamline the administration and management of military treatment facilities?

It has the potential to yield a flatter and more streamlined system.

In your view, would a component model achieve the Committee's goal to eliminate multiple inefficient layers of management and bureaucracy in the Department's medical operations?

Cultural and operational changes would need to be made in order to fully implement the Committee's vision.

In your view, would a component model eliminate the current stove-piped medical command structures of the services?

I am not sufficiently familiar with the details of the Department's component model to determine whether it would eliminate existing stove-pipes within the Services' medical commands.

However as noted above cultural and operational changes would need to be made in order to fully implement the Committee's vision.

If confirmed, I will review the model and make an assessment on its potential effectiveness.

If confirmed, would you ensure a rapid and efficient transfer of the operations of military medical facilities to the DHA?

If confirmed, I will work with the leaders of the Department, particularly the Deputy Secretary of Defense, to meet the FY17 NDAA timelines and if there are any concerns with the timelines, I will inform the Congress.

Service of Transgender Individuals

If confirmed, what would be your role in the implementation of the Administration's policy on the service of transgender individuals in the armed forces?

Based on the announcement made by Secretary Mattis on August 29, I would likely be part of a panel assembled by the Secretary to address accessions of transgender individuals and transgender individuals currently serving in the military.

In your view, what would be the impact on military readiness of continued service by transgender service members who receive hormone therapy?

The guiding principles for this and any other personnel decision should be military fitness, readiness and loyalty. The services should have a say in this and any other readiness matter.

I am not privy to any of the medical and cost reviews begun by the services as per Secretary Mattis' direction. I agree with Senator McCain's statement in July that no policy decisions are appropriate until the study ordered by the Secretary is complete and reviewed by him, the military leadership and the Congress.

In your view, what would be the impact on military readiness of requiring the separation of all transgender service members currently serving in our armed forces?

Until I have access to the study ordered by the Secretary I will not have sufficient data to with which to provide an answer to this question.

Mental Health Care

In your view, are the Department of Defense's current mental health resources adequate to serve all active duty and eligible reserve component members and their families, as well as retirees and their dependents?

Secretary Mattis said, we have a moral obligation to sustain the mental health of the force as well as service members' families. If confirmed, it will be a priority to ensure that the Department is devoting appropriate resources to mental health, and working effectively with the Department of Veterans Affairs to identify issues and close any gaps in coverage. I will advise the Committee if more resources are required.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure that sufficient mental health resources are available to service members in theater and to service members and families upon return to home station locations with insufficient community-based mental health resources?

As an active Reservist, I always include the Guard and Reserve in any assessment. The health of the total force is a national priority. Understanding the uniqueness of their service, I will work to ensure members of the Guard and Reserve and their families are included in the equation and that the appropriate amount of resources are available to support their mental health care.

Suicide Prevention

If confirmed, how would you maintain a strong focus on preventing suicides in the active and reserve components and in their families?

Zero is the only acceptable outcome for the Department. We must do more to remove the stigmas associated with mental health issues. If confirmed, I will bring the broad resources of the Department to bear on this problem and will not hesitate to recommend relevant outside expertise as well. We need to be better wingmen for our troops.

Voluntary Education Programs

The Department of Defense continues to seek ways to improve oversight of its tuition assistance programs, including standardizing eligibility criteria among the services.

What is your assessment of the tuition assistance program in light of the needs of the services and the current budget environment?

It is important to ensure member access to quality post-secondary education that supports mission accomplishment and the eventual transition to civilian life.

Do you believe this benefit contributes directly to recruiting and retention, or is it more of a nice-to-have benefit when resources allow?

DOD should provide members and families with this benefit. It is a strategic investment.

What is your view of tuition assistance as a transition benefit for service members to obtain civilian licenses and credentials?

Important tool

If confirmed, what would be your plan for improving the Department's Voluntary Educational Programs?

If confirmed I will review the program.

If confirmed, what action would you take to ensure that the Department implements administrative procedures adequate for the fair and expeditious adjudication of complaints about educational institutions that have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for a Voluntary Education Partnership?

I do not know enough about the DOD review and the MOU process at this time. I will review the program and ensure that the TA program truly serves the best interests of our members.

Religious Accommodation

On July 22, 2015, the Department of Defense Inspector General released a report on "Rights of Conscience Protections for Armed Forces Service Members and Their Chaplains." The Inspector General found that the services are not processing special religious accommodation requests promptly and, once accommodation requests are approved, they do not last for the duration of soldiers' military careers. In many cases, this has put individuals in the difficult position of being forced to violate their faith in order to join the military and they must resubmit accommodation requests every time they transfer. In some cases, these policies are unfairly burdening individuals specifically recruited by our armed forces for their unique language, culture, and technical skills.

If confirmed, what would be your role in addressing the recommendations in the Inspector General report?

I will review the report in conjunction with the President's Executive Order of May 4, 2017 regarding free speech and religious liberty.

Do you support a policy to allow service members' religious accommodations to follow their service throughout their entire military careers – no matter where they are stationed?

DOD must consistently seek a balance between religious freedom and operational readiness.

Do you support a policy that would allow prospective recruits to request accommodation prior to enlisting or accepting a commission for service in the armed forces?

Yes as long as the request does not impact readiness and the ability to deploy.

In your view, do requirements for individuals being accessed into the military to first comply with military grooming and appearance standards that conflict with their sincerely-held religious beliefs before being considered for a waiver of those military standards constitute a constitutionally-valid restraint on religious expression?

DOD must consistently seek a balance between religious freedom and operational readiness, including entry level training.

In your view, how do the military services justify strict adherence to military grooming and uniform standards in the case of religious observance, while authorizing tens of thousands of shaving profiles, including allowing beards for deployed service members, and tens of thousands waivers from tattoo policies that include religious-themed tattoos and tattoos of Bible verses?

I would have to examine this matter with the service personnel chiefs.

Do you believe that allowing service members of certain faiths, such as Sikh, Orthodox Judaism, or Islam, to maintain beards or wear turbans or other religious headwear, while in uniform, would strengthen or weaken the U.S. military's standing in areas of the world where such religions predominate? Would such allowance help or hurt our coordination and engagement with such foreign nations?

I think America's values are the most potent force when servicemembers are deployed. I would rely on the judgement of the commander on the ground to determine if military necessity would warrant allowances for religious accoutrements while wearing the uniform in theater. That said the accession of new communities into the armed forces can only enhance America's strength.

U.S. military personnel routinely deploy to locations around the world where they must engage and work effectively with allies and host-country nationals whose faiths and

beliefs may be different than their own. For many other cultures, religious faith is not a purely personal and private matter; it is the foundation of their culture and society. Learning to respect the different faiths and beliefs of others, and to understand how accommodating different views can contribute to a diverse force is, some would argue, an essential skill to operational effectiveness.

In your view, do policies concerning religious accommodation in the military appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs, including individual expressions of belief, without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief? Yes

In your view, does a military climate that welcomes and respects open and candid discussions about personal religious faith and beliefs in a garrison environment contribute in a positive way to preparing U.S. forces to be effective in overseas assignments? Yes

Would a policy that discourages open discussions about personal faith and beliefs be more or less effective at preparing service members to work and operate in a pluralistic environment?

Less effective—the more servicemembers are exposed to cultural and religious issues the better they will be prepared to receive cultural training prior to deployment.

Personnel System Reforms

The Committee conducted a series of hearings last year on reforming the Department of Defense. A number of witnesses called for reforms to the Pentagon’s personnel management system to ensure we recruit and retain the best and the brightest to work for the nation’s defense.

If confirmed, what would be your priorities with regards to military personnel management?

Before changing any aspect of the Department’s personnel policies, if confirmed I would need to review the specific military problem the change is meant to solve and then ask, “Will the change be consistent with maintaining the highest level of readiness for the force?”

I believe that there is a blueprint for prospective reform laid out by former Secretary Panetta, General Jones and Major General Punaro. If confirmed, I will also review the Force of the Future initiatives. After a more in-depth look at this issue, I will assess whether continued personnel reform is necessary and will work with the Congress on specific proposals.

Do you believe that the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) and the Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA) need to be updated to better reflect the national security challenges that we face today and will face in the future? Yes

What do you believe is the biggest deterrent to young people considering a career in the military today?

Military-civilian divide.

Lack of exposure to the military culture and the value of service—people tend to stay away from something they do not understand.

I have seen in my service, young servicemembers leave due to inadequate support for their families—non-uniform childcare, too frequent moves that deprive a spouse from putting down roots and keeping a job.

Active/Reserve Permeability

The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves was chartered by Congress “to assess the reserve component of the U.S. military and to recommend changes to ensure that the National Guard and other reserve components are organized, trained, equipped, compensated, and supported to best meet the needs of U.S. national security.” One of their recommendations stated that the Department of Defense should merge DOPMA and ROPMA into “a single system, modified to base advancement on achievement of competencies.”

Do you believe consolidating DOPMA and ROPMA into an integrated officer personnel management system would be useful to the Department? YES

Would a single officer personnel management system facilitate increased permeability between active and reserve components, thereby allowing officers to repeatedly transition between active and reserve service? YES

What would be the desired outcome of an integrated active and reserve component officer military personnel system?

This creates a culture to support a continuum of service. This provides greater opportunity to transition among the active guard and reserve components. This also makes Reserve component service an option during a military career. We should also consider extending the reserve position vacancy window beyond the current strictures of date of separation.

Are there other legislative or policy changes that would facilitate the transition of officers between active and reserve service?

I will have to consult with DOD officials to determine if additional authorities are needed.

In your view, what are the pros and cons of a single commission for active and reserve service?

This cements the symbiotic relationship between the active and reserve component. I also think it can be part of a much-needed evaluation as to who we train the total force. In the reserve component there has more often than not been a singular focus on personal readiness which often comes to the detriment of training. It is important to ensure that larger Active Forces have the reserve enablers required to meet their mission; second, to ensure that the Reserve Components have ample combat capability to complement or reinforce the Active Force in the event of sustained combat. Removing any legacy barriers to full integration would be worthwhile.

A downside in such a program would be that the unique aspects of reserve service (workplace, travel etc.) might tend to get pushed aside.

Military Pay and Allowances

The Department of Defense has traditionally compared Regular Military Compensation against comparable civilian salaries to devise a percentile as a way to assess the relative attractiveness of military pay versus civilian pay.

Do you agree that the primary purpose of a competitive military pay and benefit package is to recruit and retain a military of sufficient size and quality to meet national defense objectives? YES

What is your assessment of the adequacy of the current military pay package in achieving this goal?

I understand the current military compensation package is robust and compares favorably with the private sector.

Does the military pay package adequately compensate individuals for their specialized skills and provide an incentive to recruit science, engineering, and other critical professionals into the military?

In addition to the current pay and benefits package, I understand the Department uses special and incentive pays and bonuses to target specific recruiting and retention concerns and to incentivize the development of specific occupational skills. If confirmed, I will

evaluate the adequacy of these special pays and bonuses to ensure we are attracting the best skillset we need for the military.

Do you believe the largely “one-size-fits-all” model for military pay is still the best model considering the specialized skills our military needs to defend, fight, and deter modern conflicts?

The current system has supported and sustained an All-Volunteer Force for over 40 years and has generated the superb fighting force we have today. However, I am, if confirmed, open to considering changes to the current system, but any changes need to be thoroughly analyzed and understood so that we do not jeopardize readiness or our ability to recruit, retain, and sustain our nation’s All-Volunteer Force.

What changes, if any, would you recommend for the revision of military pay and benefits?

Although at this time I do not have any recommended changes, I am open to considering alternatives and am willing to work with the Congress to support and sustain the All-Volunteer Force.

If confirmed, will you commit to working with the Committee on revisions to military pay and benefits with the goal of offering the best deal supported by the budget to attract, recruit, and retain military personnel? Yes

This Committee has taken great interest in the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) system over the last four years. The BAH system has devolved from its original purpose of providing adequate housing to service members and their families to a system that greatly benefits officers in special circumstances and provides less of a benefit to others who are primarily lower ranking enlisted personnel.

If confirmed, will you commit to submitting a comprehensive report that addresses all elements required in section 604 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 with regard to establishing a single-salary system for members of the armed forces? Yes

End Strength

In 2017, the Department of Defense began to grow total force end strength following seven consecutive years of end strength reductions. The Army and Air Force in particular have identified a need to increase the overall size of the force to better meet combatant commander needs.

Do you believe military end strength must continue to grow? Yes

How fast can the Army and Air Force responsibly grow without having to relax recruiting standards?

Accepting the need to grow—quality is still more important than quantity. This sometimes argues for more deliberation to match recruit skills with platforms and career paths.

The last time the Army tried to grow to rapidly, recruiting standards dropped. For the Air Force, increased bonuses have done little for recruitment and retention.

If sequestration continues through 2021, what will be the impact on the active duty and reserve end strengths of all the services, and how would the mix between the active and reserve forces be affected?

Unless the Department of Defense receives funds above the caps imposed by the Budget Control Act, it will not be able to achieve the readiness, modernization, and force structure required to meet emerging threats and this means under-resourcing the total force. Each component will face the prospect of across the board cuts.

What is your understanding of the need for additional force shaping tools requiring legislation beyond what Congress has provided?

I will consult with Secretary Mattis and the Chiefs to determine if authorities are adequate.

Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) Program

If confirmed, would you recommend the continuation of the MAVNI program and the acceptance of new applicants? If so, what reforms, if any, would you recommend to ensure that the benefits of the program – recruiting those with critical skills and language/cultural backgrounds – outweigh the costs associated with conducting proper security screening of participants?

My understanding is that the DOD IG is conducting a thorough review of the MAVNI program and that new accessions are halted. I am not privy to the investigation.

This is first and foremost a military program designed to bring into the military those with critical skills. My read of the program is that many MAVNI enlistees were not subject to complete background checks and inadequately tracked post accession

It is also my understanding that many MAVNI enlistees were brought into the service to perform basic MOS missions—truck drivers, logisticians etc., not the critical MOS’ for which the program was created.

This is not to confuse the issue with one championed by Senators Shaheen and Tillis to protect and bring to America those Afghans who have sacrificed for us on the battlefield.

If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you take to address the issue of MAVNI participants' legal status expiring while they await entry into active duty?

I will consult with the General Counsel of the Department to make this determination.

Recruiting and Retention

The Department of Defense has indicated that approximately 25% of today's youth population is eligible for military service. This number is alarmingly low.

What are the main reasons for such a small pool of individuals in the 17-24 years of age population being eligible for service?

Physical fitness

What impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the armed forces have on the number of individuals eligible for military service? If confirmed, what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for military service without degrading the quality of recruits?

A review of current exclusionary childhood medical conditions should be conducted by the surgeons general.

In your view, should the existing medical and other qualifications for enlistment be changed to accommodate certain new specialties, such as cyber or RPA pilots?

Lateral accessions for critical technical needs should be reviewed. All options should be on the table.

What is your view of increasing the number of individuals eligible for service by recruiting individuals who are older than the typical core recruiting demographic?

The Department has in several instances advanced the accessions age for the military. Age should not be the sole limiting factor if a critical specialty is needed.

Some services have recently relaxed grooming and appearance standards. In your view, how will this impact recruiting and retention?

I have not seen the data or the reasons behind the policy.

What policies or tools are needed by the Department to increase the propensity to serve of today's youth?

We must expose as many young Americans as possible to the prospect of service. This includes making it easier for them to access recruiting information online and perchance have recruiting information on people interested in serving available to all components.

Recruiters should be given the flexibility of offering service in both the active and reserve components to increase a recruit's options.

Evaluate and if possible expand the reach of JR ROTC.

Expand the Warrant Officer program

Find more colleges for ROTC and put ROTC in touch with our junior colleges and community colleges.

Pilot Retention

A number of Air Force officials have testified before Congress about the increasingly acute shortage of pilots the Air Force is experiencing. Secretary Wilson and General Goldfein recently testified that the Air Force projects a deficit of approximately 1,500 pilots, including approximately 1,300 fighter pilots. The Navy and Army have their own pilot retention issues. General Goldfein has described the problem as a national crisis that will require a national response.

What do you see as the role of the USD(P&R) in crafting a Department-wide plan to mitigate and ultimately resolve the pilot shortage?

USD P&R can facilitate a holistic view of the aviation culture and provide the Secretary of Defense with a comprehensive picture of the state of military aviation and what new ideas can be explored to address the pilot shortage.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to coordinate a Department-wide, and national, response to the pilot shortage?

Bring the services together and explore opportunities for more creative career paths for pilots including options for pilots to move more freely amongst the active, reserve and Guard components—depending on how their particular life circumstances change.

Do you believe that money is the primary reason that pilots choose to stay in military service?

No—pilots join the service to fly. Money is a factor but if pilots see their chances to fly continue to diminish because of budget cuts or dearth of platforms they will leave the service regardless of monetary incentives.

What non-monetary ideas do you have for incentivizing pilots to stay and fly for the armed forces?

Provide pilots with a choice in career paths—if pilots want to concentrate on flying then they should be given that opportunity and not be forced into a higher command path which in many cases takes them away from flying. This is something that the British and Israelis do well and it is a solution that fits well into the reserve and Air Guard model.

Do you believe a cultural change is necessary to deal with the pilot exodus facing the Department? Yes

Do you believe it is wise to apply business case analyses when determining who should receive a retention bonus and at what level?

The bonuses should be allotted based on the needs of the military community and the performance of the individual.

Mobilization and Demobilization of National Guard and Reserves

Over the past 15 years, the National Guard and Reserves have experienced their largest and most sustained employment since World War II. 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?

From personal observations, I do believe the process on both ends is too long. We still have not fully digitalized the process.

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?

The most important aspect of the Reserve world is not mobilization but preparing in real time to enter the fight.

The Army is reviewing the amount of time Reservists and their commanders spend on mandatory personal readiness evolutions. Commanders are tasked with page after page of requirements that they must pass on to their troops. In an environment where one has two weeks in the summer to train and one weekend a month, this takes precious time away from training to fight. I have experienced this as a Reservist.

What is your assessment of the Department of Defense programs to assist members of the National Guard and Reserves as they transition from a mobilized status?

DOD and the Congress should periodically review the adequacy of USERRA and the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act to determine their viability in a 21st century environment.

Military Quality of Life

The Committee remains concerned about the sustainment of key quality of life programs for military families, such as family support, child care, education, employment support, health care, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) services, especially as the Department of Defense's budget declines. The services have, for several years, failed to meet the minimum appropriated funding standard, as required by Department policy, for certain MWR programs.

If confirmed, what military quality of life programs would you consider a priority, and how would you work with the services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress to sustain them while eliminating some programs that may be ineffective?

Child care

Ask the services for a status report on the state of child care services for their bases and the availability of those services off the base.

Dependent medical care

Childhood behavioral care—e.g., autism, ADD, ADHD treatment.

Adequacy of Youth Sports

Cost effective PX/BX system

What would you do to ensure that the services meet the Department's minimum appropriated funding requirements for MWR programs?

Ensure that the DOD audit considers MWR programs.

Family Readiness and Support

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

Currently, dwell time—the pressure on families of constant deployment and personnel rotation coupled with uneven access to childcare and the full range of medical care is a holistic family problem.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced?

I would follow the lead of this committee which has made family and health readiness a priority as reflected in the FY 18 NDAA.

If confirmed, how would you ensure support is provided 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?

Full integration of the support and mobilization and de-mobilization programs of the active force be provided to the reserve component.

Department of Defense Schools in the Continental United States

Some have questioned the continuing need for Defense Department-operated schools for military dependent children within the Continental United States (CONUS).

In light of the Administration’s past requests for additional Base Realignment and Closure authorities and the Department’s current fiscal constraints, should the Department update its criteria for the continued operation of Department schools within CONUS?

This is an issue that brings together a myriad of potential stakeholders—Military families, Congress, DOD, the Services, Governors, Mayors, County Commissions and City Councils.

Having been raised in the DOD School system, I understand the importance of the DOD Schools to the military culture. That said, the culture of the military has changed. In my youth, most families lived on the post—that has changed particularly at bases adjacent to major population centers. At remote installations, servicemembers have fewer opportunities. In addition, a comprehensive review of the DOD schools must include an assessment of the ability of states and localities to provide our military youth with the educational opportunities that their parents expect should the Department and Congress determine that reforms are needed.

If confirmed, how would you approach the task of eliminating some Department-operated schools in CONUS?

Military dependents' education plays an important role in the success, stability, readiness, and retention of our service members and their families. If confirmed, I will work with all stakeholders, in collaboration and consultation with the Military Departments and Congress, to review the best options for providing education support for military families.

Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs

If confirmed, how would you ensure that service members with special needs family members relocate only to new duty stations where special needs services are available?

I have experienced a similar matter in my own childhood and in those days, it was up to the discretion of the chain of command to provide such services.

I will work with the services to create policy to ensure that members are assigned to installations where such services are available

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

The community support system must be activated. This includes online information, unit personnel offices, hospitals, chaplains, schools etc.

Commissary and Military Exchange Systems

What is your view of proposals to consolidate, eliminate, or privatize commissaries and exchanges in certain areas where they are duplicative of services readily available at reasonable cost in the community?

The Commissary is part of the earned benefit for active reserve and retired families. I grew up going to the Commissary and still use it as a Reservist. The quality of life value of these benefits is of great importance to our service members and their families. If confirmed, I am open to assessing whether the value provided by the commissary or exchange systems could be more effectively provided by a private party, with the understanding that regardless of outcome servicemembers will still have access to the benefit.

If confirmed, would you approve a pilot program to test privatization of the defense commissary system?

As long, as the DOD is constrained by sequestration, all areas for cost savings should be explored. If confirmed, I am open to assessing whether the value provided by the commissary system could be more effectively provided by a private party.

Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Workforce

As the Department of Defense draws down its management headquarters functions, managers will have to make tough choices on the consolidation of functions and employees.

What is your view of a civilian employee retention system that incentivizes performance above all other factors when considering which employees to retain in a limited headquarters environment?

Performance is the key metric in any organization. It is my understanding that the Department revised its reduction in force policy in accordance with Section 1101 of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act.

If confirmed, what would be your role in the consolidation and elimination of duplicative and unnecessary positions within the Office of the USD(P&R)?

Secretary Mattis' metric is that if a program does not contribute to the lethality of the force or readiness it must be considered for elimination. I believe I would have the mandate to eliminate such programs.

What additional ideas do you have to more efficiently manage the Department's civilian employees?

Employ best practice skills from industry to better match talents with jobs. Provide better access to comprehensive education in modern business practices such as human resource management and follow the guidelines set by the Deputy Secretary in the implementation of his new business model.

Do you feel the new performance management system will properly address the issue of employee performance reviews and ratings?

The Department must effectively manage the civilian workforce while ensuring the appropriate mix of skill sets and related expertise, which enhance the readiness and lethality of our military. We must also be sure sufficient levels of civilians are available to perform critical oversight, management, and performance of readiness functions of the Department.

What, if anything, would you improve about the performance management system?

I do not have enough information about the new system at this time to make an assessment. If confirmed, I will review the Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program to determine what, if any, improvements should be made.

Do managers have adequate tools to incentivize employee performance?

I do not have enough information about all the incentive tools at this time to make an assessment. If confirmed, I will review the current tools in place and, if necessary, work with leadership and Congress to support increased flexibilities.

What is your opinion of a renewable term appointment system for new employees rather than the current tenure system?

If confirmed, I am open to considering alternative civilian personnel systems and am willing to work with the Congress to support efforts that will improve the civilian workforce.

Management Headquarters Reductions

The Department of Defense is currently under a statutory mandate to reduce headquarters staff by 25%.

What progress has the Office of the Secretary of Defense made thus far on the 25% reductions?

It is my understanding that DOD has not met the Congress' mandate. This is not new. Chairman McCain first raised the issue in 1999 and Secretary Rumsfeld's famous "Eliminate Bureaucracy" speech of September 10, 2001 argued that the Department had not met SASC goals of reducing headquarters overhead. If confirmed I will review SASC guidance with the Services.

I believe bureaucracy should be at the minimal level required to accomplish assigned tasks. At the same time, the role of the Department of Defense's civilian leadership is critical, and we must exercise a commitment to maintaining the principle of civilian control. I also agree with Secretary Gates and Chairman McCain that efficiencies can be gained by limiting contracted support to ensure that inherently governmental functions are performed by federal employees. I believe staff size should be based on assessments of the workforce needed to accomplish assigned tasks

Do you agree that the Department of Defense should strive to eliminate duplicative functions? Yes

Do you believe that the process for deciding which functions are to be eliminated should be streamlined through each service or customized to fit each service's needs?

The needs of the force must always be given deference.

Acquisition Workforce

The Department of Defense acquisition workforce has been the subject of a large quantity of reports and legislation.

What is your view on giving more acquisition authority to the service chiefs?

Agree that acquisition policy and choices should be made closer to the warfighter.

In what ways can we better train military personnel to be acquisition professionals?

The Committee has begun to move the Department toward modernizing its acquisition services. The acquisition corps in particular needs to be better trained and educated. There would be considerable value in expanding the Secretary of Defense Corporate Fellows program. Unlike many other DOD fellowship programs, which focus on providing personnel with a better understanding of government processes, the SECDef Corporate Fellowship provides up to twenty officers with the opportunity to spend a year in industry. This program should be increased across the board, allowing perhaps as many as sixty officers to benefit from this valuable experience in industry. It should also be expanded to include civilians as well.

How do you envision an acquisition workforce that holds the leadership accountable for cost overruns on procurement contracts?

Yes—in line with the Secretary's vision to implement modern business practices within the DOD.

Do you believe that the Acquisition Demonstration Project initiatives have been successful?

I have not been privy to the data gleaned from the Acquisition Demonstration Project.

GI Bill Benefits

Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act in 2008 (“Post-9/11 GI Bill”) that provides generous educational benefits for service members who have served at least 90 days on active duty since 9/11.

What is your assessment of the impact of the Post-9/11 GI Bill on recruiting and retention, including the provision of transferability for continued service?

Transferability is a vital incentive for family readiness. In the interest of full disclosure, I have taken advantage of this program for my family.

Would you recommend that the Department use transferability more sparingly as a retention incentive? No

Personnel Policy Implementation

What is your understanding of your responsibility, if confirmed, to inform and consult with this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress on the implementation of policies directed by law?

It is my responsibility after consultation with the Secretary to consult with and inform this committee on personnel policies.

What is your understanding of the Department’s obligation and authority to implement personnel policies to improve efficiency within the Department?

It has a legal obligation to implement policy set by Congress and a moral responsibility to improve efficiencies wherever possible.

What is your understanding of the timeframe in which personnel policies directed by law must be implemented by the Department?

Within the expectations of and timelines set by the Congress

Readiness Matters

How do you see the USD(P&R) role in the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress? Specifically, do you see it as a way to disseminate information or as a way to proactively impact shortfalls and gaps in our military’s force structure?

I see the USD (P&R)’s role in the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress (QRRC) both ways. The QRRC is an important mechanism allowing the Department to report the current state of readiness by identifying our most pressing issues. However, it must go

further by providing the Department's plan to mitigate and address the issues we have identified. With today's challenging fiscal environment and global threats, the Department must provide Congress with responsible and effective ways to recommend readiness solutions instead of simply stating the problem.

What is your assessment of the current metrics used to measure readiness? Do you believe the Department has any true metrics to accurately measure readiness from both a service and joint perspective?

I have not been privy to nor reviewed the Department's metrics used to measure readiness. However, I do know that in most cases when dealing with analytics, a combination of metrics, data analysis, and modeling must be used to accurately portray a given subject. If confirmed, I will look into the Department's process for measuring readiness to ensure an unbiased, fact-based approach is in place and I will ensure Congress receives value-added readiness information.

What is your opinion of a commander's ability to subjectively override a unit's readiness rating?

Commanders play the central role in developing a trained and ready forces. Assessments of a unit's warfighting capability and organizational resources are done with the professional judgment of commanding officers, who ultimately ensure the quality of both assessment and resource reporting. I believe a Commander's ability to subjectively override a readiness rating under extenuating circumstances is a critical part of readiness reporting and one that should not be taken away.

However, I do realize that in rare cases this can present situations whereby an assessment falls outside the spectrum of normal and/or accurate reporting. I will continue to monitor and report these outliers, and ensure Commanders make overrides only when truly necessary and exercise sound judgment in their assessments.

What is your assessment of how the 2017 federal hiring freeze impacted readiness?

I am aware that the Department was granted the flexibility to exempt from the hiring freeze any positions deemed necessary to meet national security or public safety responsibilities. It is my understanding that these flexibilities allowed the Department to weather the effects of the hiring freeze and minimize the impact to mission readiness and family programs.

What is your assessment of how the USD(P&R) works with the Joint Staff to improve upon readiness challenges identified by the services?

In addition to being the advisor to the Secretary on total force readiness, USD (P&R) largely operates to provide strategic oversight of Military Service readiness. Its readiness products and processes achieve an optimal balance of assessing readiness recovery and surge capability. These products inform the Defense Committees about the strategic and operational risks, in addition to planned mitigations challenging the Military Services. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen the relationship between USD (P&R) and the Joint Staff to achieve their common goals, which is to create the most lethal, decisive fighting force our Nation has ever had.

The Department relies on the organic industrial base to ensure that aging and damaged weapon systems and support equipment are available to warfighters when needed. In recent years, however, backlogs have plagued our armed forces' ability to train and fight. In your relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness, what is your understanding of the current industrial base's ability to not only share best practices but to implement those practices on underperforming services?

Readiness touches all aspects of our Joint Force, including how the industrial base supports the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will work directly with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness to address how the industrial base impacts readiness. I will ensure P&R does not operate in a silo and the logistics and materiel community understands where our readiness pressure points are so that we can create mitigation plans.

Congressional Oversight

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

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of 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 USD(P&R)? 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 in a timely manner? 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 this Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents? YES

Do you agree to answer letters and requests for information from individual Senators who are members of this Committee? YES

If confirmed, do you agree to provide to this Committee relevant information within the jurisdictional oversight of the Committee when requested by the Committee, even in the absence of the formality of a letter from the Chairman? YES