

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Mr. Michael Duffey
Nominee to be Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment

Duties and Qualifications

Section 133b of title 10, United States Code, describes the duties and powers of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)).

In your opinion, what are the most important roles of the USD(A&S) in supporting the missions of the Department of Defense (DOD)?

The USD(A&S) is the Principal Staff Assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all matters relating to acquisition and sustainment in the Department of Defense, with responsibility for delivering integrated capabilities to our warfighters quickly and at scale. This requires that the USD(A&S) maintain effective oversight of the full DoD acquisition and sustainment enterprise while establishing appropriate policies and processes to drive innovation and production at scale; foster a robust defense industrial base; sustain and modernize our weapons systems over their full life cycles; build a resilient logistics and mission support enterprise; empower the acquisition and sustainment workforce to increase cost efficiency and reduce delivery timelines; and ensure Service members and their families have safe and functional places to live and work.

Civilian oversight of the acquisition system was a key recommendation of the Packard Commission and with Goldwater-Nichols Act. What are your personal views on the principle of civilian control of the defense acquisition system?

I support the provisions included in the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which provides a clear and streamlined chain of command between the Defense Acquisition Executive and Military Service Acquisition Executives for effective oversight of the Defense Acquisition System. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Service Acquisition Executives to reinforce these principles.

Do you believe the USD(A&S) has been provided appropriate authority over the DOD acquisition and sustainment enterprise?

Based on my current understanding, I believe the USD(A&S) has the appropriate authority over the DoD acquisition and sustainment enterprise. If confirmed, I will work to further review these authorities and, if necessary, identify any potential changes for consideration.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to section 133b of title 10, United States Code?

I do not have any specific recommendations at this time. If confirmed, I will work to further review these provisions and, if necessary, identify any potential changes for consideration.

If confirmed, how do you plan to assess the organizational structure, workforce, authorities, and availability of resources to ensure that the Office of the USD(A&S) is able to effectively execute its mission?

If confirmed, I will work with leadership across the Department and my staff to assess how effectively A&S's organizational structure, workforce, and resourcing are aligned to the needs of our warfighters given the current operational environment and, if necessary, identify any potential changes for consideration.

If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (DUSD (A&S))?

If confirmed, I will prescribe duties to the DUSD(A&S) in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 137a(b). Close partnership with the DUSD is critical to maintain effective oversight of and accountability for the full A&S portfolio, and I will work closely with the DUSD to set the conditions required to deliver and sustain capabilities to our warfighters quickly at scale.

If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Assistant Secretaries and other officials (e.g., Executive Director for Business Operations and Special Programs) who will report to you or the DUSD (A&S)?

If confirmed, I will prescribe duties to the Assistant Secretaries and other direct reports within A&S in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 138(b), the A&S charter, and their individual organizations' charters. In conjunction with the DUSD, I will work closely with each to maintain effective oversight of and accountability for their respective portfolios. I will set the conditions required for them to apply their management and subject matter expertise to support our warfighters across the breadth and depth of the full A&S portfolio.

If confirmed, you would be responsible for managing the defense acquisition system. Section 133b of title 10, United States Code, requires the USD(A&S) to have “an extensive system development, engineering, production, or management background and experience with managing complex programs.”

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

I have more than two decades of experience in the national security and technology communities, including nearly 15 years in the Department of Defense. I have previously served as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, Chief of Staff to the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, and conducted multiple tours of duty in the former Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology. Having also served in the Office of Management and Budget, I have a

unique combination of perspectives that contribute to enhancing the Department's ability to deliver capability to the warfighter quickly at scale. If confirmed, I will apply these experiences to bring a holistic approach to increasing the effectiveness of the defense acquisition system and enhancing the Department's efficiency across the full acquisition and sustainment enterprise.

If confirmed, how would you leverage the skills and knowledge gained through your prior experiences to carry out the duties of the USD(A&S)?

The duties of USD (A&S) require a combination of programmatic, financial, and organizational management experience at an enterprise level. If confirmed, I will directly apply my experience in these areas to the duties of the USD(A&S) position by engaging directly and deeply with the staff on matters facing the Department to quickly work through the range of potential pathways to overcome challenges, build a roadmap for thorough implementation, and oversee successful execution to accomplish the mission.

Conflicts of Interest

Federal ethics laws, to include 18 U.S.C. §208, prohibit government employees from participating in matters where they, or certain family members or organizations with which they have certain relationships, have a financial interest.

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including investments, business ties, family relationships, or other connections that could be perceived as influencing your decision making?

Yes.

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, that if a conflict of interest arises, you will recuse yourself from participating in any relevant decisions regarding that specific matter?

I will comply with all recusal requirements under 18 U.S.C. § 208.

Do you commit, without qualification, if confirmed, to decision-making on the merits and exclusively in the public interest, without regard to private gain or personal benefit?

Yes.

Priorities and Challenges

If confirmed, what are the top priorities you would plan to focus on during your tenure as the USD(A&S)? What would be your plans for achieving these priorities?

If confirmed as USD(A&S), my top priorities I plan to focus on during my tenure as the USD(A&S) will be to:

1. Rebuild our military into a fighting force that will deter and, if necessary, decisively defeat our adversaries
2. Rapidly accelerate delivery of capability that provides dominant military superiority to our warfighter
3. Align requirements, budgeting, and acquisition across the enterprise to ensure we are focused on funding, buying, and building the weapon systems needed most to achieve our national security objectives and protect US interests
4. Modernize and streamline the defense acquisition system to empower our workforce, improve the quality and speed of our internal decision-making, and attract increased private capital investment and new entrants to maximize competition, quality, and affordability in the defense industrial base
5. Revitalize and reindustrialize our defense industrial base and repatriate our supply chains to provide resilience and deliver domestically sourced systems and components to provide our military with decisive advantage to deter and prevail in future conflict

Implementing these priorities will require rapid action to implement quick win opportunities that create momentum and build a culture that prioritizes accountability, urgency, and performance. If confirmed, I intend to immediately assess the current state of the USD(A&S) organization and our integration with the broader DoD, the health and performance of major defense acquisition programs, and the state of the defense industrial base. Throughout this initial review, I intend to refine these priorities based on the findings of the review and conversations with stakeholders, and build and execute a roadmap for rapid implementation of priority initiatives in partnership with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering, the Military Department leadership, and the Congress.

In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing the DOD's acquisition and sustainment communities?

The DoD's acquisition and sustainment communities face considerable challenges in executing the mission to ensure our military is equipped with the force structure and combat support services required to assure mission success. Our acquisition and sustainment workforce consists of dedicated, patriotic professionals who are committed to achieving this mission with dedication and skill every day. However, aligning the incentives and balancing the diverse perspectives and priorities of stakeholders across such a broad enterprise that includes OUSD(A&S), the broader Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, the defense industrial base, and international allies and partners, presents a difficult challenge to the Department and the leadership responsible for delivering results.

Additionally, the acquisition and sustainment (A&S) communities continually face pressing challenges to balance competing priorities to optimize acquisition decisions and

execution, including minimizing the speed and cost of delivery while ensuring required system performance and staying current with emerging technological innovation. A&S must also work to effectively manage the healthy tension in its relationship with industry, demanding performance and enforcing accountability while working to streamline regulations, incentivize innovation, and attract new companies to maintain a robust, competitive industrial base that rapidly delivers high performance systems within budgeted cost and schedule. A&S can only overcome these challenges with strong leadership, a culture that prioritizes urgency, performance, accountability, and results, as well as a maintaining and improving dedicated, capable, motivated, and stable workforce of acquisition professionals within government and industry.

What would be your plans for addressing these challenges, if confirmed?

Overcoming these challenges will require leadership and an unrelenting effort to create and maintain the alignment and unity of effort to accelerate our acquisition and sustainment of capability that is responsive to the needs of the warfighter while balancing speed, affordability, and performance. In order to overcome these challenges and keep pace with our adversaries in delivering cutting-edge technology quickly and affordably, adapting to rapid technological change, maintaining a healthy, diverse, competitive, and innovative industrial base, ensuring a resilient and secure supply chain, and maintaining and improving a 21st century workforce, if confirmed I intend to focus on building a culture that values urgency, speed, and performance while prioritizing results. This will require a commitment to open and frequent communication with the workforce, regular and robust engagement with internal and external stakeholders, and empowerment of the workforce with the necessary flexibility, authority, and resources, enforcement of accountability.

In addition to creating and maintaining a workplace culture focused on performance and results, if confirmed I intend to drive implementation of key initiatives that will keep our acquisition and sustainment system at the cutting edge of 21st century management practices that drive performance, including implementation of ongoing initiatives such as capability portfolio management, the adaptive acquisition framework, modular open system architectures, other transaction authority contracting, and acquisition workforce development. In addition, if confirmed, I intend to prioritize initiatives that will align, streamline, and modernize the requirements, budget, and acquisition, accelerate modernization, digitization, and streamlining of the acquisition process, and revitalize the defense industrial base.

By what metrics will you measure your progress towards achieving these priorities and addressing these challenges?

Effective data collection, measurement, and analytics are absolutely essential to aligning an enterprise with the size and impact of the defense acquisition and sustainment system and ensuring the necessary focus on the results that the Secretary, the President, the Congress, and the American people demand from the Department. If confirmed, I intend to focus on ensuring our acquisition and sustainment system dramatically improves our

data collection, analytics, and measurement capability and aligns with the cutting edge of 21st century corporate management best practices, measuring the performance of the overall system and individual components to continually assess and respond to dynamic conditions and optimize the allocation and application of resources to most effectively deliver results.

The prioritization of data-driven oversight and decision-making will enable more robust awareness of system performance in delivering results and the effectiveness of reforms while enabling a focus on maximizing positive change in metrics such as the US comparative advantage in military technological advantage, speed and efficiency of acquisition program delivery, program affordability and cost growth, current and projected system inventory and readiness levels, industrial base health and competitiveness, domestic production capacity and procurement rates within critical defense product lines, private sector investment in innovation and production, supply chain resilience and security, and workforce performance, skills, satisfaction, and retention. In addition to monitoring these outcome-based metrics, if confirmed, I intend to prioritize monitoring and maximizing the effectiveness of our data collection, analysis, and value to continually improve A&S decisions and execution.

How do you propose to enforce accountability for acquisition decisions and processes under your purview, both for yourself and for those in your chain of command?

Accountability and transparency are essential to maintaining alignment and a focus on delivering the most impactful results across the enterprise. If confirmed I would establish and reinforce clear lines of authority and responsibility so that the Program Managers and Program Executive Officers on the front lines of acquiring capability for the warfighter are empowered with the authority to make decisions, the resources to execute, the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, and the accountability to deliver results. This includes a clear definition of authorities, responsibilities, and expectations throughout the acquisition lifecycle.

If confirmed, I would also ensure there is a clear chain of command for all acquisition programs, with well-defined escalation paths for addressing issues and making key decisions. This includes access to leadership to quickly resolve issues and move forward with deliberate action. If confirmed, I would work to enhance transparency and increase data-driven decision making by modernizing the acquisition enterprise, digitizing the practice of acquisition, and continually measuring and managing through data-driven insights into program execution against key performance indicators (KPIs) like schedule, cost, and performance goals.

If confirmed, I will also seek to leverage data analytics by implementing advanced data analytic tools and artificial intelligence to identify trends, assess risks, inform decision-making throughout the acquisition lifecycle, strengthen performance management, and align incentives while tying program performance to personnel evaluations and prioritizing results over effort. By linking program manager and acquisition workforce

performance evaluations to program outcomes, we can reward success and address underperformance.

If confirmed, I would also work with the Military Departments and acquisition program leadership to structure contracts with industry partners to incentivize on-time delivery, cost controls, and delivery to performance specifications, with an intent to recognize and reward excellence from individuals and teams that demonstrate exceptional performance in acquisition program management. The Department must ensure there are appropriate consequences for poor performance, focusing on implementing corrective action plans for programs experiencing significant schedule delays, cost overruns, or performance shortfalls, re-baselining or terminating failing programs, and holding individuals accountable for poor performance or misconduct through appropriate administrative and disciplinary actions.

Key Relationships

Recent National Defense Authorization Acts have directed significant changes to the assignment of responsibilities within the defense acquisition system. For example, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 split the former Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD(AT&L)) into the USD(A&S) and the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (USD(R&E)).

In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of having two separate organizations: one to manage acquisition and sustainment, and one to manage research and engineering?

With two Principal Staff Assistants in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, one primarily focused on Acquisition & Sustainment and the other focused on Research & Engineering, the Department benefits from a sharper focus and increased expertise within each respective portfolio, allowing USD(A&S) to focus time, resources, and attention on the complex processes of acquiring and sustaining weapon systems and ensuring programs are delivered on time and within budget to meet our warfighter's most pressing needs. It also allows USD(R&E) to concentrate efforts on long-term technological superiority, fostering innovation, and working in partnership with USD(A&S) to transition cutting-edge technologies from the lab to the battlefield.

Two separate offices also allow a tailored approach to developing the strategies and policies that are specific to the unique challenges of each area, such as streamlining acquisition processes for A&S and fostering innovation ecosystems for R&E. This construct also elevates the importance of R&E by creating a dedicated voice for science and technology at the highest levels of the DoD, emphasizing the critical role of innovation in maintaining military advantage.

These benefits must overcome some disadvantages, including the potential for silos and coordination challenges limiting communication and collaboration and hindering the smooth transition of technologies from R&E to A&S. There is also risk of duplication from overlapping responsibilities, the competition for limited resources, and the additional growth of layers of bureaucracy that complicates decision-making processes if it is not managed effectively.

The success of this organizational structure depends heavily on effective communication, collaboration, and leadership, including the establishment of strong communication channels and the fostering of joint initiatives between USD(A&S) and USD(R&E) to ensure seamless transition of technologies and alignment of priorities. USD(A&S) and USD(R&E) can explore opportunities to develop joint strategic plans and technology roadmaps that bridge the gap between R&E and A&S, fostering a lifecycle approach to capability development, and measuring success with shared metrics and performance goals that incentivize collaboration and hold both organizations accountable for successful technology transition and fielding.

If confirmed as the USD(A&S), how would you envision your relationship with the USD(R&E)?

If confirmed, I intend to work collaboratively with USD(R&E), building upon our shared commitment to delivering decisive technological advantage to the warfighter. Through regular and frequent communication and coordination on the implementation of strategic priorities, I will seek to promote a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing both R&E and A&S, breaking down potential silos and fostering a culture of collaboration. Where applicable, I would seek to establish joint performance metrics that incentivize collaboration and hold both organizations accountable for successful technology transition and fielding, including the conduct of joint program reviews of key technology development efforts to assess progress, identify risks, ensure alignment on goals and objectives, and publicly recognize and reward joint successes in technology development and transition.

DOD continues to struggle with the transition of new technologies into existing programs of record. The USD(R&E) enterprise has primary responsibility for development of new advanced technologies, but the Acquisition and Sustainment enterprise must also do its part to address transition of technology development programs into procurement and fielding.

What impediments to technology transition do you see within the Department?

Technology transition is a critical capability that the Department has struggled to effectively implement in recent years. The problem is magnified by a recent surge in innovative technology solutions emerging from commercial, non-traditional, and new defense industrial base vendors. The Department must work to tackle the challenges that hamper the rapid transition of emerging technology into production and delivery to the warfighter.

Among those challenges, the Department's labs and technologists are often incentivized to prioritize groundbreaking research and technological advancements, sometimes at the expense of practical considerations like manufacturability, affordability, and integration with existing systems. The acquisition enterprise, intentionally focused on delivering proven capabilities within cost and schedule constraints, can be risk-averse to adopting new and unproven technologies, particularly if they require significant modifications to existing programs.

As separate organizations, R&E and A&S are also at risk of operating in separate silos, with decreased communication and collaboration during the early stages of technology development. Given the expertise each organization provides, it is crucial to prioritize collaboration across the lifecycle of developing and acquiring capability to address manufacturability, sustainment, and integration challenges that can lead to costly redesigns and delays, while ensuring that new technologies that often struggle to secure funding within existing program budgets can compete for resources. The DoD's acquisition regulations and test and evaluation processes, while intended to ensure accountability, can be complex and time-consuming, hindering the rapid fielding of new technologies.

Finally, the DoD lacks a cohesive, department-wide strategy for technology transition, leading to inconsistent approaches and missed opportunities across different service branches and agencies. Dedicated funding for technology transition efforts must be prioritized to bridge the "valley of death" between R&D and procurement.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to increase the rate and frequency at which proven technologies developed by DOD, defense industry, or the commercial sector are transitioned into programs of record?

If confirmed, it would be among my highest priorities to increase the rate and frequency at which proven technologies developed by DOD, the defense industry, or the commercial sector are transitioned into programs of record. If confirmed, I would work to collaborate with the joint staff to assess and reform the requirements process to ensure we are striking the right balance between adequately communicating the needs of the Department and the warfighter for technology to maintain dominance on the battlefield while preserving the flexibility for creative engineers, technologies, and executives in industry to innovate and deliver timely, cost effective, and high performance solutions.

Additionally, if confirmed, I would seek to work with R&E to assess the inventory of available technology, identify quick win opportunities to promote adoption and transition of promising emerging technology, and develop an improved pathway within the Department to ensure that emerging technologies are identified and available without delay. If confirmed, I would look to partner with R&E and DIU to assess emerging technology and proposed commercial solutions for their readiness and availability to improve the warfighter's battlefield advantage, including the technology maturity, manufacturability, reproducibility, integration risk, maintainability, cost, and other

factors that enable the Department to introduce new technology into the complex ecosystem of sophisticated systems to enhance lethality, tracking, communications, and other capabilities essential to success on the battlefield.

If confirmed, I would also work to shift the culture within the A&S enterprise to be more accepting of calculated risks associated with adopting new technologies and recognize that not every transition will be successful, but the potential benefits of experimentation and lessons learned from failure outweigh the costs of excessive risk aversion. By developing incentive structures that reward program managers and acquisition professionals for successfully integrating new technologies into existing programs or creating new pathways for rapid fielding, we can promote greater risk tolerance to accelerate learning and delivery.

Finally, we must develop and track key metrics to measure the success of technology transition efforts, such as the time it takes to field new capabilities, the number of technologies successfully integrated into programs of record, and cost savings achieved through technology adoption. By regularly assessing the effectiveness of technology transition processes and making adjustments as needed, we can more quickly identify the delays in the process and more effectively accelerate transition emerging technology into fielded capabilities.

Implementation of Acquisition Reforms

Congress has authorized a range of authorities to tailor the acquisition process to enable the rapid delivery of new capabilities including the Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA), rapid acquisition authority, and the software acquisition pathway.

In your view, what benefit has the Department derived from its utilization of Middle Tier of Acquisition?

It is my understanding the Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) is designed to streamline the acquisition process for those programs that fit under that pathway. From my perspective, MTAs have allowed the DoD to deliver critical capabilities to warfighters faster than traditional acquisition approaches by employing rapid prototyping, experimentation, and fielding of systems in shorter time frames. MTAs have also enabled DoD to be more responsive to evolving threats with increased flexibility to adapt requirements and incorporate new technologies as they emerge. If confirmed, I would seek ways to maximize use of this pathway and incorporate best practices and lessons learned to accelerate other acquisition pathways.

In your view, what benefit has the Department derived from its utilization of the rapid acquisition authority?

In my view, the U.S. warfighter has benefitted from the use of Rapid Acquisition Authority (RAA) and the Urgent Capability Acquisition (UCA) pathway. Both tools

enable the Department to rapidly address urgent operational needs and respond to emerging threats. If confirmed, I will look to leverage all the tools at my disposal, like RAA and UCA, to ensure our warfighters are getting the best capabilities at speed and scale.

In your view, what benefit has the Department derived from its utilization of the software acquisition pathway?

I believe a key benefit of the Software Pathway's rapid innovation cycles and capabilities has been more streamlined acquisition processes and increased Warfighter engagement within the development and evaluation of products. If confirmed, I will work across the Department to ensure its continued use to rapidly deliver capabilities to outpace evolving threats.

If confirmed, how will you ensure that rapid acquisition pathways are not inundated with unnecessary or unwarranted bureaucratic processes?

If confirmed, I will assess whether the acquisition workforce is fully leveraging the flexible pathways available in the Adaptive Acquisition Framework to maximize speed, deliver capabilities to the warfighter at an accelerated pace, and apply lessons learned where this has been successful. It is my understanding that, except to the extent mandated by statute, the rulesets under each of the acquisition pathways are matters of policy established by the USD(A&S). If confirmed, I will remain vigilant and seek to ensure that any policy-rooted additions are thoroughly scrutinized and fully vetted by stakeholders before they are made.

If confirmed, how will you seek to balance the need to rapidly acquire and field innovative systems while ensuring acquisition programs stay on budget and schedule?

If confirmed, I will work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering and the Military Departments' Service Acquisition Executives to ensure the necessary policies are in place. It is my understanding that the Department has several initiatives and programs to facilitate rapid fielding and innovation and, if confirmed, I would seek to leverage and build upon these initiatives where practicable. It is also my understanding that several defense acquisition programs are delayed and over budget and, if confirmed, I will conduct a thorough review of any such programs. Finally, I appreciate that some cost growth and schedule delays are a function of optimistic planning at program inception and unrealistic expectations of industry. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that disciplined and thoroughly informed baselines are established in the first instance in cooperation with the SAEs.

In your view, has the Department successfully adopted the flexibilities provided in the Adaptive Acquisition Framework? If not, what would you do to improve the adoption of the flexible authorities to bring innovation into the Department?

The Adaptive Acquisition Framework is a flexible set of acquisition pathways for effective, suitable, survivable, sustainable, and affordable solutions to deliver advanced capabilities to the end user in a timely manner. Yet our holistic acquisition system, including the requirements process and resourcing process, is not fast or agile enough to provide our men and women in uniform with the most advanced equipment available on time and under budget. If confirmed, I will work with my staff and the Service Acquisition Executives to leverage the flexible authorities granted by Congress to maximize the use of competition, disciplined requirements, and the innovation of non-traditional vendors to accelerate fielding of advanced capabilities. I will also work with the Joint Staff, Services, DIU, Comptroller and CAPE to leverage opportunities to rapidly pursue acquisition programs and ensure we properly resource those programs once we commit to them.

In your view, are there any congressionally-mandated or Department-driven reforms that you would recommend be modified or suspended? If so, why?

If confirmed, I will review the suite of authorities set forth in statute and will seek to address any identified shortfalls through the legislative proposal process.

In your view, of the congressionally-mandated or Department-driven reforms, which specifically have been the most successful and impactful acquisition reform initiatives of the past decade?

Other Transaction Authority has provided a key tool for adopting new business models and working with non-traditional providers. Similarly, the Middle Tier of Acquisition pathway has also provided flexibility to move faster to acquire operational capabilities. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the additional impacts, positive and negative, that these and other reforms have had on the Defense Acquisition System. If confirmed, I will work with my staff to develop a data-driven understanding of the impact of the changes in the last few years, and more importantly, identify where we must do more or make changes to improve outcomes.

Software and IT Acquisition

Software has become one of the most critical components of DOD systems, but recent studies by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Defense Innovation Board, and the Defense Science Board, among others, show the Department's software development practices have not kept up with leading industry practices. While DOD has taken significant steps in the last few years, such as establishing a software acquisition pathway emphasizing rapid delivery and user engagement, programs have yet to consistently incorporate leading software development practices.

What do you believe are the major barriers to DOD fully adopting modern software development approaches, and what additional steps, if confirmed, would you take to drive their adoption throughout DOD?

I believe the Department has made considerable progress in adopting modern software practices in recent years, but we must accelerate the scaling and transformation of our workforce, processes, tools, and culture. Secretary Hegseth's recently issued memorandum addressing the Software Acquisition Pathway for instance, works to initiate a cultural change in how we do business, directly addressing the use of rapid acquisition authorities for software programs. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and Services to build on our early foundations and further optimize rapid software delivery through the modernization of our enterprise processes, strategies, and culture in line with Secretary Hegseth's guidance. If confirmed, I will also ensure the Department has the needed workforce, training, resources, and guidance at all levels, such as a Software Cadre, to accelerate our cultural shift to modern software practices into our programs, policies, and processes.

What changes would you recommend to the Software Acquisition pathway, if any?

It is my understanding that the Department has been proactive in making improvements to the Software Acquisition Pathway since its inception in October 2020 and has been working across the Department to improve its enterprise processes for requirements, testing, costing, and interoperability to support the accelerated delivery timelines required by the Software Pathway. For example, the recently signed new guidance adds opportunities for Defense Business Systems to use the Software Pathway's streamlined modern practices. If confirmed, I will work across the Department to optimize our enterprise processes, ensure we have the resources to scale wider adoption of this pathway, and implement Secretary Hegseth's direction for acquiring software components of weapons and business systems.

What recommendations do you have to improve the understanding and competency of software development and IT skills in the workforce to help government decision makers be better informed consumers of such capabilities?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Department has the needed workforce, training, resources, and guidance at all levels to accelerate our cultural shift to adopt modern software acquisition and development practices into our programs, policies, and processes. In an era of software-defined warfare, I believe it is critical to have a workforce with the expertise to implement commercial best practices, rapid innovation, and streamlined acquisition.

What is your assessment of the role of DOD software factories?

It is my understanding that the Department continues to improve its software production capabilities and to establish digital development pipelines and platforms that can accelerate delivery of capabilities to the warfighter. If confirmed, I will work across the Department to enable programs with the enterprise tools and processes it needs to support more rapid and secure digital product delivery.

Do you believe that consumption-based solutions, also called software-as-a-service, is a contracting methodology that should be more widely adopted by DOD? If so, what steps would you recommend to encourage the use of consumption-based solutions?

It is my understanding that Software-as-a-Service is growing within Defense Business Systems, and I believe the Department must continue to team with industry to expand the availability of these platforms and services to address military unique challenges. If confirmed, I will continue to both enable and encourage consumption-based solutions and commercial solutions to update and upgrade our IT infrastructure.

Advanced Technology Adoption

The rapid pace at which our adversaries are fielding technological advancements demands the Department establish an acquisition system that can deliver capabilities that are responsive to new threats and emerging technological opportunities.

In your view, do the current policies and practices of the defense acquisition system sufficiently encourage and support the adoption of disruptive technologies in the Department's acquisition programs? If not, what changes would you recommend in support of these initiatives?

I believe that the Department has the right policies and practices in place to adopt disruptive technologies, and while some modifications may improve the process, the larger challenge we face is that the acquisition workforce does not make sufficient use of the new agile approaches the Department has developed through the Adaptive Acquisition Framework. I also believe that the Department needs to better incentivize its acquisition workforce to take risks. If confirmed, I will work with my team in A&S, as well as the Service Acquisition Executives to assess the effectiveness of the current system and how well it is utilized.

What do you see as the balance when making tradeoff decisions regarding whether to pursue more deliberative major capability acquisition pathways versus rapid acquisition processes?

I believe that the type of capability the Department is acquiring should drive the means it uses to acquire that capability. Where the Department is willing to take more risk, we should prioritize the use of accelerated approaches, and when acquiring larger, more complex capabilities, a more deliberate process will ensure we are correctly managing risk to develop the capability. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that where more rapid, iterative processes can be applied, the Department will ensure maximized use of rapid pathways.

What do you view as the major barriers to entry for new companies that want to do business with DOD? How would you address these barriers, if confirmed?

New companies face significant hurdles when attempting to work with the DoD. Inconsistent demand signals, bureaucratic red tape, and a slow acquisition process discourage new companies from navigating the complexities of DoD contracts. Addressing these barriers requires a multi-pronged approach. This includes streamlining the acquisition and budgeting processes to provide clearer demand signals and proactive engagement with smaller, lesser-known companies to demonstrate that the DoD values their innovation and is committed to expanding the industrial base. By taking these steps, the DoD can attract fresh talent and ideas, ultimately bolstering its technological edge and improving national security.

What do you see as the impediments for program managers to quickly transition new technologies? What changes would you suggest to the program manager and program executive officer authorities?

I believe that program management is primarily about managing risk in delivering a critical capability to the warfighter while balancing cost, schedule, and performance. Driving disruption into the system, where a disruption orientation makes sense, will require better incentives in the Department to enable a culture that takes more risk and provides greater flexibility and authority to program managers with responsibility to deliver results. If confirmed, I will work with my team and the Service Acquisition Executives to improve our ability, and willingness, to take risks in the system.

What recommendations do you have for implementing portfolio management in defense acquisition, if any?

It is my understanding that the Department has made progress towards implementing portfolio management, including the release of a Directive that mandates the use of data-driven and mission-focused analysis and cross-Department reviews to better inform decisions within and across portfolios and programs. That said, I believe that the Department must go further to establish, refine, and integrate disciplined decision-making processes across all aspects of defense acquisition, including how it programs resources, sets requirements, and makes acquisition decisions. If confirmed, I will work with the key stakeholders across the Department, to include the Joint Staff, Comptroller, CAPE, R&E, DIU, and the Military Services to enable portfolio management and improve the Department's acquisition decisions.

What is your understanding of DOD's Capability Advantage Pathfinders (CAPs), and in your view, are there any lessons that may be learned in improving cross-portfolio capability development?

It is understanding that the Department is utilizing the CAP effort to develop innovative approaches to acquisitions utilizing current authorities. If confirmed, I will familiarize myself with the CAP initiatives and work to implement any critical lessons that could be used to accelerate and scale capability delivery.

Based on your experience, how would you structure DOD to conduct better tradeoff analysis so that programmatic investments are not stove-piped and can be assessed against the impact of various alternatives?

I believe the Department needs to make better decisions, faster. Embracing more mission-focused or portfolio-focused analysis can better inform our decisions aligned to Secretary Hegseth's priorities. I understand that A&S is leading the way on capability portfolio management, and A&S, along with other key stakeholders, is executing mission-focused portfolio analysis. If confirmed, I will review the capability portfolio management and mission-focused analytics ongoing in the Department and look for ways to improve our ability to make the right decisions to rapidly and cost-effectively deliver capability to the warfighter.

Other Transactions Authority (OTA)

Do you believe DOD's use of the transition to production authority under OTAs has been adequately leveraged?

I anticipate there is more the Department can do to leverage this important statutory authority for follow-on production of prototype OTAs that were competitively awarded and successfully completed. I believe the Department should consider potential follow-on production early in the process and then assess its use during the prototyping phase. If confirmed, I would work to ensure the Department clearly communicates to industry the technical success criteria under a prototype project to rationalize any transition to production.

What steps will you take to promote the appropriate use of OTAs to encourage the participation of new and non-traditional defense contractors in the defense industrial base?

If confirmed, I will promote the appropriate use of OTAs with our defense acquisition workforce by emphasizing the benefits of the Department's increased access to the innovative capabilities non-traditional defense contractors provide as essential to outpace our adversaries. The Department must prioritize the acquisition of commercial and other non-developmental capabilities that private sector entities have already funded where appropriate. Secretary Hegseth's recent Software Acquisition Pathway memorandum directs the use of Commercial Solutions Openings and Other Transactions as the default solicitation and award approaches for acquiring capabilities under the Software Pathway. I believe this memorandum is an important first step to encouraging the participation of new and non-traditional defense contractors in our defense industrial base, and I look forward to partnering with DIU to scale this approach.

Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE)

The Department’s acquisition process is closely linked with its PPBE process, and acquisition programs can move only as nimbly as the budget processes that fund them. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 established a commission to examine and make recommendations for PPBE reform.

In your view, which of the Commission on PPBE Reform’s final recommendations do you believe are most important to improving resource allocation and innovation in DOD?

I am committed to aligning the strategy, requirements, acquisition, and resource processes to support President Trump and Secretary Hegseth’s priorities. Today, we are in an age of rapidly changing technology where technology becomes obsolete soon after it is developed – which means we must work to shorten the acquisition lifecycle, enable rapid technology refresh and modernization, and prioritize resource allocation against the capabilities that provide the most significant military advantage against our adversaries

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, Secretary Hegseth, Deputy Secretary Feinberg, and across the Department to determine the needed changes to the process to ensure we have the greatest alignment of strategy, requirements, acquisition, and resourcing to achieve President Trump’s mandate of Peace through Strength.

What steps can the Department take to implement changes to PPBE of its own accord, and which changes do you think require congressional action?

The PPBE Commission devoted considerable time and effort to investigate reform opportunities and recommend much needed improvements to the Department’s Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) process. It is my understanding that many of the Commission’s recommendations may not require congressional action. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary for Comptroller, and the Director of Cost Assessment and Program Analysis to prioritize the reforms within our control with the greatest potential impact to improve the Department’s processes. Other recommendations that foster innovation and adaptability and provide flexibility to the Department will require significant collaboration with and action by the congressional defense committees. If confirmed, I commit to working with all stakeholders to ensure the strongest ties between strategy, acquisition, and resources to support President Trump and Secretary Hegseth’s priorities.

One of the major obstacles to successfully bringing emerging technologies into the Department’s acquisition system is the so-called “valley of death,” partially caused by the gap in funding between the development of a new technology and its transition into a program of record.

What changes are needed to the PPBE and other processes to help bridge the “valley of death”?

I believe the Department must find ways to ensure program managers and Department officials have the flexibility and authority to react to emerging technological opportunities, re-allocate resources as needed, and accelerate the transition of critical technologies across the valley of death. If confirmed, I will work with my team in A&S, as well as my colleagues in Comptroller, to explore acquisition solutions for improved operational integration. Moreover, if confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Military Departments, R&E, and DIU to ensure we establish technology transition partnerships and plans to ensure we deliver technologies to rapidly address warfighting needs.

In your view, what changes in the roles of innovation offices like Defense Innovation Unit, AFWERX, and the Strategic Capabilities Office, or in established program offices, are necessary to make sure new technologies have the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, and Facilities required to successfully transition to the field?

Acquisition is a life-cycle management activity that spans from basic research to sustainment and disposal. The innovation offices throughout the Department will continue to identify, develop, and acquire new products and technologies, some of which are not always designed with the DOTmLPF requirements in mind. If confirmed, I will work with my partners in the innovation community, R&E, the Military Services, and the Comptroller, to improve the integration of new technology.

Requirements

Section 811 of the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act required the Joint Staff to take a clean-sheet approach to the requirements process and section 884 of the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act created an independent advisory panel to review the requirements processes of DOD.

What is your view of the need for a clean-sheet approach to the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS), or do you believe incremental changes are sufficient?

I believe it is important to note that the Department's acquisition processes are more than just the DoD 5000 series acquisition policy and involve partners from across the Department in Joint Staff, CAPE, Comptroller, Policy, and others. Reforms to acquisitions can only go so far without related reforms to resourcing and requirements processes. Currently, no matter how fast an acquisition program can move, it is still locked into lengthy requirements and budgeting processes. If confirmed, I will work closely with the VCJCS to understand how we can improve requirements processes to align with agile acquisition methods, as well as the Comptroller and CAPE on how we resource to meet those requirements.

If confirmed, what recommendations would you make to the requirements process to make it more adaptive to changes in threats and technologies?

I believe we can improve how requirements are developed, shifting the culture from overly prescriptive requirements that narrowly define the solution specifications to broader descriptive requirements that define the capability needs while providing flexibility to industry to innovate while developing and delivering a solution. This reform is essential to address rapidly evolving threats posed by our adversaries, such as cybersecurity and electronic warfare, as well as enable the incorporation of new technologies to address capability needs without prescribing solutions. If confirmed, I will work closely with the VCJCS to understand how we can improve requirements processes to align with agile acquisition methods.

One critique of the requirements process is the interaction of “Big R” requirements approved, for example, in a Capabilities Development Document, and the “little r” requirements such as technical specifications in a contract solicitation.

Do you believe that program managers should have a stronger voice in requirements generation to ensure that technical implementation is feasible?

It is essential for the success of the Department’s acquisition process that the requirement offices in the Military Departments work with the acquisition community to ensure they are incorporating the latest technologies and facts of life into their requirements. If confirmed, I will work with the Joint Staff and the Military Services to improve our ability to develop more flexible requirements and enable the acquisition community to embrace new approaches to take greater risk in capability development.

If confirmed, how would you improve the feedback between program execution and validated requirements when information on technologies, threats, and costs become available?

It is my understanding that most of the time, the acquisition process follows a sequential approach that develops a requirement, budgets for it, then acquires it, meaning the operator does not touch it until delivery. I believe that the Department requires a more iterative approach to meet the threats of the 21st century. If confirmed, I will work with the Joint Staff, the Services, and USD(R&E) to improve how we incorporate a warfighter centered design process into our acquisition and requirements processes.

The USD(A&S) is not a member of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council but does advise the Secretary of Defense on how to acquire capabilities and what capabilities should be acquired.

In your opinion, should the requirements process for new capabilities continue to be primarily the province of the military departments, and military officers of the Joint Staff and the combatant commands?

Yes.

In your view, what should be the role of the Joint Staff in the requirements process versus the role of the military services?

I believe that it is critical we continue to let the Services drive their own requirements; however, I also believe that Joint Staff should be working to drive joint mission needs into Service requirements and ensuring that there is balance in addressing capability needs and gaps across the Services and Combatant Commands. We also need to ensure that joint mission needs and requirements are appropriately assigned to ensure execution and follow through in meeting those warfighting demands. If confirmed, I will work with the VCJCS to understand how A&S can better assist to ensure operational success in delivering capabilities to the warfighter.

If confirmed, in what circumstances would you consider it appropriate to recommend that the Secretary invest in a capability you consider of high importance, for which there is either no formal requirement or no military department is funding a solution to a requirement?

I believe that, in special circumstances, the Secretaries of the Military Departments or the Secretary of Defense, after consulting with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, may establish requirements, including providing capabilities for allies or partner agencies. I believe that it is the role of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment to advise the Secretary to invest in a capability that addresses critical issues to expedite delivery of essential capabilities through use of the Urgent Capability Acquisition pathway. I understand that A&S already plays a role in pursuing capabilities to address emergent and urgent needs through the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell, even when there is no formally established requirement, and no funding programmed by a Military Department. By all accounts, this has been a successful approach to meet many urgent needs and if confirmed I would seek ways to improve it.

If confirmed, what actions would you recommend to improve joint requirements development and cross service communication in order to create more efficiency in the Department?

If confirmed, I will work with the VCJCS and the Services to explore how to improve joint requirements and cross-service collaboration. Concepts like cross-Service sharing of requirements documents, capability needs statements that define an operational problem rather than define the solution, and joint requirements development that define what the Joint Force needs could improve efficiency in our requirements processes.

Test and Evaluation

The objective of test and evaluation activities is to ensure that system performance meets specifications and requirements, and that deployed capabilities are operationally effective against threats.

Are you satisfied with the Department's test and evaluation capabilities? If confirmed, in which areas, if any, do you believe the Department should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?

If confirmed, I will work with the USD(R&E) and the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) to ensure the Department of Defense (DoD) prioritizes investments in the most crucial test and evaluation (T&E) capabilities, as determined by the Secretary of Defense and the National Defense Strategy. As our innovators come up with new technologies, the Department will need new T&E capabilities and capacity to effectively test those technologies.

Do you believe that current DOD test and evaluation facilities, personnel, and technical test infrastructure are up to par for what is needed for the modernization challenges of the Department now and in the near future?

It is important that the DOD maintain modern test and evaluation (T&E) infrastructure and a highly qualified workforce where necessary to ensure we can successfully test weapon systems that give our warfighters a decisive advantage. If confirmed, I will work with the DOT&E and the USD(R&E) to ensure A&S cooperation and support where the Department seeks to enhance test & evaluation capabilities.

In your opinion, what is the appropriate role of developmental, operational, and live-fire testing in the acquisition process?

Developmental, operational, and live-fire testing are important aspects of the acquisition process to ensure our systems operate as intended and provide for the safety and security of our operators. If confirmed, I will work with the USD(R&E) and the DOT&E, to review the role of developmental, operational, and live-fire testing across the acquisition process.

What recommendations would you make to tailor documentation and approvals for test and evaluation for rapid acquisition, if any?

If confirmed, I will work with the USD(R&E) and the DOT&E to review the existing test and evaluation rapid acquisition documentation and approval process to determine if changes or tailoring are needed and, if necessary, work to tailor them as appropriate.

How should DOD test and evaluation capabilities support software and other efforts that require rapid iteration between development and deployment?

Early and continuous testing throughout the software life cycle is crucial to support effective and efficient evaluations and delivery timelines. I support integrating,

streamlining, and automating testing processes to enable rapid analysis of test data and evaluation of system operational effectiveness, suitability, and survivability. Program success depends on maximum sharing, reciprocity, availability, and reuse of test results and artifacts among testing and certification organizations.

If confirmed, under what circumstances would you support programs accepting more risk upfront (e.g., flight test failures) to attempt to accelerate fielding schedules for a potential conflict with China?

In recent years, the Department's test and evaluation community has sought to integrate aspects of developmental and operational testing and conduct such testing early in the acquisition process. If confirmed, I would seek pathways to accelerate these efforts to ensure early and frequent testing to accelerate fielding.

In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of increasing the integration among the developmental, acquisition, and testing communities?

Integration across the acquisition lifecycle through early collaborative test planning and execution will work to reduce late discovery of system issues and deficiencies.

What other reforms would you recommend to improve the timeliness, efficiency, and effectiveness of the test and evaluation process to more quickly correct technical deficiencies in weapon systems?

If confirmed, I would look to increase the use of digital ecosystems to integrate mission engineering, systems engineering, and test and evaluation to mitigate weapon system deficiencies.

What do you see as the operational test and evaluation needs for non-developmental or commercial items to ensure they can still meet the technical requirements and human factors needs of environments often more complex and demanding than commercial settings?

It is vital that we continue to integrate existing commercial and non-developmental capabilities to meet our technical requirements in efforts to achieve cost effectiveness, resilience, and drive rapid innovation. However, commercial technologies often aren't designed to operate under contested, high-stress, and complex environments – including adversary electronic warfare and cyber capabilities. If confirmed, I will work with the USD(R&E) to ensure that technology readiness experimentation evaluates commercial technologies to measure readiness for the modern battlefield. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with industry, particularly nontraditional defense contractors, to implement these processes.

Defense Industrial Base (DIB)

Over the past several years, there have been increasing concerns in Congress, industry, and the Department over the health of the DIB and its ability to reliably meet current and future defense needs. The war in Ukraine has showcased how challenging it is to restart and increase relevant munitions supply chains. Additionally, many supply chains have single points of failure and/or remain reliant on non-allied sources of material.

If confirmed, what do you assess to be the most significant challenges facing the DIB and how would you propose to address them?

It is my understanding that the most significant challenges facing the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) stem from steady de-industrialization over the last 50 years and the scale of our supply chain resilience issues. Unpredictable budgets and investments weaken the DoD-industrial base relationship and limit interest in DoD as a customer. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to assess the issues within the DIB, promote capabilities through targeted investment, increase private capital investment to increase production capacity, protect against adversarial capital and cyber intrusions, and partner with international partners and allies.

What steps will you take to ensure that the DIB has the appropriate manufacturing and production infrastructure to support current and future needs of DOD? Are there additional authorities that would be useful?

If confirmed, I will prioritize strengthening the Defense Industrial Base's (DIB) manufacturing and production infrastructure to meet the DoD's evolving needs. This begins with a comprehensive assessment, conducted in close collaboration with the Military Departments, to identify current and future production demands and pinpoint existing capability gaps.

I recognize the importance of the Defense Production Act (DPA) as a powerful tool for shaping the industrial base. I am committed to utilizing existing DPA authorities when authorized. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Congress to explore whether expanding DPA authorities would further enhance our ability to build the necessary capacities and address emerging challenges in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

What do you see as the levers to motivate the defense industrial base to make additional capital investment (for facilities and tooling), as well as research and development investments to increase the capacity of the defense industrial base?

First, the DoD must provide a clear and consistent demand signal to industry. This means streamlining the acquisition process, reducing regulatory barriers, and increasing the use of multi-year procurements to demonstrate a commitment to long-term business and incentivize investment. At the same time, fostering competition within the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) spurs companies to innovate and invest to remain competitive. Finally, we should strategically leverage existing investment vehicles, through programs like the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS), to forge strong public-private partnerships that share both the risks and rewards of bolstering the DIB. If confirmed, I

would seek to develop this collaborative approach to equip the DIB with the tools and capacity needed to meet current and future national security challenges.

What steps should the Department take—on its own or as part of a “whole of government” approach—to increase domestic industrial capacity and reduce reliance on suppliers in China and on other adversaries?

Reducing reliance on supply chains in adversarial nations, particularly China, for critical defense components requires a "whole-of-nation" approach that prioritizes the growth and resilience of America's defense industrial base. The DoD can lead this effort by incentivizing commercial industry to onshore supply chains, expanding domestic manufacturing capabilities, and prioritizing U.S. productivity and competitiveness. This includes working across government agencies, such as the State Department and the Department of Commerce, to implement strategic export controls, promote fair trade practices, and foster a more robust and secure domestic supply chain for critical components and platforms.

What actions should the Department take to address the threat of “adversarial capital” from China and other sources that seek to gain undue influence over the DIB?

The threat of "adversarial capital" from China and other foreign adversaries seeking to gain influence over the U.S. Defense Industrial Base (DIB) represents a significant and evolving challenge. These adversaries employ a range of tactics, including strategic investments, corporate acquisitions, and technology transfer, to gain access to sensitive technologies, compromise supply chains, and potentially undermine U.S. national security.

If confirmed, I look forward to countering these threats through an approach that leverages the full range of government authorities and fosters close collaboration with international allies. This includes robust implementation of existing tools like the Committee for Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), Team Telecom, and export controls to scrutinize foreign investments.

In your view, what is the appropriate role for the Department with respect to proposed and ongoing private sector merger and acquisition activities of DOD contractors?

It is my understanding that DoD's role with respect to merger and acquisition (M&A) activities of DOD contractors is to assess any anti-competitive implications on the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) and to their impacts to the industrial and technological base, competition and innovation, and the public interest. Excessive consolidation can reduce competition, hurt innovation, and lead to higher costs. A vibrant, competitive, and diverse defense industrial base is vital to the department. DoD is responsible for ensuring our nation's security and is in a unique position to assess the impact of potential defense industry consolidation on its ability to fulfill its mission, while maintaining awareness of

how ongoing M&A activities influence the DIB. In certain cases, the Department should voice concerns when a merger or acquisition could adversely impact the cost, schedule, or performance of defense acquisition programs, or hinder the research and development of critical defense technologies. This proactive approach is particularly important when adversary nations and their business interests attempt to acquire or influence defense industry members or their supporting supply chains.

In your view, what actions can be taken to expand existing efforts of the Manufacturing Capability Expansion & Investment Prioritization office within USD(A&S) to further invest in domestic and allied production of required materials and products?

Investment in domestic and allied production of required materials and products are important to ensure we maintain a healthy and resilient defense industrial base. I am committed to applying authorities and resources to maximize the resilience of our defense industrial base and prioritize domestic production, and if confirmed, look forward to understanding how the Manufacturing Capability Expansion and Investment Prioritization (MCEIP) office can better utilize the authorities granted by the Defense Production Act (DPA) and the Industrial Base Fund to achieve those objectives.

How can the Department better leverage suppliers in the national technology and industrial base (NTIB) and among other allies and partners?

The Department can better leverage suppliers in the NTIB by continuing to build and strengthen relationships amongst existing and new participants in defense acquisition as well as identifying and addressing barriers to integrating ally and partner organizations into the DIB. Working closely with private capital, academia, and leaders in tech and other Defense-adjacent industries can provide the Department a wider array of companies, skillsets, and technologies, which can help modernize our overarching technological base and build resiliency.

Do you think it is possible for the venture capital and private equity community to play some role in supporting the DIB, and if so, how?

Yes. These communities are already investing in defense-related technologies and supporting the mission, often without cost to taxpayers. If confirmed, I am committed to finding effective ways to harness private capital to accelerate the growth of a more resilient defense industrial ecosystem.

To further leverage the potential of these communities, the Department must improve transparency regarding its priorities and strengthen the consistency of its demand signals. Clear and consistent communication will allow investors to make more informed decisions and direct capital towards technologies critical to national security. We must also strive to better understand how the venture capital and private equity communities operate, fostering stronger relationships and tailored engagement strategies. By bridging

the knowledge gap and building trust, we can unlock even greater support for the DIB from these vital sources of innovation and capital.

The NDAA for FY 2021 established an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy, responsible for overseeing the Department’s efforts to manage and support the DIB.

In your view, what should be the key priorities and activities of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy?

If confirmed in the role of USD(A&S), I will ensure that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy (ASD(IBP)) plays a crucial role in assuring the United States maintains its military superiority through the DIB. As articulated by the President, achieving "Peace through Strength" necessitates a robust and responsive defense industrial base. Achieving this will require strengthening domestic supply chains, particularly in critical areas like critical minerals, microelectronics, and hypersonics, while also mitigating vulnerabilities and fostering resilience against potential disruptions.

To effectively execute this mission, the Department should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies that expand and empower the DIB. This requires a thorough understanding of the DIB’s current capabilities and identification of existing gaps that need to be addressed. Equally important is leveraging legislative tools like the Defense Production Act to incentivize domestic production and innovation. By fostering a healthy and diverse industrial base, promoting collaboration, and championing technological advancement, we can ensure the U.S. maintains its competitive edge in an increasingly complex global landscape.

If confirmed, how would you ensure the office of this Assistant Secretary is adequately resourced (in terms of personnel, budget, and authority) and provided with the high-level support necessary to perform its duties and responsibilities?

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and across the Department to secure adequate authorities and ensure a team with expertise is well positioned to tackle the complexities of the DIB. Adequate and appropriate resources and support are crucial to effectively carry out Industrial Base Policy’s mission.

In addition to authorities, consistent and predictable funding is crucial for long-term success. Stable funding allows the Department to send strong signals to industry partners, enabling them to confidently invest in and expand the DIB.

In early 2024 the Department released the first ever “National Defense Industrial Strategy”, or NDIS, to guide DIB engagement, policy development, and investment over the next several years.

If confirmed, how will you retain or adjust the priorities established in the National Defense Industrial Strategy?

The National Defense Industrial Strategy and its implementation plan outline a framework to address industrial base challenges faced by the DoD, Congress, and industry. If confirmed, I will adjust and align the NDIS strategic direction to ensure that it reflects the new administration's strategic objectives and aligns with the National Defense Strategy. It will be important to build upon the momentum initiated by the NDIS, by continuing to integrate and improve with new guidance, to further DIB resilience and preparedness for future conflicts.

Defense Industrial Base Cybersecurity

What is your understanding of the challenges of enhancing cybersecurity of the DIB?

My understanding of the DIB cybersecurity challenge is that the cyber landscape changes very rapidly, and it can be difficult to balance the pace at which Department of Defense (DoD) and industry need to react to evolving threats with the implementation timelines industry needs to comply as adversaries continue to evolve their tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). Cyber-attacks on DIB information systems threaten DoD mission execution, reduce warfighting capabilities, weaken American technological superiority, and exfiltrate both intellectual property and national security information.

It is my understanding that the cyber capabilities of the companies in the DIB vary greatly. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the current state of DoD cybersecurity requirements for our industry partners and working to ensure we balance a need for security with the burdens of excessive regulation.

If confirmed, how would you balance the needs of improving cybersecurity with the burden of compliance on small and medium sized businesses? Are there authorities or resources within DOD that could help mitigate some of those compliance burdens?

Bolstering cybersecurity across the DIB without placing undue burdens on small and medium-sized businesses is critical. These businesses are often more vulnerable to cyberattacks due to resource constraints, yet they play a vital role in our nation's defense.

Access to secure facilities, such as SCIFs, is often cost-prohibitive for smaller companies. If confirmed, I will actively explore the feasibility of multi-use SCIFs and other shared resource models to alleviate this burden and ensure equitable access to classified information.

In the last few years, the focus of the Acquisition & Sustainment model has been on one element of the framework: the Cybersecurity Maturity Model certification (CMMC).

If confirmed, are there any changes you would make or recommend to the CMMC efforts beyond those already mandated by the Deputy Secretary, including CMMC 2.0?

I recognize the critical importance of ensuring that contractual requirements for protecting DoD information are met by defense contractors. If confirmed, I will review the current requirements of the CMMC program and evaluate options to improve the requirements and implementation so that industry can affordably maintain pace with current cybersecurity best practices.

What is your view of the role of the certified third-party assessment organizations?

Managing and assessing cybersecurity compliance are important roles to ensure our DIB partners are applying cybersecurity best practices to protect critical information. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing current and potential mechanisms to assess compliance, including third-party assessment organizations.

What do you believe is the appropriate role of the CMMC Advisory Board (CMMC-AB)?

Cybersecurity accreditation is an important role to ensure our DIB partners understand our requirements in applying cybersecurity best practices to protect critical information. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing our accreditation procedures to ensure our requirements keep pace with the threat and manage the burden on the industrial base.

Defense Production Act (DPA)

In 2020, the Defense Production Act (DPA) was successfully leveraged during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide vital response materials, including through Operation Warp Speed, accelerating vaccine development and the delivery of other COVID-related medical supplies.

What is your understanding of how DOD has leveraged DPA authorities, including as an interagency funding mechanism, during the pandemic and post-pandemic?

My understanding is Defense Production Act (DPA) Title III has been leveraged to sustain and expand production in areas where national security was considered to be at risk. I understand the Department has coordinated with other agencies to understand risks in the industrial base that could impact national security, as well as how DPA authorities could be leveraged to mitigate them. During the pandemic, the Department worked with Health and Human Services (HHS) to understand where DPA authorities could be best leveraged to increase production capacity to respond to COVID-19. Since the pandemic, DPA Title III investments have allowed us to begin removing China from our supply chains.

What are your views on DOD's use of DPA Title III authorities to support the defense industrial base?

The Defense Production Act (DPA) is a critical tool for rebuilding our defense industrial base and ultimately reestablishing deterrence. We can do more to expedite DPA Title III awards, but I am aware the DPA Title III program is already enabling the Department to make investments directly in the sub-tiers of the defense industrial base, especially into areas where private industry is unwilling to invest, which otherwise would not be possible. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring the Department continues to focus our use of the DPA on national defense, in line with the President's and Secretary Hegseth's priorities, existing statute, and in coordination with Congress.

What are your views on the DPA loan and loan guarantee programs? If confirmed, would you advocate expanding these programs? How would you monitor the effectiveness of the loan program?

If confirmed, I would review the benefits and challenges of expanding the DPA activities of the Department into loan and loan guarantee programs. I understand the Department has established loans and loan guarantees in other parts of DoD, like the Office of Strategic Capital (OSC), to incentivize private capital investments to transform capability for the DIB, and I will look to better understand how an expansion of the DPA loan program office can complement and enhance the DIB in cooperation with OSC's loan program.

Do you have any recommendations to improve the effectiveness of how DOD employs DPA Title III authorities?

My understanding is that there are ongoing efforts to develop legislative proposals to update the DPA for the modern era. If confirmed, I plan to support that process and prioritize the most effective application of DPA authorities to strengthen the DIB, including expanding the Department's ability to incentivize private investment and accelerate its impact in expanding domestic industrial base capability and capacity.

Organic Industrial Base

In your opinion, what role does the organic industrial base play in modernization efforts and in the sustainment of warfighting capabilities?

The Organic Industrial Base plays an important role in bolstering the defense industrial base's primary goal of ensuring sustained readiness of DoD weapon systems and equipment throughout the lifecycle. By providing essential resources like facilities, skilled personnel, technical expertise, and equipment, the OIB supports critical activities including maintenance, repair, overhaul, upgrade, and manufacturing to meet operational needs. Additionally, the OIB enables the Department to rapidly scale production and sustainment capabilities during periods of heightened demand.

What is your assessment of the status of the facilities and workforce in DOD depots, logistics centers, arsenals, and other elements of the organic industrial base?

I believe that the Organic Industrial Base, to include our depots, logistics centers, and arsenals, serves an important role in maintaining military readiness. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to formally assess the state of our OIB and assess the need to foster continued modernization of the OIB to ensure the Department maintains the proper mix of capabilities to meet future warfighting needs while staying adaptable for future missions.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to strengthen the Department's organic industrial base?

If confirmed, I will work with the Administration and Congress to assess the areas of greatest need and, where necessary, request resources to support the modernization and optimization of our OIB facilities and workforce, together with other key elements of our domestic defense industrial base. This would include a thorough analysis of the current state of OIB infrastructure, workforce, and capabilities to identify strengths, gaps, and areas requiring urgent attention to ensure we are applying the most modern capabilities to ensure we maximize the readiness of our military forces.

Sustainment

DOD has committed to rebuild its readiness to conduct large-scale combat operations against near-peer competitors such as China and Russia. The readiness of critical weapon systems relies on the quantity and timeliness of sustainment. However, sustainment challenges continue to impede readiness across the warfighting domains and military services.

What is your assessment of the sustainment challenges facing the Department's naval vessels, ground vehicles, and aviation fleets, and what actions would you take to improve mission capable rates for these fleets?

I understand that sustainment is often an afterthought during the acquisition process. And yet, as we saw during the nominee for the Secretary of the Navy's confirmation hearing, corrosion and other sustainment challenges are limiting the readiness of our critical systems and inflating the costs of our weapons systems. I believe that renewed focus on anticipating, planning for, and addressing sustainment issues on the front end of the lifecycle of weapons systems will help the Department improve weapon system reliability and maintainability. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we have the proper policies and resources to achieve sustainment priorities in partnership with the Military Services.

In your opinion, what steps should DOD take to ensure our ability to execute the current and expected volume of platform maintenance and modernization?

If confirmed, I will work across A&S and with the Military Services to understand the specific challenges facing platform maintenance and modernization to drive closer collaboration. However, in general, I believe that the Department can invest in focused and predictable infrastructure upgrades and modernization, workforce development, improvement of predictive maintenance practices through better data, including technical data, and conduct periodic reviews of maintenance and modernization operations to better identify bottlenecks, inefficiencies, and areas for improvement. I believe that, by taking these actions, the Department can meet both current operational demands as well as build a resilient and adaptable framework capable of addressing future challenges.

In your view, what are the biggest challenges in the sustainment of commercial technologies that are fielded to warfighters?

I understand that the sustainment of fielded commercial technologies poses significant challenges for warfighter readiness and can be expensive because the commercial providers operate outside of our acquisition lifecycle and they operate on a proprietary basis which may increase the risk of vendor lock. Additionally, I understand that the cost for the sustainment of commercial technologies is not always programmed. If confirmed, I look forward to working with stakeholders across the Department to tackle the challenges associated with the sustainment of commercial technologies to ensure the warfighter has interoperable tools they need to complete the mission. Our warfighters must be adequately trained on rapidly evolving commercial technologies while managing long-term sustainment costs of legacy equipment.

Improving Planning for Sustainment

The GAO has reported that operation and sustainment (O&S) costs account for about 70 percent of a system's total lifecycle costs.

In your opinion, how well are the Department's acquisition programs planning for sustainment?

I strongly believe in the importance of prioritizing sustainment planning early in the acquisition process in order to reduce life-cycle costs. While I am aware the existing policy currently requires this level of planning, there is always potential for further improvement. If confirmed, I will collaborate across A&S and the Military Services and Defense Agencies to strengthen sustainment efforts by continuing to integrate comprehensive planning into new programs and focus on refining sustainment strategies for existing programs at every stage of a weapon system's lifecycle to enhance readiness, efficiency, and long-term effectiveness.

Do you believe that the military services are adequately resourcing activities to resolve diminishing manufacturing sources and material shortages?

Based on my experience, I believe that the Military Services are taking diminishing manufacturing sources and material shortages and related activities seriously. If confirmed, I will seek information on actions being done to address diminishing manufacturing sources and material shortages and pursue appropriate solutions to reduce associated risks to material readiness.

What is your view of the benefits of introducing second sources of supply into weapon systems component and parts manufacturing, if any?

I believe that introducing second sources of supply by qualified vendors enhances competition, reduces dependency on a single supplier, prevents vendor lock by introducing competition, improves resilience to disruptions, and can lower costs while ensuring a more reliable and diversified supply chain for weapon system components. Additionally, having more suppliers increases our ability to respond to critical backorders from our warfighters, and improves our ability to surge.

Section 865 of the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act seeks to expedite qualification and testing of alternative sources of supply and section 882 seeks to remove policy barriers to reverse engineering.

If confirmed, how would you use section 865 and section 882 to improve the timeliness of the qualification, certification, and test processes for new sources of supply?

If confirmed, I will work to implement authorities from Congress that are aimed at removing barriers to securing alternative sources of supply across commercial and organic solution types. A balance between the need to move quickly with the need to safeguard our systems will ensure that any reverse engineering efforts enhance our warfighters' ability to protect our national interests and defend our homeland. Additionally, if confirmed, I will work expedite the qualification of new suppliers in critical areas like energetic materials and advanced manufacturing by establishing clear timelines, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and exploring innovative testing methods. A streamlined process will attract a wider range of companies, fostering competition, innovation, and a more responsive defense industrial base.

What additional recommendations do you have for expanding the industrial base to create more timely and cost-effective supply of spare and repair parts?

Increasing the overall production capacity of the DIB is paramount as we seek to reduce our reliance on supply chains in adversarial nations and increase our domestic supply chain resilience. To expand the industrial base to create a more timely and cost-effective supply of spare and repair parts, we need to expand utilization of existing authorities to help fund new capacity in partnership with industry investments. If confirmed, I will build upon this framework to ensure we utilize all funding and acquisition methods to increase our industrial capacity.

In your opinion, what is the opportunity for advanced manufacturing techniques such as 3D printing to reduce cost and lead times for parts that are currently ordered in low production volumes?

I believe there is opportunity to use advanced manufacturing capabilities, such as 3D printing, to reduce cost and lead times for parts that are currently ordered in low production volumes. On-Demand manufacturing, decentralized production, customization, rapid prototyping, and supply chain resilience can translate to substantial cost savings, increased operational readiness, and a more agile and resilient military supply chain. If confirmed, I will seek to understand what specific advanced manufacturing efforts are ongoing at the Department and work with my colleagues at OUSD(R&E) to implement advanced manufacturing techniques and standards where appropriate to aid the warfighter and reduce sustainment costs.

Are there additional incentives or strategies, such as royalties, the Department should use when negotiating with industry to ensure there are multiple suppliers for spare parts?

Ensuring a robust and diverse supply chain for spare parts is critical for maintaining readiness and avoiding single points of failure. If confirmed, I will explore a range of incentives to encourage multiple suppliers.

If confirmed, I will promote the utilization of advanced manufacturing techniques, as long as the resulting parts meet performance specifications. This approach fosters innovation and competition while reducing reliance on traditional sole-source providers.

Finally, I believe that conducting comprehensive supply chain analyses to identify and mitigate risks associated with third, fourth, and fifth-tier suppliers is crucial to prevent inadvertent single-source dependencies from emerging deeper within the supply chain. By implementing these multifaceted strategies, we can foster a healthier and more resilient industrial base capable of meeting our spare parts needs now and into the future.

Facilities Sustainment

To combat the growing \$180 billion facilities sustainment backlog, in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, Congress required each of the military departments to budget at least 4 percent of their total plant replacement value (PRV) by 2030.

If confirmed, what approach will you take to address this backlog, ensure the Department is following the law to meet the PRV metrics leading up to 2030 and to ensure that facility sustainment funding is sufficiently prioritized and funded? Please specify aspects of the approach such as increased funding, elimination of excess infrastructure, and addressing infrastructure in failing condition.

Our installations are critical to both the warfighting mission and the quality of life of our military members and their families. If confirmed, I will work with the Military Departments and other DoD components to ensure investments in our infrastructure meet the requirements of the warfighter and their families, are efficiently sized and maintained to provide maximum value to the U.S. taxpayer, and are fully compliant with statutory requirements.

Acquiring Commercial Technology

Since the end of the Cold War, Congress and successive leaders in DOD have recognized that the technological superiority and modernization that is critical to national security increasingly takes place in the commercial sector, and that in many technical areas, the pace of commercial technological advance is much quicker than that of the government.

In your view, has DOD adequately complied with statute establishing a commercial item preference? Why or why not?

I believe the Department can do more to leverage commercial and other non-developmental capabilities that private sector entities have already funded. My understanding is that statute directs the congressional preference for establishing a commercial item of preference. If confirmed, I will review the Department's current compliance with this statute, and ensure we are maximizing effective application to leverage technological advancements of the commercial sector while balancing the need to successfully integrate those technologies into the DoD ecosystem.

Do you believe that DOD's acquisition practices sufficiently incentivize programs to opt for commercial items? If so, what processes would you recommend changing?

I believe it is important to ensure the Department is incentivizing DoD programs to opt for commercial items where it is most beneficial to the warfighter. Secretary Hegseth's recent issuance on "Directing Modern Software Acquisition to Maximize Lethality" is a good example of prioritizing commercial solutions. His direction to employ the Commercial Solutions Openings and Other Transactions as the default solicitation and award approaches for software development will drive the Department to prioritize existing capabilities in the marketplace.

In your view, have Commercial Solutions Openings been a useful solicitation process for adopting commercial technologies and innovative solutions? What recommendations would you make to improve Commercial Solutions Openings, if any?

I understand Commercial Solutions Openings (CSOs) have proven to be a useful solicitation process to enable the Department to adopt commercial technologies and

innovative solutions. If confirmed, I will examine how the Department has used CSOs, particularly for software development as Secretary Hegseth has directed, to understand whether any legislative or other improvements are necessary.

In your opinion, are there new ways to reward and incentivize the acquisition workforce and programs to choose commercial solutions, if available?

If confirmed, I will lead a culture in the Department's acquisition community that celebrates the adoption of existing commercial solutions in support of warfighting and other capabilities where it benefits the warfighter. I would seek to establish a culture that prioritizes results and provide the necessary resources to encourage our workforce to employ modern business approaches to meet today's challenges.

In your view, how should the USD(A&S) work with the Chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council to promote the acquisition of commercial technologies?

I believe there should be a close partnership between USD(A&S), the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Military Services to modernize DoD's requirements system. If confirmed, I would look to partner with the appropriate stakeholders to reform the system to integrate operational needs "requirements pull" with commercial solutions "tech push," informed by experimentation, via a collaborative, iterative approach to exploit new technologies and adapt our ways of fighting.

Do you believe the Department is making the best use of both Part 12 and Part 15 of the Federal Acquisition Regulations in developing acquisition strategies for programs?

I understand the Administration is advancing a bold initiative to overhaul the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and that the OUSD(A&S) staff are actively engaged. If confirmed, I will lead the effort to understand how FAR Parts 12 and 15 need to be transformed to optimize acquisition rules and reduce or eliminate costly burdens that stifle broader industry participation

Congress and the Department have prioritized the entry of nontraditional defense contractors into the defense industrial base.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to the definition of nontraditional defense contractors?

I believe any changes to the statutory definition of nontraditional defense contractors should be grounded in the principle of maximizing competition amongst all types of companies to expand the defense industrial base. If confirmed, I will assess this more closely and offer any recommendations to the Congress for statutory change.

What recommendations do you have to changes to the definition of nontraditional defense contractors, if any? Do you believe that nontraditional defense contractors should be treated commercially to the maximum extent practicable? Why or why not?

If confirmed, I will assess this more closely and will work with the Administration to offer any recommendations to the Congress for statutory change.

Nontraditional defense contractors often take significant risk using private sources of funds to develop technologies. What recommendations do you have for achieving fair and reasonable pricing for products and services supplied by nontraditional defense contractors that recognizes their privately-funded risk and lack of government-compliant business systems?

I believe the current practice for pricing of Defense contracts allows for these considerations to be fully addressed, compensated in a sole source context, and included as a company sees fit in any competitively submitted price proposals. However, there is always room for improvement, and if confirmed I would look into this issue to see how nontraditional companies can better balance their risk to foster increased collaboration with DoD.

Intellectual Property

Do you believe that DOD has implemented intellectual property (IP) best practices sufficiently to ensure that the government has appropriate access to IP and technical data?

I believe that the Department has made progress in implementing best practices through updated guidance, training, tools, and communication, but the Department has not yet realized the full spectrum of intellectual property (IP) best practices necessary to ensure that the Government has appropriate access to IP, including technical data and associated licensing. I believe the acquisition of life-cycle IP early in the program must be a higher strategic priority. I believe this will be key to making sustainment more agile and affordable and ensure DoD can take full advantage of industry's faster pace in technology innovation.

What is your view on the Department's adequacy of enforcing data rights it has already negotiated onto contracts, such as through invalidation of improper rights assertions, and ensuring delivery of data ordering?

If confirmed, my initial focus in this area will be to better understand the obstacles that DoD program personnel are facing in enforcing delivery of data and accompanying rights it has already negotiated in contracts. If confirmed, I will review the existing mandatory processes and procedures for invalidating improper rights assertions and review whether there are constraints on compelling contract performance that may be impeding delivery.

If confirmed, I will also work with the Department's Intellectual Property Cadre to understand the challenges regarding available enforcement mechanisms and Department practices to support warfighter needs.

If confirmed, what adjustments would you make to DOD's practices in negotiating IP and technical data rights for programs in order to improve DOD's ability to develop, procure, and sustain new systems and technologies affordably?

If confirmed, my initial focus in this area will be to better understand the practical obstacles that DoD program personnel are facing related to IP. To thrive in this environment, I anticipate the need to improve our training in identifying IP requirements and negotiating to meet the needs. If confirmed, I would ensure the workforce takes greater advantage of agile tools and techniques such as non-traditional contracting methods, negotiating specialized licenses, and fully implementing modular open systems approaches in DoD programs.

Reform of the Protest Process

To what extent do you think the time required to settle protests warrants reform in order to protect the interests of both industry and the government?

If confirmed, I will review the regulatory and policy approaches along with the recommendations to determine what changes, if any, are necessary.

Do you have any recommendations on how to improve the protest process?

If confirmed, I will review the bid protest processes and consider recommendations to improve existing processes where possible.

Small Business

In your view, what are the biggest barriers that prevent small businesses from doing business with the Department?

In my view, some of the biggest barriers to entry for new companies are the number of entry points into the Department, the complexity of the DoD procurement process, and the challenges that new companies face when seeking to understand and comply with necessary industrial security requirements. I understand that the Office of Small Business Programs, which reports to the USD(A&S), is the principal advisor to this official and the Secretary of Defense on all issues affecting small businesses that want to work with the Department. If confirmed, I would work with my fellow Under Secretaries of Defense and the Director of the Office of Small Business Programs on leveraging the tools, programs, and authorities to address these issues and mitigate barriers to entry.

In your view, what are the biggest barriers that prevent small businesses from becoming prime contractors for the Department?

I understand the Office of Small Business Programs provides guidance and administers statutory programs to increase the number of small business prime contractors and suppliers in the DIB. In my view, one of the biggest barriers preventing small businesses from becoming prime contractors for the Department is the lack of experience or knowledge of defense acquisition processes. If confirmed, I will work with the Director of the Office of Small Business Programs to make the Department a more attractive customer by reducing administrative barriers and supporting the statutory tools and programs that Congress has authorized.

Do you believe the Department is using all available authorities to provide small businesses the opportunity to subcontract with existing prime contractors in order to ensure that programs of record have access to the most advanced and effective technologies?

My understanding is that the Department has numerous authorities and programs that work to ensure small businesses have the maximum practicable opportunity to compete for subcontracts, such as the DoD Mentor-Protégé Program, the DoD APEX Accelerators program, the Indian Incentive Program, and the Rapid Integrated Scalable Enterprise, among others. If confirmed, I would work with the Director of the Office of Small Business Programs to better understand these programs and ensure that the Department is leveraging these authorities to ensure that Defense programs have access to the most advanced and effective technologies.

What do you see as the benefits of diversifying the defense industrial base through more engagement with small and disadvantaged businesses?

The magnitude of demands on DOD is putting compressed needs and demands on industry contributions to those efforts, increasing the importance of main street small businesses to help fulfill the needs. It will require a robust defense industrial ecosystem to successfully deter the rising threats to our National Security.

A diverse and resilient industrial base, powered by a robust ecosystem of small businesses, sends a strong signal to our adversaries about our ability to mobilize the full weight of the U.S. economy in support of our national security. It demonstrates our capacity to tap into the ingenuity and determination that have always defined America, and to harness that power in service of our defense.

DOD continues to struggle to meet all its small business goals. Do you believe the current small business goals for the Department are achievable? Should the small business goals be adjusted?

My understanding is that historically the Department of Defense has met its overarching small business prime contracting goals. I am committed to supporting Department

programs and initiatives that promote genuine small business participation in the DIB while reducing barriers to their participation. My understanding is that, in alignment with Congressional intent, the small business goals have been adjusted to the statutory levels prescribed in the Small Business Act. If confirmed, I will work with the Director of the Office of Small Business Programs on efforts to achieve the Department's statutory small business goals, including regulatory relief and modernizing of acquisition processes, and, if necessary, recommend adjustments for Congressional consideration.

Acquisition Workforce Education and Training

A well-trained and empowered acquisition workforce is a critical enabler in the implementation of acquisition reform and in the management of acquisition programs.

What is your assessment of the Department's acquisition workforce, both in terms of its capacity and capability? Does the Department have enough acquisition professionals with the right skills?

I believe that the Department of Defense's acquisition workforce is critical to equipping the warfighter and maintaining our lethality. Rebuilding our military and reestablishing deterrence requires an acquisition workforce capable of using innovative practices across the full spectrum of the acquisition and sustainment lifecycle. If confirmed, I will evaluate the workforce's capacity and capability to ensure the Department has the right mix of acquisition professionals with the necessary expertise to support the warfighter.

In what ways does the DOD civilian workforce take on tasks that would otherwise have to be done by military personnel, and thus taking them away from their core warfighting functions? What do you see as the pros and cons of civilian versus military acquisition professionals?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Department maximizes the effectiveness of both its civilian and military acquisition professionals while prioritizing military readiness and lethality. The DoD civilian workforce plays a critical role in sustaining warfighter capabilities by handling essential acquisition, logistics, and sustainment functions—allowing uniformed personnel to focus on operational and warfighting tasks. Civilians provide continuity, specialized expertise, and long-term program management critical to the defense industrial base. Similarly, our uniformed acquisition professionals bring current operational expertise which ensures warfighting capabilities are integrated. If confirmed, my focus will be on efficiency, accountability, and ensuring that acquisition professionals—whether civilian or military—are advancing the Department's mission in the most effective manner possible.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure the acquisition workforce is fully trained on new acquisition authorities and best practices, so that it can make informed decisions about when and how to use the different acquisition pathways and tools available to it?

The President and Secretary Hegseth have made it clear that preparing the workforce to meet the challenges we face as a Nation and a Department is a top priority. If confirmed, it will be my responsibility to support the Military Services and Components in developing an agile, responsive Defense acquisition workforce. I believe that it is critical to empower the workforce with the tools that allow it to innovate, upskill, and operate as an agile and enduring advantage supporting the new National Defense Strategy. Additionally, training must evolve to align with new acquisition approaches, such as the Adaptive Acquisition Framework. I understand that there are several workforce initiatives in progress. If confirmed, I will review each to make sure we have effective planning and investments to support the workforce.

What is your assessment of the Department’s training, education, certification, and credentialing programs for the acquisition workforce? Are there “health metrics” that the DOD is or could be using to help ensure that the acquisition workforce is adequately sized for all of the tasks assigned to it?

In our current threat environment, workforce skills requirements are constantly evolving and require continuous review and iteration. If confirmed, I will review the metrics used and evaluate the health of the acquisition workforce. I will also work with the Military Services and Defense Acquisition University (DAU) to ensure training, education, certification and credentials are optimized to equip the acquisition workforce to do their part to rebuild the military and reestablish deterrence.

Section 832 of the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act created a program for the Defense Acquisition University to implement field training support for the acquisition workforce, by which facilitators would teach rapid acquisition and commercial contracting in the context of completing a phase of an actual acquisition or sustainment program.

What is your view of the need for field training to support implementation of real-world programs as a complement to traditional school-house training provided by the Defense Acquisition University?

I fully support point-of-need field training in the workplace. I believe we must equip acquisition program teams to smartly use innovative acquisition practices such as the acquisition pathways and commercial solutions. The acquisition team is critical to rapidly fielding capabilities that rebuild the military and reestablish deterrence. If confirmed, I will review and make sure the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) is working with the Services to implement the DAU field training teams required by Section 832 of the FY25 NDAA.

If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to improve the effectiveness of the training provided by the Defense Acquisition University?

If confirmed, I will thoroughly assess and evaluate DAU training to ensure all activities are aligned with the Secretary's priorities and to the strategic needs of the acquisition workforce. It is my understanding that DAU has endeavored to optimize the way it develops and delivers training, as well as strengthening the relationships with the Military Services and DoD Components. The capabilities of the Defense Acquisition Workforce are vital to rebuilding the military and reestablishing deterrence, and if confirmed I will review the steps being taken to improve these capabilities.

The Acquisition Innovation Research Center (AIRC) is intended to engage universities to support acquisition training and research, whereas the Systems Engineering Research Center (SERC) is intended to engage universities on systems engineering.

How do you view the effectiveness of the AIRC, and do you believe it is adequately focused on business problems facing the acquisition community?

As I understand, the AIRC is DoD's vehicle for improving the acquisition system by engaging academia through applied research and other activities to innovate acquisition policies, processes, tradecraft, education, and outcomes. If confirmed, I will review AIRC's accomplishments and ongoing activities to ensure they are focused on increasing efficiency, speed and capability fielding to help the Military Services rebuild the military and reestablish deterrence.

I also understand that AIRC is supporting OSD in implementing the ROTC-like Defense Civilian Training Corps (DCTC) program. My understanding is that this program was started under President Trump's first Administration by the former USD(A&S) and that the vision was to rigorously prepare selected college juniors and seniors to join DoD as civilians, ready with the mindset and skills needed in defense acquisition. If confirmed, I will review AIRC's work and implementation of the DCTC program.

Do you believe the AIRC and the SERC have sufficiently different research focus to provide value?

It is my understanding that the AIRC and SERC have sufficiently different research focus areas and engage faculty with unique backgrounds – SERC engages faculty largely from Engineering and Computer Science; and AIRC engages faculty from Business, Law, and Policy. This diversity of focus areas allows them to benefit their respective missions through synergy of research efforts. If confirmed, I will ensure that AIRC takes the lead in developing best practices across all the functional areas that will create synergistic solutions to support the DoD mission.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment

If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to improve the incorporation of the energy Key Performance Parameter (KPP) and incorporation of operational energy

and sustainability into maintenance requirements and the acquisition system, which should also save money over the lifecycle of a weapons platform?

If confirmed, I will review the integration of the Energy Key Performance Parameter (KPP) and operational energy considerations throughout requirements, acquisition, and sustainment decision-making and work closely with the Services to ensure our operational energy efforts are focused on enhancing the lethality and cost effectiveness of our military's operational capabilities.

Space

As part of the creation of the Space Force, the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act created a Service Acquisition Executive (SAE) for Space to consolidate space acquisition functions in the Air Force. The FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act subsequently expanded the role of the SAE to oversee space acquisition across the “space systems and programs of the armed forces in support of the Chief of Space Operations.” This was part of a series of reforms to empower the SAE for Space and the Chief of Space Operations as the Space Force achieves institutionalization of its Title 10 status.

If confirmed, will you support the SAE for Space per the duties included in the FY 2020 and FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Acts?

Yes, if confirmed I will support all SAE's, including the SAE for space, in executing their duties.

The USD(A&S) co-chairs the Council on Oversight of Defense Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) Enterprise. The major activities of the Council have been to coordinate the Military GPS User Equipment (MGUE) across the Department of Defense, given the increasingly contested electromagnetic spectrum within which DOD systems must operate.

If confirmed, what do you see as the major issue(s) with acquiring and coordinating the installation of MGUE components across the myriad number of DOD systems that rely on GPS signals, to include synchronization with the GPS satellites?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Military Services' acquisition organizations to review the installation of MGUE components across the Department and identify opportunities to accelerate fielding where appropriate, to include the removal of unnecessary barriers and optimization of contract structures to better incentivize vendors where possible.

Nuclear Modernization

The USD(A&S) oversees the programs to modernize U.S. nuclear forces, most of which are decades beyond their planned service lives. Successfully executing these programs is essential to preserving a viable nuclear deterrent for the United States.

What is your understanding of the state of U.S. nuclear forces, global nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) architecture, and the supporting weapons sustainment and production capabilities within the National Nuclear Security Administration?

The nation's nuclear forces, global NC3, and weapon sustainment and production capabilities are undergoing large-scale recapitalization, replacement, and revitalization. If confirmed, I look forward to fully reviewing the status of each of the programs to ensure that our current and future capabilities and programs provide a reliable and credible nuclear deterrent.

Do you agree with the assessment of past Secretaries of Defense that nuclear deterrence is DOD's highest priority mission and that modernizing our nation's nuclear forces is a critical national security priority?

Yes. Nuclear deterrence is the cornerstone of our national security.

If confirmed, do you commit to support full funding for efforts to comprehensively modernize the nation's nuclear deterrent forces, including supplemental capabilities like the sea-launched cruise missile, and accelerate such programs wherever possible?

If confirmed, I am committed to supporting full funding for nuclear modernization and acceleration wherever possible, including additional capabilities that bolster deterrence.

Please describe what you see as the major acquisition issues with each of the above.

Nuclear deterrence is DoD's top priority mission, and it is critical to maintain our fielded systems while simultaneously modernizing all three legs of the triad. If confirmed, I will review each of our modernization programs and understand any associated acquisition challenges to ensure our modernization programs deliver timely capability to the warfighter.

The nuclear enterprise functions through collaboration among the Navy, the Air Force, the Joint Staff, the Offices of the Under Secretaries of Defense for Policy, Acquisition and Sustainment, and Research and Engineering, the NNSA headquarters, and the NNSA national laboratories and production plants.

Do you believe that the current system adequately connects military requirements to acquisitions and procurement to technical expertise and production?

I believe that Congress has empowered the Nuclear Weapons Council and Joint Requirements Oversight Council to coordinate in a way that improves upon the current system. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the processes and understanding options for further improvement to provide capabilities to the warfighter.

If confirmed, do you have any recommendations for improving the functions of the complex?

If confirmed and with my colleagues on the Nuclear Weapons Council, I will review the functions of the joint enterprise and be prepared to offer recommendations as appropriate.

Nuclear Weapons Council

Section 179 of title 10, designates the USD(A&S) as the Chair of the Nuclear Weapons Council.

What is your understanding of this role?

My understanding of the role of Chair of the Nuclear Weapons Council is to ensure the Council fulfills the statutory requirements set forth in Section 179 of Title 10 and ultimately to ensure that the Departments of Defense and Energy are postured to ensure a safe, secure, reliable, and effective nuclear deterrent.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the duties and responsibilities of the Nuclear Weapons Council are effectively executed?

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Nuclear Weapons Council is focused on the most critical issues facing the enterprise and will work with the Staff Director—the new Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs—to enable timely, data-driven, risk-informed decisions.

What do you see as the primary challenges that the Nuclear Weapons Council will face over the next four years, and if confirmed, what steps will you take as Chair to address these challenges?

I understand that the Department of Defense and its partners at the Department of Energy face challenges as we work together to sustain fielded systems while executing modernization programs. If confirmed, I will work with all stakeholders to understand and address these challenges, ensuring that the enterprise is prepared to meet DoD requirements that can help pace the threat in an evolving security environment.

In addition to the Department of Defense programs for modernizing U.S. nuclear forces and the NC3 system, the Nuclear Weapons Council has laid out a schedule for modernization of the nuclear weapons stockpile and the supporting National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure.

Do you agree that modernizing the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile and supporting National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure is a critical national security priority?

Yes, the nuclear weapons stockpile must be underpinned by responsive and resilient production capabilities and infrastructure. Delivering modern infrastructure with the capabilities and capacity necessary to support the stockpile is a critical national security priority.

Do you support and intend to advocate for all aspects of the Nuclear Weapons Council's sustainment and modernization plan for the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile and supporting National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure?

The nuclear weapons stockpile must be underpinned by responsive and resilient production capabilities and infrastructure. Delivering modern infrastructure with the capabilities and capacity necessary to support the stockpile is a critical national security priority. If confirmed, I will review the Nuclear Weapons Council's sustainment and modernization plan for the US nuclear weapons stockpile and supporting NNSA infrastructure and advocate for the initiatives and resourcing that supports the President's and the Secretary's priorities to ensure nuclear deterrence.

In your opinion, are the multiple components of the DOD and NNSA nuclear modernization plans appropriately sequenced and scoped in order to meet the operational needs of the commander of U.S. Strategic Command?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, through the Nuclear Weapons Council, to understand the linkages between challenges facing the scope and schedule of the modernization programs and how those challenges translate to operational risk.

If confirmed, will you commit to working with the other members of the NWC and the interagency to ensure that annual budgets adequately support the modernization and sustainment of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile?

Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to working closely with other members of the NWC to ensure the U.S. nuclear stockpile remains safe, secure, reliable, and effective. Overseeing and ensuring adequate funding to support these activities is a core function of the NWC and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues to tackle these issues.

If confirmed, how do you plan to leverage the USD(A&S)'s various roles within the nuclear enterprise to ensure the health of the specialized industrial base needed to produce certain components currently being modernized?

If confirmed, I will leverage the important roles of the USD(A&S) in stewarding aspects of the nuclear enterprise. If confirmed, I will focus on achieving robustness in the

specialized and fragile industrial base and efficiency in the acquisition system to ensure timely support for the modernization of the nuclear deterrent.

Do you support the Stockpile Stewardship Program, and have you reviewed the elements of this program as conducted by the NNSA?

I support the Stockpile Stewardship Program as a significant and successful endeavor of the National Nuclear Security Administration to ensure a safe, secure, reliable, and effective nuclear stockpile in the absence of nuclear testing. If confirmed, I will further review the program to understand its many facets.

If the technical conclusions and data from the Stockpile Stewardship Program could no longer confidently support the annual certification of the stockpile as safe, secure, and reliable, what would be your recommendation?

I understand that a core function of the Nuclear Weapons Council is to provide an annual assessment of the safety, reliability, and military effectiveness of the nuclear stockpile, underpinned by independent assessments of the national security laboratory leaders and the Commander, U.S. Strategic Command. If technical conclusions and data could not support this certification, I would seek to work closely if confirmed with the laboratory leaders, the Commander, U.S. Strategic Command, the Members of the Council, and the Secretaries of Defense and Energy to understand the issues and provide the President with a recommendation to remedy.

Major construction efforts are underway at the NNSA laboratories and plants to support the re-establishment of a U.S. plutonium pit production capability at the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Savannah River Pit Production Facility, as well as the production of uranium components at the Y-12 Plant's Uranium Processing Facility.

Please explain your understanding of each of these construction projects and your views on each relative to statutory and DOD requirements.

I acknowledge that the National Nuclear Security Administration's laboratories and plants are reestablishing production capabilities and capacities not exercised in the U.S. since the end of the Cold War. I understand that statutory and DoD requirements are driving timelines and capacities of these capabilities, and I applaud the recent first production unit of a plutonium pit at Los Alamos National Laboratory. If confirmed, I will prioritize visiting the sites of these construction projects to understand the challenges and provide assistance and advocacy.

The Nuclear Weapons Council works with the United Kingdom through what is known as the "U.S. – U.K. Mutual Defense Agreement."

Please explain your understanding of the importance of this agreement and its effects on DOD policies and programs. Do you support continued collaboration with the United Kingdom in the maintenance of its independent nuclear deterrent?

The United Kingdom is a critical ally and one that is also working to modernize its independent nuclear deterrent, heavily leveraging and reliant on U.S. information and capabilities through several agreements, including the U.S./UK Mutual Defense Agreement and Polaris Sales Agreement. I support, and, if confirmed, look forward to continuing the close collaboration and partnership with the UK through the U.S./UK Mutual Defense Agreement and through the Nuclear Weapons Council.

What are your views on the W93 weapon program?

I understand that the U.S. Navy's W93/Mk7 program will provide the U.S. Navy with a modern system to meet deterrence objectives and also plays an important role in support of the United Kingdom's separate but parallel effort. If confirmed, I will prioritize gaining a comprehensive understanding of all programs associated with the modernization of our nuclear stockpile, particularly the W93/Mk7.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs

The Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act restructured the existing Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs into the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs. Congress took this action to cut through bureaucratic stovepipes in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and designate a single official as the principal civilian staff assistant responsible for nuclear policies, programs, and operations.

If confirmed, will you commit to expeditiously implementing this reform and working with the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to ensure resources, personnel, and policies are reallocated and revised to support the office of the Assistant Secretary?

If confirmed, I will prioritize working with the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the Under Secretary for Policy to implement the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act provision. Empowering this position with the resources, personnel, and policies necessary to achieve congressional direction is paramount.

Guam

The USD(A&S) is designated as the Senior Defense Official responsible for the development of the Integrated Air and Missile Defense of Guam system, and co-chairs the Guam Synchronization Oversight Council (GSOC), which is charged with aligning DOD investments to support the restoration of DOD infrastructure on the island.

What is your understanding of the condition of DOD facilities on Guam?

Guam is critical to our national security and the Department must ensure the warfighters have the right infrastructure to provide credible deterrence. If confirmed, I will review the collective DoD efforts to ensure the infrastructure and facilities requirements meet the operational and support missions necessary to meet the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's requirements.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to work with your GSOC co-chair, the Under Secretary of the Navy, to accelerate efforts to reestablish Guam as an effective power projection platform in the Western Pacific?

If confirmed, I will work with the Under Secretary of the Navy to execute my role as the GSOC Co-Chair assessing infrastructure requirements to meet the needs of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and helping to drive the necessary budgetary requests to support those requirements. Furthermore, if confirmed, I look forward to working with each of the Military Department's to identify roadblocks to on-going efforts and helping to find solutions which meet the needs of the Department.

In your view, if 2027 is indeed a period of increased risk of a conflict with China as multiple commanders of Indo-Pacific Command have stated, is DOD moving at an acceptable pace for developing and deploying missile defense capabilities to Guam?

If confirmed, I will thoroughly investigate this topic and evaluate the role that A&S has had as it relates to these capabilities. President Trump has clearly communicated his desire for the Golden Dome initiative and, if confirmed, I commit to working with all Department stakeholders to review the development and deployment of missile defense capabilities to Guam at speed and scale.

If confirmed, what adjustments, if any, would you direct to the current planning for the Integrated Air and Missile Defense of Guam?

If confirmed, I will work with the appropriate A&S teams to understand and evaluate existing plans and program information. From what is publicly available, it is clear the Integrated Air and Missile Defense of Guam plays a significant role in overall homeland defense. President Trump signed the Iron Dome for America executive order that directs the Department to develop Golden Dome and, if confirmed, I will work with all Department stakeholders to review our progress in accomplishing that directive.

Military Installation Resilience

One of the principal responsibilities of the USD(A&S) is to develop and update policies, programs, and guidance, and oversee compliance within the Department to ensure resilience against the current and projected impacts of extreme weather on military installations—both in the United States and overseas. In the FY 2020 NDAA, Congress amended section 2864 of title 10, United States Code, to require that Installation Master Plans include a component addressing the weather resilience of both the installation and of key supporting civilian infrastructure. Notwithstanding Congress’ mandate, there does not seem to be any sense of urgency within the Department to comply, even at those installations identified as most vulnerable to impacts of extreme weather.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to increase the pace of the required revisions of Installation Master Plans to include this resilience component?

If confirmed, I will review the state of military installation resilience and the current pace of revisions to Installation Master Plans to include this resilience component and determine appropriate measures to adjust that pace according to the needs of the Department.

What steps would you take to ensure that this component of such Master Plans addresses both the resilience of the installation and the resilience of the key supporting civilian infrastructure?

If confirmed, I will review this component of such Master Plans and evaluate what steps would need to be taken to address the appropriate resilience of an installation and the key supporting civilian infrastructure.

Relations with Congress

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

USD(A&S) and Congress share a common goal to accelerate the acquisition and sustainment of our weapon systems to rapidly deliver the most capable systems and services to our warfighters within cost and schedule limitations. This shared mission provides the basis for a strong relationship between the USD(A&S) and Congress which can and should be strengthened by prioritizing transparency, communication, and a genuine commitment to working together by pairing Congress’ ability to mandate change through statute with USD(A&S) commitment to executing the mission. This complementary relationship is essential for success within the acquisition and sustainment communities.

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

Building a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the Office of the USD(A&S) is essential to achieve the mission and implement acquisition reform. If confirmed, I would prioritize the development of that relationship by establishing a cadence of regular briefings and consultations with key Congressional committees, including the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) and House Armed Services Committee (HASC), as well as relevant appropriations subcommittees. I would aim to proactively notify Congress of any significant program delays, cost overruns, or performance issues, providing detailed explanations and proposed solutions.

I intend to prioritize building personal relationships with key members of Congress and their staff, going beyond formal hearings and briefings to engage in dialogue, build trust, and understand the priorities and concerns of individual members and their constituents. I would seek opportunities to organize site visits and program demonstrations for members of Congress and their staff to provide firsthand insights into DoD programs and technologies, and engage with Congress early in the legislative process, seeking input, sharing perspectives, and collaborating on proposed changes to acquisition laws and regulations. It is a top priority for me to work collaboratively with Congress to develop solutions that overcome the challenges facing the defense acquisition and sustainment enterprise.

Sexual Harassment

If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment, discrimination, or other harassment from an employee of the Office of the USD(A&S) or an employee of an organization over which the USD(A&S) exercises authority, direction, and control?

If confirmed as the USD(A&S), I would take any complaint of sexual harassment, discrimination, or other forms of harassment with the utmost seriousness. Every individual within the Office of the USD(A&S) and in organizations under its purview deserves a safe and respectful work environment. I would ensure the safety and well-being of the complainant, initiate a prompt and thorough investigation, take appropriate disciplinary action, foster a culture of prevention and respect, and seek to ensure fairness for all parties involved, prioritizing evidence-based findings to prove guilt under any investigation.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive

timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.