

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Dr. Troy Meink
Nominee to be Secretary of the Air Force

Duties and Responsibilities

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

The Secretary of the Air Force is the senior civilian leader of the Department of the Air Force. Under USC Title 10, the Secretary has the responsibility to organize, train and equip the Department, which contains both the United States Air Force and the United States Space Force. Additionally, he or she is responsible for recruiting, for training and for overall administration, to include the morale and welfare of Airmen and Guardians and their families. This individual is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for the functioning and efficiency of the Department and must work closely with the Congress, sister services, industry partners, civic leaders and our Allies and partners to ensure the Air and Space Forces effectively support national defense objectives.

In particular, what management and leadership experience do you possess that you would apply to your service as Secretary of the Air Force, if confirmed?

I have been serving in national security for over 35 years, first as an active-duty Air Force officer, then as a career civil servant. My path of civil service has allowed me to lead and manage organizations with larger and larger scopes of responsibility. This includes my previous service as the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for Space and my present role as the Principal Deputy Director of the National Reconnaissance Office. In my current role, I oversee an organization with a global footprint, thousands of employees and billions of dollars in national security contracts. I have successfully led 16 clean audits at the NRO. If confirmed, I plan on applying the lessons learned through these unique experiences to the Department of the Air Force.

If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Under Secretary of the Air Force?

Under Title 10, the Under Secretary of the Air Force performs the duties and exercises such powers as the Secretary of the Air Force may prescribe. The Under Secretary serves as the Chief Management Officer for the Department and carries out the primary responsibility for the business operations of the Department of the Air Force. Additionally, the Under Secretary oversees other matters assigned by the Secretary. If confirmed, I will review the current duties and responsibilities

If confirmed, over which members and organizations of the Air Force would you direct the Chief of Staff of the Air Force to exercise supervision and what would be the scope of such supervision? What other duties would you assign to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force?

Under Title 10, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Chief of Space Operations perform their assigned duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of the Air Force and are directly responsible to the Secretary. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the supervisory responsibilities of both Chiefs and consider any appropriate reallocation of duties and responsibilities. My priorities for them will be to assist me in improving the warfighter readiness of our Airmen and Guardians as well as improve their quality of life and quality of service.

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

If confirmed, I look forward to bringing my 30 years of successful innovation to the Department of the Air Force. We need to not only innovate but innovated faster than our potential adversaries. To be successful at increasing our rate of innovation we will need to take holistic look at our strategies. We need to streamline the budgeting and acquisition process, tailor or risk management approach, increase the level of competition, broaden our industry base and ensure we are recruiting and retaining the needed talent. We also need to strive for innovation across all functions in the department.

Conflicts of Interest

Federal ethics laws, like 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.

Major Challenges and Priorities

What would you see as your highest priorities for the near-term and long-term future of the Air Force?

If confirmed, I will focus on the most critical areas needed to deter aggression and win decisively if conflict arises. This includes the near-term challenges of maintaining and operating our current capabilities and the long-term modernization activities we need to get right! There are critical modernization activities underway in all mission areas of the Air Force, including nuclear deterrence, Air Superiority, Global Strike, C2, Rapid Global Mobility and ISR. In addition, the U.S. leadership in space is being challenged and I will work to ensure the U.S. Space Force doesn't let that happen.

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

If confirmed, I have no doubt that there will be several areas that require my immediate attention, to include the nuclear and conventional modernization going on across the Department. However, there are three significant challenges that I can readily identify based on the information available to me. First is the need for resilient space architectures; second is the auditability of the Department of the Air Force; third is maintaining a technological edge over our near-peer adversaries.

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

If confirmed, I would always look to work with the Secretary of Defense, my service counterparts, our industry partners, and this committee to address these challenges. For resilient space architectures, I would seek to leverage our commercial partners as much as possible, buying what we can and only building what we absolutely must. Widely proliferated space capabilities that leverage commercial industry deny our adversaries any "first-mover" advantage and thus have a deterrent effect on conflict in the space domain.

For auditability, I would leverage my experience at the National Reconnaissance Office as well as tools like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning that have not been available to the Department in previous decades.

I am committed to enabling the strongest ties between strategy, acquisition, and resources to support President Trump and Secretary Hegseth's priorities. We must ensure the Department's foundational processes deliver capabilities and closes gaps that are focused on warfighting and lethality. Today, we are in an age of rapidly changing technology where tech is obsolete almost as soon as it is developed, and the current geopolitical landscape demands speed and agility – this means an acquisition cycle far shorter than those of our legacy systems and prioritizing resource allocation against the most

significant threats and towards the Department's plans to deal with those threats.

National Defense Strategy

The 2022 NDS outlines that the United States faces a rising China, an aggressive Russia, and the continued threat from rogue regimes and global terrorism. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the NDS Commission testified in July 2024 that China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea have formed an “axis of aggressors”, supporting each other’s military aggression and illegal wars.

What is your assessment of the military threat posed by the People’s Republic of China?

I believe that China poses the largest plausible military threat to the United States of America, as well as our Allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. China has utilized the last two or more decades to “go to school” on the United States as we were focused on countering violent extremism. They have used that time to modernize and attempt to catch up in terms of both capability and capacity. Furthermore, their aggressive behavior in places like the South China Sea conspicuously demonstrates a willingness to use military “hard” power to achieve their national security objectives. I am most concerned with the developmental timelines of their military programs; if we cannot shorten our own timelines in acquisition, they are likely to continue closing the gap.

What is your assessment of the military threat posed by Russia?

While I acknowledge that I do not have access to all information, it is clear that Russia poses an acute threat to its European neighbors, many of whom are NATO Allies. Despite setbacks over the previous years of conflict in Ukraine, Russia has maintained a war economy and will remain a threat with its military power (conventional and strategic). I am more concerned with Russia’s pursuit of asymmetric advantages in the space, information, cyber and electronic warfare domains.

What is your assessment of the military threat posed by collusion among Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea?

While I do not have access to all the information regarding collusion among these four states, it is my understanding from open-source reporting that they are sharing resources and equipment. This has been most conspicuous in the conflict in Ukraine. Greater cooperation among these countries allows them to cover down on the shortfalls in each other’s capabilities and capacity. If confirmed, I see my role as organizing, training, and equipping the Air and Space Forces to a level of warfighting readiness that deters this kind of collusion in the future.

In 2024, the Air Force announced a refocus on “Great Power Competition,” with a series of reorganizations intended to modernize force structure and force design, to align to

the 2022 NDS.

In your view, has the GPC initiative been successful?

I have not been fully briefed on the extent of these initiatives to make a judgment on their success. I do agree, in principle, with the Department's focus on the kind of high-end competition delineated in our National Defense Strategy. If confirmed, I look forward to receiving an in-depth briefing on this initiative, reviewing the data and analysis, and making my own assessment. I commit to sharing the results of that assessment with this committee.

What do you perceive to be the Air Force's role in competing with and countering China?

I believe the role of the Air and Space Forces is to achieve a level of warfighting capability, capacity, and readiness to deter China from pursuing the use of force as an avenue for achieving their national security objectives. On the strategic front, this means having a nuclear capability that is never in doubt. On the conventional side, it means being able to prosecute all our core functions at a time and place of our choosing. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and this Congress to ensure the Department has the authorities and resources to achieve that level of warfighting readiness and thus influence the decision-making calculus of China.

Is the Air Force adequately sized, structured, and resourced to implement the current strategy and the associated operational plans? Please explain your answer.

While I have not been briefed on current operational plans, I understand from open-source reporting that the Air Force is smaller and older than it has ever been in its history. I am equally concerned—as a private citizen—about the low mission capable rates for our fleets, some of which have been reportedly as low as 50% or so. If confirmed, I look forward to receiving briefings on the adequacy of the force to implement these operational plans. If there are shortfalls, I commit to working with this Committee and this Congress to advocate for the resources needed.

What are your primary lessons learned from observing operations in Ukraine and the Middle East that the Air Force must consider in its modernization efforts?

While there are several lessons that I have learned from open-source reporting of the conflict in Ukraine, there are two that I think are most useful to the position I have been nominated to take. First, the increased use of unmanned systems has already altered the character of war. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of the Air Force is focused on both offensive and defensive unmanned systems and tactics.

Second, the need for resilience in our space architectures. The conflict in Ukraine has highlighted how dependent joint forces have become on space for capabilities like satellite communications and positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT). For our own

joint force to prosecute its missions, our Space Force must have resilient architectures to ensure these capabilities are not lost in times of crisis or conflict.

Does the Air Force have the requisite analytic capabilities and tools to support you, if confirmed, in evaluating the Air Force's force structure and sizing strategies to ensure that it can and will generate forces that are manned, trained, and equipped to execute current plans and strategies? Please explain your answer.

I am not aware of the specific analytic capabilities and tools the Air Force uses to evaluate its force structure. If confirmed, I look forward to learning what tools are being used to conduct analysis of force structure and if they are inadequate, I will advocate for bringing in the right tools and analytic capabilities. Moreover, I commit to full transparency with this Committee on the results of my assessments.

If confirmed, how will you address any gaps or shortfalls in the Air Force's ability to meet the demands placed on it by the operational plans that implement the current strategy?

While I have not been briefed on current operational plans, I understand from open-source reporting that the Air Force is smaller and older than it has ever been in its history. I am equally concerned—as a private citizen—about the low mission capable rates for our fleets, some of which have been reportedly as low as 50% or so. If confirmed, I look forward to receiving briefings on the adequacy of the force to implement these operational plans. If there are shortfalls, I commit to working with this Committee and this Congress to advocate for the resources needed.

If confirmed, what changes or adjustments would you make in the Air Force's implementation of the current strategy?

I do not yet have access to the information necessary to make an assessment on the Air Force's implementation of the current strategy. However, I have seen through open source reporting the level of focus the Department has on high-end competition and conflict and I applaud efforts to re-prioritize after decades of countering violent extremism. If confirmed, I look forward to receiving briefings on the implementation plans for both Services and will make my own assessment. I commit to working with this committee to share the results of that assessment.

How would you characterize your familiarity with the civilian leaders of the militaries of other nations and multi-national and international air power-focused consultative forums? If confirmed, on which leaders and forums would you focus your engagement with a view to advancing the interests of the Air Force?

I do not yet have access to the information necessary to make an assessment. In the execution of my current duties as Principal Deputy Director of the National Reconnaissance Office, I have some familiarity with civilian leadership in the national

security establishments of other nations, but it is not extensive. If confirmed, I would place a premium on building positive bilateral and multilateral relationships with my counterparts in the military services of our partners and Allies. To my knowledge, there are many forums for facilitating that kind of engagement. Should I be fortunate to be confirmed to this position, I would prioritize building relationships with our Allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region, including our Quad partners and our ASEAN partners. I would also take care not to neglect our many European Allies and partners and am aware that there are several forums that the Secretary traditionally has an opportunity to engage in, including the Munich Security Conference and the Royal International Air Tattoo.

Air Force Readiness

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

My current understanding is the Air Force is ready today to deter and defend, and if necessary, to fly, fight and win against any adversary. However, I believe the Department's advantage is shrinking and the ability to overmatch adversaries is a concern.

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

Guardians protect our Nation's interests in, from and to space. They must be trained and ready to fight and win in a contested environment, enable and deliver warfighting lethality to and as part of the Joint Force, and assure freedom of access for our forces while denying the same to our adversaries through day-to-day activities and contingencies.

To achieve this end, the Space Force must prioritize space domain awareness, resilience, and capabilities that "hold at risk" adversary spaces assets to protect the Joint Force. Additionally, we must reinforce the warrior ethos within our Guardians, providing them with the equipment, the tactics, and the training required to use military force to control the space domain.

The Air Force provides airpower through 5 core functions – Air Superiority, Global Precision Attack, Rapid Global Mobility, Global ISR, and Command and Control. Together, these functions provide a range pre-emptive and reactive options to the National Command authority and allow the department to integrate with the joint force in peacetime, crisis, and high-end conflict. As we maintain readiness, individual units may not train to all 5 core functions, but as a department we stand ready to provide Air Superiority, Global Precision Attack, Rapid Global Mobility, Global ISR, and Command and Control, anywhere in the world, in support of U.S. national interests, Allies, and partners. Given the pervasive and increasing threat of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems

(UAS), Airmen and Guardians should be trained to detect, respond and if necessary, counter sUAS in both day-to-day and contingency scenarios. Similarly, as more missile defense capabilities come online, Airman and Guardian operator training for those systems will also be necessary.

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

To my knowledge, our current suite of authoritative data sources is not aligned to allow easy transfer of data that will allow us to analyze and report the readiness of our personnel, supply, equipment, and training levels. The Department must upgrade the current analytic tools to inform not only Service-level decisions, but to communicate readiness across the Joint Force, the Department of Defense, and Congress. My understanding is the Department needs new analytical tools to complement the efforts in improving force generation and presentation and allow the Air Force to better articulate capacity, readiness, and risk.

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

Nuclear deterrence is foundational for our national security. Need to protect foundational readiness programs such as Flying Hours, Weapons Sustainment Support, and Pilot production.

We also need to balance today's requirements with the need to modernize and maintain future readiness, deterrence and lethality. Manage short-term risk to readiness to modernize and prepare our forces for mid-to-long term and enduring strategic missions as well as acute and persistent threats. We need to invest, modernize, and upgrade Operational Test and Training Infrastructure (OTTI) for the high-end training capability to sharpen Air Force and Joint Force combat effectiveness and lethality such as the Nevada Test and Training Range and the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex.

Budget

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

If confirmed, I will work with my senior military and civilian officials in assessing resources levels to ensure the Air Force and Space Force budgets achieve the priorities set forth by the Administration, with a laser focus on defending the homeland and deterring China and other competitors. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) must align with Defense strategic priorities and maintain readiness while modernizing capabilities to meet evolving threats. The DAF must maintain a competitive edge against

threats posed by our strategic competitors to ensure air and space superiority and dominance over adversaries, while also projecting combat power to support the Joint Force. If confirmed, I would like to discuss specific assessments against all our priorities with Congress to ensure the DAF is resourced adequately.

How will you ensure the Air Force is appropriately resourced to simultaneously modernize, grow readiness, and take care of its people?

If confirmed, I will prioritize the unique Air Force capabilities critical to the Joint Force to generate lethality and achieve peace through strength. I will also prioritize rebuilding our military by matching threats to capabilities. Putting people first means ensuring the readiness of our troops and their families. It also means providing our troops with the most lethal and modern capabilities that will outpace our adversaries. I will work internally with stakeholders, the Administration, and ultimately, Congress to advocate for readiness and modernization funding, as well as taking care of our most important asset, people.

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

If confirmed, do you agree to support the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Chief of the Space Force in providing their unfunded priorities lists to Congress in a timely manner?

Yes. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing and including critical funding requirements in our budget requests. I will also support the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Chief of Space Operations in the submission of their unfunded priority lists in accordance with law.

Alliances and Partnerships

Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are one of our greatest comparative advantages in competition with near-peer rivals.

What do you see as the role of the Air Force and Space Force in building relationships and interoperability with allies and partners?

The Air Force and Space Force are charged with developing combat-credible international partnerships that support U.S. objectives across, though, and above AORs. The Air Force plays a crucial role equipping and training Allies and partners so they can defend themselves deter adversaries, and fight alongside us. In addition, the scope and scale of the challenges within the space domain is too large for any one country—including the United States—to address alone, so we must fully leverage Allies and

partners as force multipliers to achieve space superiority. Interoperability and interdependence with Allies and partners in the space domain broadens the number of systems available for space operations, strengthens resilience, and complicates adversaries' decision-making—making an attack on one of our space systems more risky, less profitable, and less likely to achieve the adversary's end states. With the growing number of Allies and partners standing up their own dedicated military space organizations we have incredible opportunities to play the same crucial roles in both air and space. We will continue to leverage these opportunities through international engagement that prioritizes integration of space capabilities, posture, training, wargaming, and exercising to dominate the space warfighting domain.

If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to prioritize and strengthen existing U.S. alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and take advantage of opportunities in international cooperation?

If confirmed, I will continue to advance President Trump's directive to achieve Peace Through Strength by empowering our Allies and partners via security cooperation to be force multipliers. Department of the Air Force security cooperation will facilitate greater burden-sharing with Allies and partners who are positioned to assume primary responsibility for defending their national and regional interests, freeing U.S. resources toward priorities aligned with U.S. national strategic objectives, to include homeland defense. We will achieve this strategic alignment through key-leader engagement, international armaments cooperation, and proactive export policy that increases the lethality, interoperability, and readiness of our Allies and partners to deter Chinese aggression.

Indo-Pacific Region

What are the key areas in which the Air Force and Space Force must improve to provide the necessary capabilities and capacity to the Joint Force to deter Chinese aggression and, if necessary, prevail in a potential conflict with China?

The Space Force must keep the advantage we have maintained in space for over 60 years including counterspace capabilities. The Air Force must accelerate the modernization of its aging fleet and ensure high levels of readiness.

How would you assess the threat to Air Force forces and facilities from Chinese missile forces? In your assessment, have Air Force investments, posture shifts and/or new operational concepts sufficiently addressed this threat?

To my knowledge, the threat to USAF forces and facilities from People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) are ever increasing due to the growing number, type, range and sophistication of missiles being produced year over year. The Agile Combat Employment (ACE) concept will make it harder for China to neutralize operations and increases aimpoints that must be targeted. While the USAF has made progress in

addressing the Chinese missile threat, but there is more to be done.

In your assessment, what are the priority investments the Department of the Air Force could make that would help implement the National Defense Strategy in the Indo-Pacific?

With China's increasing threat and capability in the Indo-Pacific region, the DAF will have to operate in a highly contested environment, characterized by a complex web of overlapping integrated air and space defense systems. Investments in asymmetric capabilities will create a more resilient and adaptable force augmenting the DAF's credible deterrent against China and other potential adversaries in an increasingly complex and challenging security environment.

USAF investments in prepositioned munitions and petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) are also crucial for maintaining logistical support in contested environments.

Furthermore, improving overall force readiness, modernizing the force, developing collaborative combat aircraft (CCAs), conducting joint and combined training with Allies & partners, and establishing resilient command and control systems are vital steps to strengthen the USAF's agility and effectiveness in the region.

USSF investment priorities focus on achieving space superiority through space control. Supporting and underpinning these capabilities, the USSF requires the systems and sufficient baseline force structure and enabling capabilities such as space domain awareness, warfighting manpower, infrastructure, facilities, security, and realistic testing and training.

What is your current assessment of the risk of operational failure in a conflict with China as a result of a critical logistics failure?

The risk of operational failure due to logistical challenges in a conflict with China is a serious concern. The DAF modern Force relies on highly complex and interconnected supply chains for everything from ammunition and fuel to spare parts and advanced technology. Potential adversaries, like China, have the capability to threaten our logistics hubs and supply lines, which are essential for sustaining military operations. This requires improvement to DAF distributed logistics, base resilience, and prepositioned supplies. We also need to consider how to better leverage our Allies and Partners.

In your opinion, what role will Guam play in a conflict with China? Do you believe Guam's infrastructure is currently adequate to support the current and future mission?

In my opinion, Guam is a critical forward location that enables the projection and sustainment of airpower from the frontlines of the Indo-Pacific, bolstering the USAF's posture west of the International Date Line. My understanding is that significant infrastructure improvements have already been made at Andersen, but further enhancements including ongoing upgrades to its airfields, increasing support facilities, and expanding fuel and munitions storage capacity are vital to ensure robust resiliency and operational continuity in contested environments.

What is your view of the role of unmanned systems in deterring conflict in the Taiwan Strait?

The Taiwan Strait is a highly contested and sensitive region, and the potential that China would use military aggression against Taiwan remains a significant concern for regional and global stability. Unmanned systems play a critical role in deterring conflict in the region, but the systems' effectiveness depends on addressing the challenges and limitations associated with their use. A comprehensive approach that includes developing advanced unmanned systems, improving command and control, enhancing cybersecurity and resiliency, and integrating unmanned systems with other warfighting capabilities is key to maximizing their potential.

Europe

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

The Air Force must work with our NATO Allies to ensure that the Alliance has the capability and capacity to deter Russian aggression and if necessary, prevail in conflict. The Air Force's ability to project power globally is a decisive factor in deterring our peer adversaries. Reviving our defense industrial base and rapidly fielding emerging technologies are key to sustaining the Air Force's speed, agility, and lethality.

In your view, are there investments the Air Force should prioritize for the competition with Russia below the level of direct military conflict in order to counter Russian malign influence and hybrid warfare operations?

The USAF will need to work with NATO to ensure that our Europe Allies are capable of deterring and countering Russian malign influence, including hybrid warfare operations. We will prioritize guiding European investments in these areas.

How do you assess the Air Force's current posture to support operations in Europe?

The U.S. Air Force is postured to support operations in Europe with a diverse and capable force, including forward-based squadrons and high-end capabilities like the F-35. Integration with NATO Allies is strong and has steadily improved in recent years. However, the evolving threat environment, particularly from Russia, necessitates continuous force posture assessment and potential adjustments to ensure the long-term capability to deter and, if necessary, defeat aggression.

Acquisition

Civilian oversight of the acquisition system has been a cornerstone of the post-World War Two acquisition system.

What are your personal views on the principle of civilian control of the defense acquisition system?

I believe civilian control of our military is fundamental to our system of government and I place that same premium on our defense acquisitions system. It requires a collaborative effort between military, civilian, and industry stakeholders to deliver the capabilities our warfighters need on time and within resources. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of the Air Force's Senior Acquisition Executives to increase innovation, streamline and accelerate the acquisition process, and ensure cost, schedule, and performance goals are maintained.

Congress has expanded and refined the acquisition-related functions of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Chief of Space Operations, and the other Service Chiefs.

If confirmed, how would you synchronize your acquisition responsibilities and those of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology and those of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Chief of Space Operations?

If confirmed, I would ensure continuous collaboration and transparent communication with SAF/AQ, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the Chief of Space Operations to synchronize acquisition efforts with operational priorities. This unity of effort will enable us to deliver effective and timely capabilities that support the operational needs of the joint force and maintain strategic advantage.

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

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

In my view, the MTA pathway benefits the Department of the Air Force by allowing for rapid prototyping and fielding of capabilities within 2-5 years, delivering new technologies to the warfighter faster.

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

The Department of the Air Force benefits from rapid acquisition authorities by accelerating the development, acquisition, and fielding of critical combat capabilities, enabling the DAF to deliver warfighting capabilities faster without the more bureaucratic traditional acquisition processes.

How will you ensure that rapid acquisition pathways are not inundated with unnecessary or unwarranted bureaucratic processes?

If confirmed, I look forward to utilizing and accelerating these hard-won pathways. Having these tools is critical to getting more capability to the warfighter faster. If confirmed, I will scrutinize any barriers to these novel and promising pathways and will continue to streamline processes.

How will you seek to balance the need to rapidly acquire and field innovative systems while ensuring acquisition programs provide effective capabilities for the joint force?

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to streamline the requirements and acquisition process. I will ensure our acquisition programs provide meaningful and effective capabilities for the Joint force while leveraging all acquisition authorities and flexibilities to deliver at speed and scale. If confirmed, I will also ensure we have the necessary policies in place to strengthen the health of the defense industrial base.

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

If confirmed, I will ensure our approaches allow mission and capability informed decisions. Both the Section 809 Panel and PPBE commission have called for a portfolio-based approach to making acquisition decisions. If confirmed, I will work to move the DAF from system-by-system analysis approach to a mission informed capability portfolio approach.

What is your assessment of the adequacy with which the Air Force has been transitioning nontraditional defense contractors from research and development into production contracts? What steps, if any, would you take to improve the Air Force's ability to do business with nontraditional defense contractors?

To my knowledge, the DAF has been focused on lowering barriers to entry and promoting competition and has made progress, with the Collaborative Combat Aircraft Program being a very important example. If confirmed, I will continue lowering of barriers to entry for nontraditional defense contractors. Our Acquisition Strategies and the incentives they create should recognize bold investment in R&D, increased capacity options, and increased competitive opportunities enabling more opportunities and competition for nontraditional contractors.

What is your assessment of the sufficiency of the Air Force acquisition workforce across both civilian and military personnel, both in the number and the level of experience of those personnel? What do you see as the benefits or disadvantages of civilian versus military acquisition professionals?

I believe the single most important factor in acquisition success is the skill of the government team. As I understand it, the Airmen and Guardians within the Acquisition Workforce are some of the best and brightest in the Department of the Air Force. Our unified Acquisition workforce, military and civilians, are invaluable to the warfighter and our overall readiness. If confirmed, I will work with military and civilian leadership to ensure our acquisition workforce has the professionalism and competency required for success.

Requirements

The Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act required the Joint Staff to take a clean-sheet approach to the requirements process and the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act required the Secretary of Defense to establish an advisory panel on reforming the requirements process.

What recommendations would you make to the requirements process to make it more adaptive to changes in threats and technologies?

For the United States Space Force, top-level requirements need to be written in broad mission areas which allows the acquisition community to decompose them in ways that allow for rapid technological insertion, increased adaptation of commercial capabilities, and the flexibility to trade performance for speed in certain circumstances. I believe a robust discussion of the reforms proposed in the FoRGED Act and the report directed under Section 811 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 will allow the Military Services to work with Congress on potential process reforms. Reducing Quick Action Requirement (QAR) restrictions at the Joint Staff and service level, while also allowing for budgetary flexibility, will best posture Combatant Commanders for success in the current national security environment.

What role do you see for the Joint Staff versus the military services in the requirements process?

The Joint Staff ensures the voices of all Services and Combatant Commands are taken into consideration and manages the process of joint requirements development. The Space Force has unique authorities in the requirements process due to the designation of the CSO as Force Design Architect for the Armed Forces, and as the Joint Space Integrator, which provide him broad latitude to capture and satisfy joint warfighting gaps that can be filled with space capabilities along with developing Service specific requirements.

The Joint Staff will act as the integrator for service needs, meaning ensuring the services are working together to provide the effective mission solutions as a joint team. Furthermore, the JS must provide oversight, ensuring the voice of the joint warfighter is front and center in the requirements process.

Test and Evaluation

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

Generally, I believe that limited initial production should be utilized to support formal operational testing. Developmental production prototypes should, to some extent, be employed for developmental testing before making a production decision. However, this approach is highly dependent on the urgency of the operational requirement and the nature of the system being acquired. In certain cases, it may be appropriate to procure weapon systems and equipment that have not undergone full testing and evaluation. This applies when there is an urgent and clearly defined warfighter need, the technical risk is low, the system has been demonstrated in some capacity (including cybersecurity), and the planned procurement is limited. Nevertheless, a basic level of safety, cybersecurity, and performance should typically be validated before the system is fielded.

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

I believe these communities play a critical role in ensuring the timely deployment of systems that deliver operational advantages to our warfighters while meeting their requirements. For any program, regardless of its structure, the sequencing and content of testing should be customized to the specific program, considering factors such as technical and operational risks, the urgency of operational needs, and the efficiency of the testing process.

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

To maintain our military edge, we must be able to test and evaluate our systems as effectively as we build them. That means a sustained commitment to modernizing our test infrastructure across the board. We need to invest in cutting-edge technologies, expand and connect our ranges and develop a secure digital test environment while cultivating our workforce. This is not just about keeping pace; it is about staying ahead in critical areas like autonomy, artificial intelligence, and multi-domain operations. Without these investments, we risk fielding systems that are untested and unreliable.

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

In my opinion, our current test and evaluation capabilities in facilities, personnel, and test apparatuses require constant investments to keep pace with the Air Force's modernization agenda. While we have a dedicated and innovative workforce, the reality is that aging facilities and retaining a highly skilled workforce challenges our ability to effectively test and field the next generation of advanced systems. If confirmed, the Air Force will remain committed to maintaining Test and Evaluation investment to meet the demands of future conflict.

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

As I understand it, the Air Force is committed to leveraging the innovation of commercial technologies wherever possible, but it must never compromise on ensuring those systems are truly ready for the demands of military operations. While we can buy it off-the-shelf, that does not mean it is combat-ready. Both commercial and military items must be rigorously tested in realistic missions with the actual warfighters.

How many Air Force developmental or operational test and evaluation facilities are accredited for TS/SCI discussion and processing?

My understanding is the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center (AFOTEC) currently manages 12 facilities with the necessary accreditation for Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) discussions. On the developmental test and evaluation (DT&E) side, the Air Force Test Center currently has ~1.3 million square feet of classified facility space with 22 facilities.

How many Air Force test and evaluation personnel designing tests are accessed to the OPLANs that their programs are designed to support? How will you ensure your testing is operationally representative if the personnel designing tests do not know the use cases for the equipment?

Understanding the operational environment and operational employment is critical to ensure a well-structured test approach. I do not have access to that level of personnel data to assess if the workforce has the appropriate access, but if confirmed I will ensure they do.

Will the Integrated Capabilities Command (ICC) have the authority to cancel programs that perform poorly in testing or whose need has been overcome by events?

If the need for a capability in development is overcome by events and/or the requirement for such a capability is no longer valid, ICC will coordinate with the A5/7 and make recommendations to the VCSAF via the Air Force Requirements Oversight Council. ICC oversees capability development, and if an ICC-proposed solution to a valid requirements

performs poorly in testing, those results are presented to the AFROC for AF senior leadership to decide whether to continue the program. Service Component Commands (and serviced Combatant Command): Air Mobility Command (USTRANSCOM); Air Force Global Strike Command (USSTRATCOM); United States Air Forces Europe (USEUCOM and USAFRICOM); Pacific Air Forces (USINDOPACOM); Air Forces North / Air Force Space Command (USNORTHCOM and USSPACECOM); Air Force Special Operations Command (USSOCOM); Air Forces Southern (USSOUTHCOM); Air Forces Central (USCENTCOM).

What do you believe should be the relationship between the major commands of the Air Force and the ICC, and how will you ensure the commander of the major commands will be able to execute the mission assigned to them under various operational plans developed by the combatant commands?

My understanding is the AF is planning to move towards streamlining its top-level commands into two types: institutional and service component. Institutional Commands are responsible for the organization, training, equipping and presenting ready Air Forces to Service Component Commands, which then employ those forces IAW the orders of the Combatant Commander to which they serve as the Air Component. By realigning this way, commanders are given the authority to wholly own their respective function and do not face the conflicts of interest which arise between trying to modernize their force while simultaneously employing it. The ICC will work closely with MAJCOMs, Institutional Commands, and Service Component Commands (MAJCOM/I/SCCs) on synchronizing AF modernization needs with sustainment requirements to achieve mission and system integration. The ICC will develop and validate operational concepts and align capability development efforts to build a combat-credible force, capable of achieving National Defense Strategy (NDS) objectives alongside joint, allied, and partner forces. The ICC will prioritize modernization investments, including associated depot activation investments and develop narratives to influence planning and programming choices integrated by design to achieve maximum efficiency and efficacy in the USAF Strategy, Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (SPPBE) corporate process.

Do you believe there are enough full-scale aerial targets to execute test plans for current and future programs?

My understanding is we face a serious challenge in aerial target capabilities. Inventory is shrinking while the sophistication needed for these systems continues to increase. This gap threatens the ability to effectively test and field next-generation weapons. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense to explore solutions, including potential replacements.

The Air Force has shifted focus to beyond line of sight kill chains rather than individual weapons systems. The test community has not yet pivoted to testing the entire process in full.

How will you ensure adequate test and evaluation of the long-range kill chain

“system of systems” in total rather in separate pieces?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Air Force remains committed to rigorously testing the Long-Range Kill Chain as a complete system, not just individual parts. We will do this by using realistic scenarios, leveraging advanced test capabilities like expanded ranges and modeling/simulation, and closely coordinating developmental and operational testing. Our goal is to ensure the Long-Range Kill Chain is effective, resilient, and fully integrated into a multi-domain fight, giving our warfighters a decisive advantage.

Audit

If confirmed, what specific actions will you take or direct to enable the Air Force to achieve a clean financial audit in the most expedited fashion?

The Department of the Air Force continues to make significant progress with audit as roughly 70% of their general fund balance sheet is considered audit ready. If confirmed, I would make audit a top priority and continue to push for accelerated results by taking advantage of industry tools and software that can enable rapid acceleration on audit activities.

What are the benefits to Air Force missions and effectiveness of achieving and maintaining a clean audit?

The annual audit remains a catalyst for positive change, boosting mission readiness, while transforming and streamlining how we operate. The pursuit to obtain and maintain a clean audit opinion has fueled the Department of the Air Force to enhance accountability over assets (e.g., aircraft, munitions, satellites, engines, and property), which directly impacts the DAF mission and warfighters’ effectiveness.

How will you hold Department of the Air Force leaders and organizations responsible and accountable for making the necessary investments and changes to correct findings and material weaknesses identified in the audit process?

If confirmed, I will establish a culture of audit accountability within the Department of the Air Force. This includes a new governance approach, stringent timelines for senior leader remediation efforts, and targeted investments to expedite our path to an unmodified audit opinion by the 2028 Congressional mandate.

Based on your experience, how do you see improved data from Air Force financial management IT systems that support audit help Air Force decision-making and readiness?

Improved data from auditable financial management IT systems will better inform communication of our readiness posture, (e.g., what assets we have and what condition they are in), enhance budget accuracy to focus on actual needs, and enable stronger negotiation positions with vendors to meet mission needs cost-effectively.

Nuclear Enterprise

The Air Force is responsible for maintaining and operating two legs of the nuclear triad, including its nuclear weapons and the majority of the 107 nuclear command, control and communications systems that link the President to the nuclear forces. There have been a number of troubling incidents since 2007, including the inadvertent transportation of six nuclear armed AGM-86 cruise missiles without authorization by a B-52 from Minot Air Force Base to Barksdale Air Forces Base, and the shipment of ICBM fuses to Taiwan. These actions resulted in a loss of confidence and dismissal of the two senior leaders of the Air Force, both the Secretary and the Chief of Staff. In 2014, the entire wing of combat missileers at Malmstrom Air Force Base was decertified after leaders uncovered a proficiency exam cheating incident. It was later determined that this cheating activity was partially due to low morale and a shortage of qualified missileers to perform the long hours deployed in remote CONUS locations under harsh weather. These incidents resulted in number of reviews, including a DOD enterprise review in 2014 by Secretary Hagel. The reviews resulted in such actions as creation of Air Force Global Strike Command, and its elevation to a four-star command, and the establishment of a Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration (A10).

What are your overall views on responsibility of the Secretary of the Air Force as regards the nuclear enterprise?

As denoted in Title 10, the Secretary through the Chief of Staff of the Air Force ensures the safety, security, reliability, effectiveness and credibility of the nuclear deterrence mission of the Air Force. If confirmed, this is one of the most important responsibilities I have, and one I will take very seriously.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to oversee the continued implementation of these reforms of the nuclear-focused organizational and personnel systems?

If confirmed, I first would assess the status of these reforms to see if the Department of the Air Force adequately implemented them and then ask for an evaluation of the success of these reforms to see if they had a positive impact.

If confirmed, what would be your approach to ensure these nuclear-related systems are adequately resourced?

If confirmed, I will take a keen interest in monitoring how the Department of the Air Force resources their nuclear enterprise within its corporate processes to ensure the nuclear enterprise receives sufficient resources to maintain the safety, security, reliability, effectiveness and credibility of the Air Force nuclear deterrence mission.

Will you commit that, if confirmed, you will personally visit Air Force nuclear facilities and bases to gain an in-depth understanding of both the infrastructure,

hardware, and especially how our airmen operate, maintain and secure them?

Yes. Strategic and nuclear deterrence are a top priority for Department of the Air Force and, if confirmed, I commit to personally visiting the Airmen in the field who execute this mission 24/7 to ensure they have the resources and facilities to execute this critical mission.

If confirmed, will you commit to preserving the unique role of Air Force Global Strike Command within the Air Force nuclear enterprise and ensuring its structure reflects the command's responsibility for two legs of the nation's strategic nuclear triad and over 70 percent of the DOD's nuclear command, control, and communications capabilities?

The nuclear deterrence capability provided by the USAF underpins global stability and our National Defense Strategy, and it will remain our utmost priority. Over the last 16 years, Air Force Global Strike Command has unfailingly ensured a safe, secure, reliable, and credible nuclear deterrent, and will continue to play a key role in the evolving geopolitical landscape of Great Power Competition. I understand that we are currently reviewing efforts initiated by the previous Administration to realign USAF force structure for GPC and will pay careful consideration to any proposed changes to Air Force Global Strike Command structure. While some changes may occur, if confirmed, I will be dedicated to ensuring that no efforts will negatively impact the USAF's ability to continue fielding and modernizing our significant portion of the nuclear triad and strategic communication capabilities.

If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that Air Force Global Strike Command has the capability, resources, training and organizational structure to meet the operational requirements of U.S. Strategic Command to deter nuclear escalation?

Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure the Air Force Global Strike command has the resources and authorities to meet its Service Component responsibilities in support of the USSTRATCOM mission.

The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reaffirmed long-held American doctrine to maintain the nation's nuclear triad of land-, sea-, and air-based capabilities.

Do you agree that modernizing each leg of the nuclear triad and the Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons complex is a critical national security priority?

Yes, a robust and modern nuclear deterrent is the cornerstone of our national security, and it is essential that we invest in its modernization to stay ahead of emerging threats and maintain our strategic edge. If confirmed I will assess the status and provide the needed advocacy to continue to have a capable, and ready nuclear deterrent.

Do you believe the current program of record is sufficient to support the full modernization of the nuclear triad, including delivery systems, warheads, and

infrastructure?

To the best of my knowledge, the current program of record outlines a comprehensive plan for modernizing the nuclear triad, including delivery systems, warheads, and infrastructure. Upon confirmation, I intend to conduct a comprehensive review of the Department of the Air Force's existing nuclear weapon systems and modernization initiatives to identify the best ways to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent, which is essential for our national security.

The Minuteman III ICBM is decades beyond its planned service life and must be replaced by the Sentinel ICBM if the U.S. is to retain a triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems. However, the Sentinel program has encountered significant issues over the past year, culminating with a Nunn-McCurdy breach.

Do you support the current program of record for the Sentinel ICBM, and if confirmed, will you advocate for fully funding the program?

I understand that in Summer 2024, the Sentinel program was certified as essential to U.S. national security, and that the Department directed the DAF to restructure the program. If confirmed, I commit to following the recommendations from the Nunn-McCurdy certification. The ground leg of the nuclear triad - Minuteman III and, over time, Sentinel - are foundational to strategic deterrence and defense of the Homeland.

If confirmed, I commit to exploring ways in which the program may be able to regain schedule and reduce cost. Ultimately, the success of this program will be a coordinated effort among the whole of government (DoD, DOE, Commerce, OPM), industry, and our civil communities, all working together to complete the most massive national-defense modernization effort in this century.

Do you support the current program of record for the Long-Range Stand Off weapon and if confirmed, will you advocate for fully funding the program?

If confirmed, I will carefully review the status of the LRSO program to ensure that it is postured to deliver the deterrence capability that the Nation needs on schedule and that is properly funded.

What are your views on expanding production of the B-21 bomber?

The B-21 is a critical capability in the Air Force's nuclear modernization effort that will form the backbone of the Nation's future bomber force and provide both conventional and nuclear capability.

A penetrating bomber, like the B-21, is an important and unique capability for the United States. I understand the B-21 program is currently meeting its goals, we should look carefully at the total numbers of the long-term bomber force, comprised of B-21s and modernized B-52s.

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the details and status of the B-21 program and working closely with senior Air Force leaders to assess the total number of B-21s required to meet the needs of the Joint Force.

What are your views on reconverting the full B-52 fleet back to be nuclear-capable once the New START Treaty expires?

It is my understanding the Air Force has assessed what it would take to reconvert the full B-52 fleet back to nuclear-capable. If confirmed, I will review this assessment and ensure the Air Force is postured and responsive to Presidential direction.

The Air Force owns and operates the majority of the 107 nuclear command, control and communications systems. Major reforms have been put in place at U.S. Strategic Command to set future requirements, while the Undersecretary for Acquisition and Sustainment oversees the acquisition of new capabilities to replace existing systems.

What are your views on the adequacy of the current Air Force nuclear, command, control and communications systems?

Maintaining a safe, secure, reliable, effective and credible deterrent to include nuclear command, control and communications (NC3) systems is a top U.S. national security priority. If confirmed I will assess the status of the Department of the Air Force's current NC3 systems and evaluate how they ensure a safe, secure, reliable, effective and credible deterrent.

Do you support the current organizational approach to the acquisition and management oversight of the modernization of nuclear command, control and communications?

If confirmed, I will conduct a thorough review of the programs to modernize nuclear command, control, and communications and the management structures of these efforts.

The E-4B National Airborne Operations Center utilizes an aging 747-200 platform that must be replaced in the 2030s to ensure the capability and continuity of a number of essential missions including nuclear, command, control and communications.

What are your views on the Survivable Airborne Operations Center program to replace this platform?

If confirmed, I will review the status of the Survivable Airborne Operations Center program to ensure that it is postured to deliver the critical capability of a highly survivable command, control, and communications center.

Air Force Programs

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

The Department of the Air Force must ensure a mission focused methodology to prioritize research and development investment, including science and technology, prototyping, and experimentation resources. If confirmed, I will pursue a portfolio approach that is both risk and mission informed and balances R&D investment across near- and long-term needs and aligned with National Defense Strategy priorities.

Where do you believe the greatest gaps remain between required and current capability in both the Air and Space Forces?

The greatest gap between required and current capability is a matter of both scope and scale. The USSF needs to continue developing offensive and defensive space control capabilities to successfully prosecute a war in space and to conduct operations at a time and place of our choosing. Additionally, we need to enhance our resilience, a trend that is already underway, with proliferated constellations, additional commercial capability, and increased protection against advanced kinetic and non-kinetic threats.

The USAF is in the middle of modernizing all core mission areas, which need to be successful to maintain a force capable of deterring all potential adversaries and win decisively if deterrence fails.

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

If confirmed, how would you plan to meet that minimum?

The previous Administration determined a minimum of 72 fighter aircraft per year. If confirmed, I would work with my Service Chief to reassess the current fighter aircraft requirement based upon the priorities of the President and Secretary of Defense. Once we've determined the necessary fighter aircraft levels, we must then hold the aircraft industry accountable in producing the contracted number of aircraft on time and in accordance with the combat mission requirements of each aircraft. Readiness is my priority along with modernizing our combat force to deter and if required...win conflict.

In your opinion, what is the optimum mix of 4th and 5th generation aircraft required to meet the threat outlined in the 2022 NDS?

The Air Force requires sufficient 4th and 5th generation aircraft located and suited to their capabilities. Fourth generation aircraft have many roles to play, and where those roles exist, they should be performed by 4th generation--not 5th generation--aircraft in order to preserve 5th generation aircraft for missions only they can perform. From a capabilities' perspective, our 4th Generation aircraft still have an active role to play in all but the densest and most advanced threat environments around the world. Where the

threat increases, specifically as we move closer to Chinese mainland, the integration of 5th generation capabilities becomes more important. But the question of fighter fleet composition isn't just about capability, it's also about managing the overall health of an aging aircraft fleet. We need to continually replace 4th generation fighters with 5th generation fighters over time, not just to address a growing, proliferating adversary threat, to efficiently and effectively manage readiness and sustainment over the coming decades.

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

The U.S. Air Force's ability to rapidly deploy forces and conduct operations globally hinges on aerial refueling. Tankers extend the range and endurance of fighter jets, bombers, reconnaissance aircraft, and cargo planes. Maintaining a robust and adaptable force capable of meeting the demands of a rapidly evolving security environment will be crucial to a future fight against our adversaries.

Tankers must refuel receivers where they need gas, when they need it to ensure the Joint Force can deter adversaries. Additionally, many studies show the Joint Force benefits having tankers equipped with battlespace and situational awareness to maneuver around threats and use on-aircraft survivability to persist.

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

What are your views as to the appropriate balance of contract and organic adversary air capability? If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force properly addresses the challenges associated with the availability of adversary air to ensure that its 5th generation fighters are properly trained and ready for combat?

Optimally, the Air Force would generate all adversary air organically through a mix of unit generated sorties and a professional aggressor force. My understanding is that currently, and for the foreseeable future, our aircraft availability rates, and Instructor Pilot manning requires the Air Force to augment our capacity with contract adversary air capabilities. If confirmed, I will pursue a professional 5th generation aggressor force balanced with funding contract adversary air to support Air Force pilot production, absorption and readiness commensurate with budget priorities.

What is your assessment of the readiness of the Air Force heavy bomber fleet? As to each of the airframes listed below, what improvements should be made to increase airframe readiness?

- B-1

- **B-52**
- **B-2**

At this time, I am not aware of the specific challenges of each airframe; therefore, I am not in a position to identify necessary improvements that would enhance the readiness of the bomber fleet. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Gen Allvin and the Air Force leadership to support the readiness of our bomber fleet.

Munitions

Air Force munitions inventories—particularly for precision guided munitions and air-to-air missiles—have declined significantly due to high operational usage, insufficient procurement, poor program execution, and a requirements system that does not adequately account for the ongoing need to transfer munitions to our allies.

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

If confirmed, I would review the procurement plans with an aim to fund procurement of critical weapons at maximum annual production capacities and, where capacity is insufficient, to expand production capacity to meet requirements. I would also explore options to leverage affordable mass weapons and expand the munitions production capacity as a whole.

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

Delivery lead times are the biggest source of delays in rapid replenishment of munitions. If confirmed, I would review existing processes and explore opportunities to reduce lead times including use of advance procurement, multi-year procurement, and industrial base initiatives to expand the number of qualified sources for key weapon components.

In your view, how should the Air Force adapt to self-imposed DOD restrictions on area attack and denial munitions, consistent with the Ottawa Agreements?

To my knowledge, the United States has never signed nor ratified the Ottawa Treaty. If confirmed, I will ensure the Air Force complies with directions from the Secretary of Defense including limitations on munitions.

Based on your experience, how should the Air Force be factoring in the needs of foreign partners and allies into overall munitions forecasting in order to improve the long-term production stability of the industrial base?

The Air Force will work with our Allies and partners to project their long-term munitions requirements and encourage them to formally submit these requirements to us. This demand signal would represent a commitment that the U.S. industrial base can use to build production capacity and work with 2nd and 3rd tier suppliers to meet demand. Additionally, for long-term production stability, the Air Force needs to contract for multiyear weapons procurements. By ensuring predictable demand, we allow industry to invest in the infrastructure, workforce, and supply chain resilience necessary to accommodate increased production and support Secretary Hegseth's goal of reviving the defense industrial base.

The FY24 NDAA required the Department of Defense to establish a pilot program to incorporate CL-20 into existing munitions.

Is the Air Force considering executing any activities under this pilot in order to improve the explosive yield or operational envelope of any of its munitions?

If confirmed, I will review how the Air Force is examining the utility of CL-20 to improve the performance of existing munitions and for weapons currently in development, with the intent to maximize effectiveness.

Regardless of whether the Air Force is doing anything under this pilot program, how is the Air Force considering incorporation of new energetic materials, like CL-20, or new manufacturing processes for energetics, like biomanufacturing, into existing munitions to increase explosive effects or operational envelope of its weapons?

I understand the Air Force has ongoing research programs to investigate improvements in both warheads and missile propellants, for the purposes of increasing warhead effectiveness and missile range. If confirmed, I will ensure the Air Force is actively working with industry to identify, develop, and implement new ideas in these areas.

Space

The United States is increasingly dependent on space, both economically and militarily—from the Global Positioning System on which many industries and military capabilities rely, to the missile warning systems that underpin U.S. nuclear deterrence. Our strategic competitors—China and Russia—are engaged in a concerted effort to leap ahead of U.S. technology and limit U.S. freedom of action in the space warfighting domain.

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

The unclassified 2022 NDS recognizes the space domain as a key integrator for joint warfighting capabilities and emphasizes China's maturing space capabilities. Secretary

Hegseth recently called space, “the next and the most important domain of warfare,” and vowed to invest appropriately in both offensive and defensive space capabilities. If confirmed, I will ensure the next NDS prioritizes a secure space environment for the United States, its Allies, and its partners to empower a lethal and ready Joint Force and to reflect the environment’s growing importance.”

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

China and Russia continue to use coercive and provocative tactics to threaten and undermine U.S. leadership. Because space is critical to American security, prosperity, and way of life, winning the competition in space and establishing space superiority is a crucial responsibility of the Department of the Air Force and the Joint Force. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States pursues a robust force structure that includes capabilities for offensive and defensive space control missions to enable the Joint Force to achieve national security objectives through U.S. space superiority.

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

Access to space, space-based data, and space-enabled applications is becoming increasingly simple and streamlined for all actors. Both North Korea and Iran, for example, have continued to press forward with their space programs, and even if they may never rival the great powers in terms of scale, they will be able to exploit the domain to their own ends and potentially employ counterspace technologies against us. Each of these two have already demonstrated the ability to jam satellite communications and GPS as well. Even without a robust space program, any actor, state or non-state, hostile or benign, can take advantage of space technology, whether it be precision navigation, global communications, imagery, weather, and much more with little more than a smartphone, potentially using these nominally neutral space capabilities to challenge U.S. interests. Lastly, as China continues to actively peddle its rapidly expanding space capabilities to the world—and the developing world in particular—the United States risks a loss of its presently dominant soft power in the domain, yielding that influence to Beijing.

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

Congress has already played a central role in fostering several changes, and the Department of Defense needs to stay focused on successfully implementing them. Specifically, space acquisitions need to shift from legacy practices of bespoke, siloed systems to integrating commercial space solutions into national security space architectures that drive new doctrine, strategy, force designs, capabilities, and operations. If confirmed, I will review the approach to space enterprise acquisition and work with

Congress and the Department to implement any necessary reforms.

The Space Force is now acquiring space systems for protect and defend missions, similar to any other weapon system of the Air Force.

Do you believe the Space Force is adequately structured and capable to acquire, test and evaluate these weapons systems to deliver the required effects of the combatant commands such as USSPACECOM, USINDOPACOM, or USEUCOM?

As space operations evolve to meet the demands of the emerging strategic environment, so too must the systems, processes, and activities intended to present credible combat capability. I believe that rigorous test and evaluation is a requirement to prove combat credibility of the weapons systems that the combatant commands will employ. If confirmed, I will ensure that our space acquisitions programs and test activities are aligned to the requirements of the combatant commands and that those capabilities will be rapidly delivered in a streamlined and transparent manner.

What recommendations would you make to this acquisition and testing process to improve its effectiveness in supporting the combatant commands? What is your vision for the ideal relationship between the Space Force and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)? How will you minimize duplication of effort between the organizations?

As the NRO's Principal Deputy Director, I provided day-to-day management of the NRO, including the integration of intelligence capabilities to meet mission priorities. If confirmed, I would review the space acquisition structure, to include test and evaluation processes, with an eye towards streamlining decision-making and eliminating bureaucracy, to ensure that doctrine, strategy, and operations are all properly aligned to fully exploit the combined commercial and exquisite national capabilities of the United States. Further, I would prioritize a review of integration across the national security space enterprise, to include the Intelligence Community, using Congressionally established bodies, to understand where greater integration may be achieved to effectively support combatant commands.

In your role as Deputy Director of the NRO, and prior acquisition roles at the NRO before that, you developed close working and successful relationships with key space industries – a highly narrow and technically specialized area. However, as Secretary of the Air Force you will take on a much broader role overseeing the long-term success of the Air Force in multiple domains of conflict.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the Assistant Secretary for Space Acquisition and Integration exercises Air Force oversight of those day-to-day space acquisition and integration roles that you once held at the NRO in order to avoid any appearance of a possible conflict of interest with these key space industries that you once had at the NRO?

Yes, if confirmed, I would ensure that the Assistant Secretary for Space Acquisition and Integration exercises oversight of those day-to-day space acquisition and integration roles. I fully support the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration's role and responsibilities for quickly delivering space capabilities to the warfighter that are fully integrated with the Joint Force.

In addition, in my 30 years of acquisition and operations related leadership, I have worked with a large percentage of the U.S. Defense and Tech Industry base. Throughout that time, I have complied with all financial reporting requirements, received regular ethics training and consulted with General Council to ensure I was free from all conflict of interest concerns. I will continue this approach if confirmed.

Cyber and Electronic Warfare

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

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

If confirmed, I will continue to leverage the DAF Principal Cyber Advisor to advise my office, the CSAF, and CSO on all cyber matters concerning the DAF to include implementing the DoD Cyber Strategy and interim NDS within the DAF. Specifically, I will expect the PCA to coordinate and oversee the execution of the DAF's cyber budgeting, workforce, and operational policies as an independent advisor. This independence is critical to ensure I am fully informed of all views, and I will continue to use the PCA in this manner in addition to evaluating additional opportunities to integrate the PCA with other warfighting communities.

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

If confirmed as Secretary of the Air Force, the PCA would be a principal member of my staff providing independent consultation that cannot be found in other offices. If confirmed, I will maintain the PCA's position and role within the DAF's leadership structure and assess how it can be even further utilized.

What are Air Force's top three cyber challenges, and how will you use the PCA to address them?

The PCA's office will serve as a principal office as we aim to tackle our 3 big challenges; how do we organize, train and equip. For a cyber engagement we look to novel solutions to keep up with current pacing threat. These cyber challenges are centered on our ability to present lethal forces to the joint fight. The PCA's role as an independent advisor is crucial to providing unbiased guidance on how best to solve these challenges for the

DAF.

In September 2023, DOD released its 2023 Cyber Strategy. The strategy charges DOD to persistently engage malicious cyber actors and other malign threats to U.S. interests in cyberspace.

In your view, how well postured is the Air Force to meet the goals outlined in the 2023 Cyber Strategy? What actions would you take, if confirmed, to mitigate any gap between Air Force capacity and capability and Cyber Strategy goals?

To my knowledge, the 2023 cyber strategy identifies 4 LOEs, and the DAF's resourcing decisions directly align to supporting these LOEs by providing the best organized, trained, and equipped Airmen and Guardians. Mitigating gaps between current AF capacity and the cyber strategy may require reassessing current and future investment strategies. My staff will vigorously address any gaps based on a careful, data-driven assessment to identify the most effective COAs.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to improve military and civilian cybersecurity career paths?

Protecting the American people and our critical infrastructure demands that we prioritize cybersecurity across all levels of government. Our dedicated military and civilian workforce are crucial to achieving this goal. If confirmed, I will champion the ongoing modernization and enhancement of our cyber workforce, both military and civilian. This includes streamlining career opportunities and deepening expertise through collaboration with private industry and academia. Additionally, we must continue coding cyber workforce roles to military and civilian classifications to ensure consistency of work performed by our cyber total force. We must improve talent management strategies and create new avenues for skilled professionals outside government to transition into public service. Furthermore, I will work with Congress and the Department of Defense to ensure we offer competitive incentives and targeted development programs that attract and retain the very best cybersecurity talent.

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

Air and Space Force core missions depend on information dominance. As the Department of the Air Force looks to develop and deploy Joint All Domain Command and Control and Globally Integrated Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance capabilities, it must consider the interconnectedness of systems and the need for actionable information at the point where leaders must make time-sensitive operational decisions. Future operations will demand near real-time flow of timely, accurate, relevant tactical information over a global network without disruptive classification constraints or other barriers slowing or limiting effective sharing of information with Joint, Allied, and Coalition partners. If confirmed, I will strive to leverage partnerships and shared objectives to field high-priority information systems to effectively optimize air and space

power and enable our partners in the joint and combined force to meet national security objectives and priorities.

If confirmed, specifically what measures would you take or direct to improve the cybersecurity culture across the Air Force workforce—military, civilian, and contractor? How would you empower and hold key leaders accountable for improvements in DOD cybersecurity?

I firmly believe cybersecurity is a shared responsibility, demanding vigilance from every member of our team, not just IT and cybersecurity professionals. If confirmed, I will empower the workforce with the knowledge to identify and mitigate risks, fostering a culture of shared responsibility for the security and defense of all systems and information. We will continue to embed cybersecurity considerations throughout the entire lifecycle of the acquisition process and prioritize investment to the most critical vulnerabilities. Accountability will be paramount, with cybersecurity breaches resulting from negligence in executing cybersecurity responsibilities carrying appropriate consequences. I will personally champion the inclusion of cybersecurity into all exercises and readiness inspections, using these evaluations to inform strategic investments and ensure our cyber defenses remain resolute. By prioritizing these areas, we'll create a culture of cybersecurity ownership, ensuring the Air Force remains ahead of evolving threats.

What is your vision for the future of Air Force electronic warfare (EW) capabilities?

I understand that recently the Department published a policy establishing electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) superiority governance, management, capability development, operations and sustainment, and capability divestment. To counter this, the policy provides that the Department will restructure spectrum superiority across air, space, and cyberspace domains. The EMS is contested and dynamic, and our potential adversaries can deny us the freedom of maneuver and action essential to U.S. and multinational operations. To counter this, the policy provides that the Department will restructure and modernize the EW enterprise, cultivate a culture of EMS/EW awareness through robust training, doctrine development, and establish Air and Space Force Directorates to champion these efforts. Additionally, the Department's EMS superiority strategy aligns with national defense priorities outlined in the National Defense Strategy.

I believe electronic warfare (EW) is a critical warfighting capability and an area in which the Department of the Air Force must invest to ensure future operational superiority. As part of a joint and combined multi-domain force the Air Force and Space Force will need to focus EW capabilities on the broader electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) and joint capabilities. My view is that future battlefields will require an Air Force and Space Force with distributed software-defined systems and capabilities that are rapidly updatable that operate in coordination and jointly to maintain an advantage over any adversary. If confirmed, I would support EW as a priority and the introduction of new and innovative concepts and doctrine in this area.

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

To my knowledge, the Department acknowledges the need to enhance operational, tactical-level and personnel-wide EMS operations (EMSO) training. The challenges are the EMS is finite, and the increasing demand from military, civilian, and commercial users create congestion. Training within the EMS is constrained by physics, technology, and policy which is governed by domestic and international law. Further discussion is needed between the Department and stakeholders to find solutions to provide a venue for realistic joint training opportunities while minimizing any impacts to other users.

The Air Force is now re-invigorating the role of EW in the combat arms. It has stood up the 350th electronic warfare wing to ensure EW and Spectrum operations can perform their mission against a near peer adversary at speed and relevance. It has begun to acquire the EA-37B electronic warfare platform, which has the capability to perform EW and spectrum operations across multiple domains. Lacking however is the development of a dedicated career field devoted to EW and spectrum operations.

If confirmed, will you commit to review and report back to this committee on the role of EW and spectrum operations in the Air Force to ensure it is holistically integrated across multiple domains, whether the 350th EW wing can adequately support the EW platforms that the Air Force maintains and whether there should be a dedicated career field to this mission set?

If confirmed, I will absolutely commit to reviewing the Department's electronic warfare and spectrum operations posture. This review will focus on ensuring holistic integration across multiple domains, evaluating the 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing's capacity to support the Department's EW platforms, and assessing the feasibility and benefits of establishing a dedicated career field for this critical mission set.

Air Force Information Technology Programs

If confirmed, how would you improve the Air Force's development and deployment of major IT systems, including business systems?

If confirmed, a top priority will be accelerating IT delivery to achieve critical operational effects. We will prioritize commercial solutions with minimal customization, particularly for business systems, to leverage existing innovation and drive efficiency. Additionally, we will embrace accelerated acquisition pathways, aiming to deliver operational capabilities in months instead of years, saving taxpayer dollars and ensuring our agencies have the tools they need to fulfill their missions effectively.

In your view, what is the relationship between Air Force efforts to develop and implement enterprise IT programs and efforts being undertaken by the DOD Chief

Information Office, the Defense Information Systems Agency, and other Defense Agencies?

To my understanding, the relationship between the Air Force's enterprise IT efforts and those of DoD CIO and DISA is deeply collaborative and aligned with shared goals. All are focused on streamlining IT functions and responsibilities to meet warfighter needs more efficiently, complementing broader DoD initiatives to eliminate redundancies and accelerate capability delivery. Empowering the Air Force CIO to deliver Enterprise IT services mirrors DISA's role in delivering consistent IT solutions across DoD, ensuring greater efficiency and alignment.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that appropriate business process reengineering is accomplished before the Air Force initiates, develops, and deploys new business IT systems?

If confirmed, I will ensure our business systems are truly effective by integrating two key principles into their governance. First, we'll prioritize "business process reengineering," meaning we'll fundamentally rethink and optimize our own processes before considering developing new technologies. Second, after validating requirements, evaluating commercial solutions, and selecting a suitable and efficient software solution, we'll tailor our business processes to fit its strengths, not the other way around, to ensure we maximize the value of our IT investments and create systems that truly support our mission.

Do you perceive a role for the Air Force research and testing enterprise in the development and deployment of Air Force business IT systems? Please explain your answer.

Yes. While commercial solutions are essential, the Air Force's unique operational context sometimes requires specialized tools, such as those that address risks within our complex supply chain or optimize the sustainment of aging aircraft. Instead of relying solely on lengthy, traditional testing methods, we will prioritize a research-driven approach that embraces agile methodologies. This means emphasizing rapid prototyping, continuous feedback, and iterative development to deliver effective solutions in a fraction of the time.

Air Force-related Defense Industrial Base

What is your assessment of the systems and processes for identifying, evaluating, and managing risk in the Air Force's organic and commercial defense industrial base, including the munitions industrial base?

It is crucially important that the Air Force understands the defense industrial base and has the capability to manage industrial base risk. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing tools and processes that will best enable the Air Force to proactively identify supply

chain risks and capacity bottle necks so that we can address them before a crisis.

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?

Capital will always flow toward return on investment, and a clear and consistent demand signal is what industry relies on to determine where that return on investment can be found. If confirmed, I will request continued support from Congress to provide stable funding, and I will work within the Air Force to incentivize capital investment in the industrial base. The tools I would use to do this include aggregating demand signals across programs, promoting multiple opportunities for competition throughout the life of programs, and identifying where direct government investment in key industrial capabilities is needed. In the 1950's the Air Force Heavy Press Program built huge industrial capacity that our commercial industrial base has now relied on for decades. That type of big, bold investment may be needed again.

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

A deep understanding of the industrial base is crucial for Air Force Acquisition leaders. If confirmed, I will ensure that acquisition strategies consider industrial base impacts and are aligned with an overall Air Force strategy to strengthen the Defense Industrial Base by promoting competition, lowering barriers to entry, and shaping incentives that drive strategic investment in capacity and bold R&D.

How would you seek to ensure the Air Force engages with the broadest industrial base possible, including traditional contractors, nontraditional contractors, and small businesses?

If confirmed, I will further develop mechanisms for the Air Force to work directly with contractors at all levels of the supply chain to include the small businesses that are crucial to delivering capability to our warfighters. I would support efforts to interact with industrial associations, state and local governments, and trade organizations to better understand the risks and constraints that our industrial base faces.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you pursue in systems and processes to ensure that risk in the Air Force-relevant sectors of the defense industrial base is adequately managed to enable the development, production, and sustainment of technically superior, reliable, and affordable weapons systems and munitions?

If confirmed, I will work to advance the tools and processes that enable the Air Force to proactively identify industrial base risks and capacity bottle necks so that we can address them before a crisis. I would also challenge Air Force Acquisition leaders to ensure that acquisition strategies promote competition, leverage the benefits of Modular, Open

Systems Architectures, and design in producibility. Production scale and surge capacity are crucial attributes of Air Force capabilities just like range, speed, and survivability.

Operational Energy and Energy Resilience

The Department defines operational energy as the energy required for training, moving, and sustaining military forces and weapons platforms for military operations, including the energy used by tactical power systems, generators, and weapons platforms. Department of Defense energy requirements are projected to increase due to technological advances in weapons systems and distributed operations over longer operating distances.

If confirmed, how would you lead the Air Force in harnessing innovations in operational energy and linking them with emerging joint operational concepts in order to reduce contested logistics vulnerabilities for warfighters?

If confirmed, reducing contested logistics vulnerabilities will be a high priority for me. If confirmed, I will ensure that the DAF is adequately supporting the development of more efficient aircraft with a focus on increasing combat capability and driving change where the greatest gains are possible. I will strengthen the linkages between DAF offices and industry to promote innovative energy concepts. I will particularly emphasize initiatives that maximize combat capability in contested domains, to support both current and future requirements.

The Air Force is in the final phase of evaluation for microvane drag reduction technology on C-17s. Data shows that C-17s equipped with microvanes experience a 1 percent reduction in drag and fuel consumption compared to their unmodified counterparts. They yield a return on investment in seven months.

Would you agree that microvanes are a low-cost, innovative, force multiplying capability that improve mobility?

To my understanding, the C-17 microvanes initiative has been undergoing research and evaluation over the last few years and has shown promise in being an innovative, low-cost, fuel-efficient enhancement to the fleet. If confirmed, I will conduct a review of C-17 microvanes to better understand the ongoing research efforts.

In what specific areas, if any, do you believe the Air Force needs to improve the incorporation of energy considerations and alternative energy resources into the strategic planning processes?

Continually reducing the Air Force's operational energy costs and usage through alternative fuels and leveraging the benefits of technological advancements to improve operational energy efficiencies and lower the burden and dependency on fuels are an imperative. The Air Force must invest in critical capabilities and technologies, including alternative energy resources, to modernize the force to be more ready, efficient, and

resilient. Our investments will target weapon systems, infrastructure, technology, and equipment that are demonstrably more efficient to improve the Air Force's warfighting capability tomorrow.

How can Air Force acquisition systems better address requirements related to the use of energy in military platforms to decrease risks to warfighters?

The Department's acquisition processes can better address energy requirements in military platforms by considering energy as a foundational capability from day one. If confirmed, I will examine the incorporation of energy considerations into both initial capability development activities and throughout the acquisition life cycle.

In your view, what steps can be taken to render "energy supportability that reduces contested logistics vulnerabilities" a key performance parameter in the requirements process, as compared to "check the box" consideration it is today?

I do not know the degree to which energy may be a "check the box" consideration today, but if confirmed I will ensure that energy considerations are taken seriously and measured when we plan for future scenarios. I will ensure appropriate emphasis is placed upon the Energy Key Performance Parameter, specifically by ensuring thorough analysis of campaign-level energy consumption and addressing expected logistics risks.

How can the Department of the Air Force better integrate energy security and resilience as standard components of its Military Construction (MILCON) programs, in your view?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Department pursues initiatives that standardize and integrate common sense energy security and resilience practices into Military Construction (MILCON) programs. They will be cost effective and promote installation survivability and recovery. I will ensure the DAF is taking a holistic approach to improve its MILCON program to build infrastructure able to withstand and recover from the spectrum of threats to assure mission success.

Environment

If confirmed, how would you further efforts to address PFAS contamination at Air Force installations?

I am familiar with the PFAS issue, and, if confirmed, I will ensure the Department addresses PFAS impacts resulting from DAF mission activities. I will also ensure all DAF installations, including Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard installations, comply with all applicable congressional, federal, and state and local laws and requirements. I am committed to ensuring the health and safety of our Airmen, Guardians, their families, and the communities in which they live and serve.

Readiness and Resource Impacts from Extreme Weather

How would you assess the readiness and resource impacts on the Air Force from recent extreme weather events?

Extreme weather events have degraded the Department of the Air Force's ability to operate and train. If confirmed, I will work to develop a full understanding of the national security implications of severe weather, taking a comprehensive approach that includes use of authorities, impacts on operations, installations, and infrastructure.

Based on these readiness and resource impacts, do you believe it necessary to use more resilient designs in Air Force infrastructure? How can the Air Force better use existing authorities on extreme weather mitigation granted by Congress in the last few NDAA's?

Yes, if confirmed, I will ensure the Department pursues initiatives that integrate common sense resilience practices into infrastructure planning. They will be cost effective and promote installation survivability and recovery. Severe weather impacts have degraded the Department of the Air Force's ability to operate and train. If confirmed, I will work to develop a full understanding of the national security implications of extreme weather, taking a comprehensive approach that includes fully utilizing the existing authorities granted by Congress in recent NDAA's.

Infrastructure Challenges

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

If confirmed, what steps would you take to streamline the process for the identification and use of appropriate non-DOD infrastructure funding mechanisms, and how long would it take you to resume entering into contracts that benefit Air Force installations?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Department utilizes all available authorities, including third-party performance contracts, to enhance infrastructure resilience and energy security. I will work with OSD and the Department of Energy to identify opportunities to streamline processes and expedite solutions.

Science, Technology, and Innovation

What are the key technologies that the Air Force should be focused on to support modernization activities?

Focused DoD-wide effort to advance and transition technology into modernized warfighting capability is critical to maintaining technological advantage. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of the Air Force priorities remain consistent with the priorities of the President and Secretary of Defense.

What do you see as the most significant challenges (e.g., technical, organizational, or cultural) to U.S. Air Force development of these key technologies?

The Department must accelerate adoption of new technology and innovation while ensuring timely delivery of capability needs. Total force modernization requires careful balance of investment across the broad spectrum of technology, development, production, and sustainment needs; as well as leadership, people and streamlined processes to drive change. If confirmed, I will continue efforts to expand our innovation base and provide opportunities for rapid prototyping and experimentation that enable the transition of new technologies to the field.

How well has the Air Force prioritized limited research and development funding across its technology focus areas?

If confirmed, I will assess the DAF technology investment portfolio and work closely with the DoD Research and Engineering enterprise to leverage and partner on shared technology interests for delivery of warfighting capabilities aligned with the President's priorities.

How is the Air Force balancing revolutionary capability advancements, including investments in basic research, as compared to "quick win" incremental improvements that can be rapidly fielded?

To maintain technological advantage, the Department of the Air Force must prioritize research and development investment to ensure long term competitive advantage. Development of cost-imposing disruptive capabilities, while delivering near term warfighting capability improvements to performance and lifecycle cost benefits are goals. If confirmed, I will ensure a balanced R&D investment that accomplishes these goals.

In your view, what steps must DOD and the Air Force take to ensure that critical technical information is protected by Air Force organizations, industry, and academia?

We must protect against peer competitors that seek to exploit the openness that is the basis of our innovation and economic strength, while preserving critical national security interests. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of the Air Force continues to implement fundamental research security and due diligence necessary to safeguard critical technologies, in accordance with government-wide guidelines, and will continue

working with our DoD partners and outside agencies to facilitate a comprehensive approach to mitigating exploitation of DAF R&D.

If confirmed, what would you do to increase the interaction between Air Force labs and the private sector, and between Air Force labs and the rest of the DOD innovation enterprise (i.e., the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, Defense Innovation Unit, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the other Military Services)?

If confirmed, I will work with Air Force Research Labs, the DoD innovation enterprise, and the private sector to strengthen our innovation ecosystem. Our defense innovation base's strength relies on the collaborative efforts of these organizations and the exceptional talent, technical expertise, and competency they bring to the table.

What are the challenges you perceive to effectively transitioning technologies from research programs into programs of record?

The "valley of death" between technology and programs of record is real and remains a continuing struggle. Challenges include the planning, programming, budgeting, and execution system driving investments two years into the future, and the risk incurred by programs of record to onboard technology insertion, especially programs that have not been designed with "open architectures" or pre-planned technology updates.

How would you address these challenges, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I will reinforce efforts to address technology transition by normalizing open standards and reference architectures as a basis of acquisition program structure, as well as emphasizing prototyping and experimentation opportunities for operational and technical stakeholder engagement that de-risk on-ramps to programs.

Recent budget requests for defense science and technology (S&T) have fallen short of the Defense Science Board's recommended goal of dedicating 3% of the total defense budget to S&T. Robust investment in S&T underpins technological advances in our military capabilities and is vital to maintaining our military technological superiority over emerging adversaries. However, over the past few years, the Air Force has prioritized near-term research and development over long-term S&T.

If confirmed, what metrics would you use to assess whether the Air Force is investing adequately in S&T programs and whether the Air Force has achieved the proper balance between near-term research and long-term S&T?

Robust S&T is foundational to military superiority, especially when considering peer competitor investment. Throughout my career I have pushed technology development and integration into operations, often exceeding the DSB's recommendations. Defense S&T investments not only provide disruptive advantage for the warfighter, but they also drive innovation and economic growth. The Department of the Air Force must strike the

appropriate balance between near-term readiness and the forward-looking long-term S&T to ensure Air Force and Space Force technical superiority. If confirmed, I will work to ensure an appropriate, balanced S&T investment portfolio.

Technical Workforce

A significant challenge facing the Air Force today is a shortage of highly skilled data scientists, computer programmers, cyber and other scientific, technical, and engineering talent to work at Defense laboratories and technical centers.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to increase the recruiting and retention of scientists, engineers, software coders, and in other technical positions across the Air Force's research, development, and acquisition enterprise?

If confirmed, I'll review the Air and Space Force initiatives to attract STEM talent to support research and development; the acquisition enterprises; and operations to ensure we retain our technological edge. I'll focus on reducing hurdles to hiring and cultivate a 21st-century workforce using tools such as partnerships, outreach and scholarships.

What is your view of the utility of various special civilian personnel authorities (e.g. Acq Demo, Lab Demo, Cyber Excepted Service, etc.), that were enacted to address the needs of the DOD technical workforce?

As I understand them, special hiring authorities, like AcqDemo, LabDemo, and Cyber Excepted Service are essential tools for the Department of Defense to compete for the best and brightest minds in science, technology, engineering, and acquisition. By adapting aspects of traditional personnel management, these authorities allow us to recruit and retain individuals with specialized skills critical to national security. If confirmed, I would further explore streamlining these opportunities.

Air Force Military End Strength

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

If confirmed, I will work the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Chief of Space Operations, the Director, Air National Guard, and the Chief of Air Force Reserve to review Air Force and Space Force end strength requirements to ensure an adequate balance between current operational requirements and any future force requirements. I will commit to ensuring the right end strength is achieved to properly sustain a force structure that meets all mission demands and continuing to work on modernizing our capabilities and our force.

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

view?

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

Space Force Military End Strength

The prior Secretary of the Air Force has stated that the end strength and budget of the Space Force is insufficient to meet current threats.

What are your views of the current Space Force end strength and budget?

The Space Force has made great progress in the five years since establishment. However, I believe that the increasing threats in, from, and to space capabilities require that we review the budget to ensure the Space Force has the funding needed to address space superiority and ensure they can control the domain. The threats in space require that we make strong investments in the near term to stay ahead of the threat, which may require a significant increase in funding and manning. Further, to achieve Peace through Strength, the Space Force needs to smartly grow to respond to the challenges of the space domain.

Recruiting/Retention

The 2024 National Defense Strategy Commission stated that “The DoD workforce and the all-volunteer force provide an unmatched advantage. However, recruiting failures have shrunk the force and raise serious questions about the all-volunteer force in peacetime, let alone in major combat.” In addition, DOD studies indicate that only about 23% of today’s youth population is eligible for military service, and only a fraction of those who meet military accession standards are interested in serving.

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

I understand the Department continuously evaluates recruitment and retention programs to optimize policies and processes necessary to thrive in the fierce competition for talent. I understand the Department is seeing historically high recruiting and retention rates. I have significant experience in recruiting and maintaining a highly skilled workforce and if confirmed, I will review these standards to ensure we recruit and retain quality, highly skilled talent needed to fight and defend the Nation we serve.

If required to choose between maintaining high recruitment and retention standards and achieving authorized end strength levels, which would be more important, in your view?

It is most important for the Department of the Air Force to maintain its readiness while simultaneously building the force of the future each Service needs through data-informed recruiting and retention initiatives. If confirmed, I will assess our standards and policies ensuring they support the Department's readiness and war-fighting needs.

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

I currently have no reason or data to doubt the current standards and criteria. If confirmed, in my view, we must balance our standards to keep pace with medical science and modernization while meeting the need for a ready and capable force. To that end, I will keep the balance of those standards in the forefront and work with DoD to maximize our effectiveness and ensure force readiness.

Rather than relying solely on ever-higher compensation for a shrinking pool of volunteers, what creative steps would you take, if confirmed, to expand the pool of eligible recruits and improve Air Force recruiting?

I understand the Air Force and Space Force are on track to meet FY25 requirements with record high recruiting. If confirmed, I will work with our services to evaluate our recruiting force, our marketing strategies, and our recruiting policies and programs to recruit the talent needed to meet our warfighter readiness.

What do you consider to be key to the Air Force's future success in retaining the best qualified personnel for continued service in positions of greater responsibility and leadership in the Air Force?

The key to developing and retaining our personnel lies in fielding a continuum of training, education, and experiential development that fosters Air Force leaders. We need to focus both on quality of life and quality of service. If confirmed, I will collaborate with our force development and management experts as well as career field managers to align officer, enlisted, and civilian development with Air Force needs.

What steps, if any, should be taken to ensure that current operational requirements and tempo do not adversely impact the overall recruiting, retention, readiness, and morale of soldiers?

If confirmed, it will be my responsibility to evaluate the current operational requirements, recruiting, retention, and readiness to ensure we are prioritizing strategic force management, investing in quality-of-life initiatives, fostering a warrior ethos, and leveraging technology and innovation. I will be tireless in my advocacy and support for Airmen and Guardians to ensure they have the resources, training, and support they need to be successful.

In your view, do current recruiting standards—particularly DOD-wide criteria for tier-one recruits—accurately predict recruit attrition and/or future success in the Air Force?

To my understanding, DoD-wide tier-one recruiting standards provide a valuable baseline by focusing on factors like education, aptitude and physical fitness. Robust recruiting standards help Airmen/Guardians successfully transition into their first operational unit, but there are limitations on predicting accurate recruit attrition and/or future success in the Department of the Air Force. This is due to the evolving nature of warfare and wide variety of career paths in the Department. If confirmed, I will work to understand recruitment pools, prioritize meritocracy in evaluating recruits, and ensure the Air Force is refining recruitment metrics.

Do you believe that current military entrance testing methods unnecessarily restrict the pool of eligible recruits, for example, by penalizing prospective recruits for whom English is not their native language?

If confirmed, I will review the current efforts across the Department to ensure valid, reliable, and fair criteria and measures are used to access applicants with the highest potential.

Pilot Retention

The Air Force has consistently reported a shortage of thousands of pilots including a shortage of at least 950 fighter pilots.

What are the Air Force's current efforts to address this critical problem? How would you assess the effectiveness of these efforts to date?

I am aware airline hiring is expected to grow by approximately 6% annually through 2031. This likely will challenge the Air Force's pilot ecosystem by recruiting its experienced pilots who are critical to providing experience in combat operations as well as producing and experiencing new pilots. I understand that thanks to Congress, the Air Force offers the most comprehensive pilot retention incentive in history. If confirmed, I will pay close attention to the results of retention incentives and continue to work with Congress to improve pilot production and retention.

What monetary and non-monetary incentives and initiatives implemented by the Air Force have yielded the most positive impacts on pilot retention?

I understand the Department is committed to retaining experienced pilots by focusing on four key areas: compensation, talent management, quality of life, and quality of service. This includes utilizing targeted bonuses, prioritizing assignment stability and transparency, and ensuring a holistic approach that addresses all aspects of a pilot's experience. If confirmed, I will closely monitor these efforts and work with Air Force

leaders to ensure their effectiveness in meeting the needs of our future force.

What additional authorities does the Air Force need from Congress to address this shortfall definitively?

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

How has the Air Force increased pilot production capacity commensurate with the demands of the NDS?

To my understanding, the Department recognizes the critical importance of addressing the pilot shortage to meet the demands of the National Defense Strategy with a highly trained and ready force. The Air Force has implemented numerous programs to increase pilot production capacity through a multi-pronged approach that encompasses recruitment, retention, modernization of training, and monetary incentives.

As the Air Force prepares for competition with a peer-adversary, what steps is it taking to increase quality standards within and screening rates for flight school, and the pipeline beyond?

The Air Force's mission is airpower anywhere and anytime. It is critical the Department addresses the pilot shortage. If confirmed, I will tackle this challenge by consulting with internal and external experts to develop an approach that enhances pipeline strength, optimizes training efficiency, and prioritizes retention of our pilots.

Reserve Components

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

The appropriate relationship between the Active Air Force, the Air National Guard, and the Air Force Reserve is robust interoperability. Seamless integration across the components enhances overall mission capability and readiness of the Total Force. If confirmed, I will work across the components to evaluate and understand the current dynamics of this relationship, enabling me to identify the best approaches to leverage the unique structure and strengths of each component.

What is your vision for the roles and missions of the Air Force Reserve Components? If confirmed, what new objectives would you seek to achieve with respect to the Air Force Reserve Components' organization, force structure, and end strength?

The Total Air Force team includes the Air Reserve Component imbued with decisive and precise deterrent capability unmatched in other nations. The appropriate roles and

missions of the Air Reserve Component should be aligned with the strategic requirements of the Air Force and the National Defense Strategy. The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve provide strategic depth and operational capacity across all mission sets, domains, and capabilities of the Total Force. If confirmed, my objectives would be to ensure an integrated, Total Force approach to organizing, training, and equipping Airmen to meet the National Defense Strategy.

Are you concerned that continued reliance on Air Force Reserve Components to execute operational missions—both at home and around the globe—is adversely affecting the ability to meet their recruiting and retention missions? Why or why not?

I recognize sustained tempo can create challenges. If confirmed, I will consult with Guard and Reserve leaders to assess the impact and identify any steps needed to support the long-term health of the force.

Military Compensation

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

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

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

If confirmed, I will review the current cost of DAF military personnel, what led to its growth, and areas in which we may be able to achieve cost savings while maintaining our ability to attract and retain talent.

Military Health System (MHS) Reform

Do you support the implementation of the MHS reforms mandated by the NDAAs for FYs 2017, 2019, and 2020?

If confirmed, I will support the Defense Health Agency (DHA) based on the direction of Congress. DAF has been a steadfast, transparent partner to the DHA, providing leadership and project management experience to transfer programs and resources IAW with law to support DHA's mission. There have been many challenges based on the disparate organization of each of the Services and Service-specific needs, but I will ensure the DAF remains dedicated to supporting the DHA and MTFs that support Air Force and Space Force missions and healthcare delivery to our communities.

Will you ensure that the Air Force continues to provide the military medical personnel needed to provide care in military treatment facilities?

I proactively support the Military Health System's (MHS) mission to ensure a medically ready force and a ready medical force – anytime, anywhere. We owe it to our Service members and their families to provide the finest care available both at home and on the battlefield, and our military medical personnel are at the center of that capability. If confirmed, I will carefully review our military medical personnel strategic outlook to ensure we are recruiting, accessing, and retaining the right talent to best support the demands of our complex mission.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force reduces its medical headquarters' staffs and infrastructure to reflect the more limited roles and responsibilities of the Air Force Surgeon General?

If confirmed, I will work with the Air Force Surgeon General to validate the size of the Surgeon General's headquarters staff and ensure effective execution of the roles and responsibilities within the office.

Non-Deployable Service members

Do you agree that airmen and guardians who are non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months should be subject either to separation from the Air Force or referral into the Disability Evaluation System?

Readiness is vital to military service. If confirmed, I'll ensure that non-deployment policies align with Air Force priorities, putting readiness and mission needs first. Individual circumstances will be considered, but operational strength and deployability will take precedence. I'll work closely with leadership to ensure our forces remain strong, capable, and mission ready, while still allowing the DAF to take full advantage of human capital available.

In your view, under what circumstances might the retention of a servicemember who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months be in the best interest of the Department of the Air Force?

I do not have enough information to speculate on the frequency of this occurrence. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to understand the current approach and consider mission and readiness requirements of the Department of the Air Force.

In your view, should an airman or guardian's readiness to perform the required specific missions, functions, and tasks in the context of a particular deployment also be considered in determining whether that service member is deployable?

If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to understand the current approach, consider

mission and readiness requirements of the services, and ensure those policies are applied consistently.

What are your ideas for addressing the challenges of medical non-deployability in the reserve components?

Ensuring medical readiness in the Air Force, to include the Reserve Component, is critical to maintaining overall force effectiveness. If confirmed, I will work to identify and address the root causes of non-deployability across the entire service to include the Active and Reserve Component.

Military Family Readiness and Support

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

I believe we recruit Airmen or Guardians but retain families. Based on what I hear in the press and see with members of the NRO staff, I am concerned spousal employment and access to high-quality, affordable food may be some of the family readiness challenges today's force faces. If confirmed, I will engage with DAF leaders to identify the key family readiness challenges, assess the DAF's existing capabilities in addressing them, and develop strategies to enhance these programs while advocating for required resources.

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

Military readiness depends on providing military families access to affordable, high-quality, and readily available childcare. If confirmed, I will collaborate with DAF leaders to evaluate ongoing initiatives addressing this need. Additionally, I will explore opportunities to further expand the childcare network, including traditional, non-traditional and community-based solutions to meet the needs of our Airmen and Guardians.

Suicide Prevention

If confirmed, what actions would you take to prevent suicides in the Department of the Air Force, and in the families of airmen and guardians across all components?

I believe the Air Force has a responsibility to promote mental well-being, eliminate barriers to mental health resources, and remove the stigma of seeking help. Doing so enhances our lethality, readiness and warrior ethos. If confirmed, I will support continued implementation of the Brandon Act and the establishment of the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce and will support evidence-based programs that improve the

process for service members to access mental health support.

Mental and Behavioral Health Care

If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure that sufficient mental and behavioral health resources are available to airmen and guardians in an operational theater, as well as to they and their families at home station locations?

Military service provides unique challenges, and access to mental and behavioral resources is essential. If confirmed, I will work to understand the state of our mental and behavioral health resources – at home and in operational theaters - to provide Airmen and Guardians the care they need.

If confirmed, what specifically would you do to ensure that sufficient mental and behavioral health resources are available to Reserve Component airmen, guardians, and their families who do not reside near a military installation?

Military service provides unique challenges, and access to mental and behavioral resources is essential. If confirmed, I will work to understand the state of the mental and behavioral health resources available to Reserve Component airmen and their families.

Although the Department has made great strides in reducing the stigma associated with help-seeking behaviors, many service members remain concerned that their military careers will be adversely affected should their chain of command become aware that they are seeking mental or behavioral health care. At the same time, the military chain of command has a legitimate need to be aware of physical and mental health conditions that may affect the readiness of the service members under their command.

Regarding the provision of mental and behavioral health care, how does the Air Force bridge the gap between an airman or guardian's desire for confidentiality and the chain of command's legitimate need to know about matters that may affect the readiness of the airman, guardian, and the unit?

Ensuring the readiness of our force depends on the mental health and well-being of our Airmen and Guardians. Balancing confidentiality with the need to address issues affecting readiness is a critical and complex challenge that I would take seriously. If confirmed, I would work with DAF leadership to identify best practices to ensure a fair balance between confidentiality and operational readiness. I would work to foster a culture where seeking help is viewed as a strength, not a career risk, while maintaining the readiness and lethality that the DAF's mission demands.

In your view, do non-medical counseling services provided by DOD Military Family Life Counselors have a role in promoting the readiness of airmen, guardians, and their families? Please explain your answer.

While I have not yet had the opportunity to review the DAF methods for deciding between the use of DoD Military Family Life Counselors and medical counseling services, I am passionate about military readiness. If confirmed, I will work closely with DAF leaders to analyze these processes, clarify the role of DoD Military Family Life Counselors, and explore ways to enhance their utilization in the future.

Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention and Response Programs

Do you believe the policies, programs, resources, and training that DOD and the Military Services have put in place to prevent and respond to sexual assault, and to protect service members who report sexual assault from retaliation, are working? If not, what else must be done?

As a leader in DoD, I witnessed significant emphasis on ending sexual violence in our Services. Sexual assault and retaliation for reporting sexual assault harms our Airmen and Guardians and reduces our military readiness – therefore, it demands our attention. If confirmed, I will review current policies, programs, resources, and training related to sexual assault prevention and response for their effectiveness, to include the protection of service members who report sexual assault from retaliation.

If confirmed, what would you do to increase focus on the prevention of sexual assaults?

If confirmed, I would review current DAF programs designed to respond to and prevent sexual assaults. I also would work with DAF leaders to ensure the programs and initiatives we implement align with military readiness. Finally, I would receive a briefing on the current evaluation activities to assess progress.

What is your view of the necessity of affording a victim both restricted and unrestricted options to report sexual harassment?

In my view, restricted and unrestricted reporting options offer victims the option to maintain confidentiality, if desired, as well as providing an opportunity to file an official report. Using both options allows the Department to provide helping services in line with the victim's desires.

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Military Families

What is your understanding of the extent of domestic violence and child abuse in the Air Force, and, if confirmed, what actions would you take to address these issues?

Any case of domestic violence or child abuse and neglect is against the values and threatens operational readiness in the Department of the Air Force. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring these issues are receiving the attention they deserve and that there are

adequate resources to support the initiatives to prevent and respond to domestic violence and child abuse and neglect.

U.S. Air Force Academy

In your view, what is the unique benefit of a military service academy compared to other officer commissioning sources?

I value all commissioning sources. Between USAFA, ROTC, and Officer Training School we are able to build the officer corps we need for the future. My understanding is a very high percentage of USAFA graduates commission into combat and combat support career fields, heavily weighted to our pilot and space operator pipelines. If confirmed, I will evaluate the commissioning opportunities.

Do you believe the Air Force Academy currently is meeting the needs of the Air Force and Space Force in terms of producing new officers with necessary academic experience, military discipline, and character?

Yes. I support USAFA's priorities of forging warfighters to win, developing leaders of character and quality, and motivating critical thinkers to adapt. If confirmed, I will ensure USAFA provides academic rigor and that all our commission programs instill in cadets the warrior ethos required to lead our forces.

What is your assessment of the efficacy of the policies and processes in place at the Air Force Academy to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, and to ensure that cadets who do report assault or harassment are not subject to retaliation—social ostracism and reputation damage—in particular?

I have not yet had a chance to review the specific policies and procedures in place at the Air Force Academy. If confirmed, I would ensure the Air Force Academy is in full compliance with DoD and DAF policy and initiatives on preventing and responding to sexual assault and harassment. If improvements are needed, I am committed to making required changes.

Joint Officer Management

In your view, do the requirements associated with becoming a Joint Qualified Officer (JQO), and the link between attaining joint qualification and eligibility for promotion to General Officer, continue to be consistent with the operational and professional demands of Air Force and Space Force line officers?

The DAF must operate in a joint environment to be effective, and I believe joint experience is important to success. Although I am not currently familiar with the specific requirements, if confirmed I will work with senior leaders, across the DAF, to examine

the qualification and make any recommendations I find necessary to ensure the requirements are aligned with development requirements to support operational priorities.

What additional modifications, if any, would you recommend to JQO prerequisites necessary to ensure that Air Force and Space Force officers are able to attain both meaningful joint and Service-specific leadership experience, as well as adequate professional development?

Leadership experience and professional development are crucial to ensure our officers are prepared for leadership in complex security environments. If confirmed, I will work with senior leaders, across the DAF, to examine JQO prerequisites and make any recommendations I find necessary to ensure the requirements are aligned with development requirements to support operational priorities.

Space Force Personnel Management Act

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 authorized the Space Force to combine all active and reserve component guardians into a single, full-time/part-time, component.

In your judgement, how will this novel military personnel arrangement benefit the Space Force?

If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about implementation of the Space Force Personnel Management Act. Thanks to the vision of Congress, PMA offers significant potential in enabling the Space Force to manage its unique military force more effectively to meet current and evolving mission requirements while delivering unmatched space capabilities.

How will you ensure former members of the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard are not disadvantaged by joining the Space Force under this new construct?

As I understand it, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 authorized the creation of the Space Force Personnel Management Act (SFPMA) which approved the integration active-component Guardians and Air Force Reservists in space-focused career fields to offer both full- and part-time service options. If confirmed, I will review the existing progress towards implementation of SFPMA to ensure it properly meets the Total Force needs and will focus on how implementation plans provide a level playing field for current members of the Air Force Reserve who opt in to the Space Force. Additionally, it is my understanding that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 directed the transfer of Covered Space Functions of the Air National Guard to the United States Space Force. If confirmed, I will review implementation of this requirement.

The committee understands that personnel information technology systems are the

main obstacle preventing the Space Force from implementing the Space Force Personnel Management Act expeditiously.

If confirmed, how will you assist the Space Force acquire the necessary technology required to implement the Space Force Personnel Management Act?

The Space Force Personnel Management Act is an important step towards modernizing the Space Force and allowing additional flexibilities to support a more efficient and effective force development. If confirmed, I will ensure the Space Force is resourced and unhindered by bureaucratic roadblocks throughout the multi-year implementation process to deliver the technology required to meet Congressional intent and take care of our Guardians.

Section 514 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 requires the Secretary of the Air Force to transfer to the Space Force the covered space functions and personnel of the Air National Guard.

What is your understanding of when the transfer of the covered units and equipment to the Space Force will occur, and what is the associated plan for transferring personnel?

If confirmed, I will work with my senior military officials in assessing resource levels to ensure the Space Force budget aligns with the priorities set forth in the National Defense Authorization Act, which will include evaluating the timeline for transferring covered units and equipment and developing a comprehensive plan for transferring associated personnel.

Air Force Integrated Pay and Personnel System (AFIPPS)

The committee is aware that the AFIPPS program continues to struggle with significant schedule delays and cost overruns. This program is essential for the Air Force to implement modern personnel policy and for Air Force audit requirements.

What is your view of the importance of AFIPPS?

It is my understanding that the Air Force Integrated Personnel and Pay System (AFIPPS) is the DAF's modernized solution to link personnel and pay. If confirmed, I will seek a briefing on the program and, if necessary, will work with DAF leadership to build a strategy to finalize the program.

If confirmed, what will you do to ensure AFIPPS delivers the promised capability according to latest schedule and cost estimates?

Caring for our personnel is a no fail mission. If confirmed, I am committed to working

with DAF leadership to understand where we are with this program and what we need to do moving forward.

Professional Military Education

What changes or reform would you recommend to the professional military education system to ensure that tomorrow's leaders have the tools necessary to ensure the Department is able to meet the national defense objectives of the future?

If confirmed, I will conduct a comprehensive review of our Professional Military Education system, engaging with internal and external experts to ensure current delivery models align with mission readiness. This includes analyzing curriculum relevance, resource allocation, integration of emerging technologies, and strategic competition preparedness, to ensure the successful execution of mission by the Department.

Department of the Air Force Civilian Workforce

How would you describe the current state of the Department of the Air Force (including the Space Force) civilian workforce, including its morale and the Department's ability to successfully recruit and retain top civilian talent?

I believe civilian employees are vital to sustaining the readiness of our military forces. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department is focused on hiring top talent into positions that directly contribute to our warfighting readiness. I also will review the work environment and level of employee engagement. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to maintain or enhance work environments and employee engagement.

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

If confirmed, I would work with DAF leadership to understand the challenges DAF faces in managing the work force. In addition, if confirmed, I would maximize the numerous hiring and compensation flexibilities and authorities the Congress has provided and seek out ways to bring dramatic, long-lasting improvements through a meritocratic culture that promotes innovation and excellence. I will review our personnel processes and systems and look for efficiencies that will enable effective management of the civilian workforce.

In your view, do Air Force and Space Force supervisors have adequate authorities to address and remediate employee misconduct and poor duty performance, and ultimately to divest of a civilian employee who fails to meet requisite standards of conduct and performance? If so, are both civilian and military supervisors adequately trained to exercise such authorities? If not, what additional authorities or training do Air Force and Space Force supervisors require?

If confirmed, I am committed to making sure the Department continues to have the best people. Throughout my career, I have focused on getting the right people into the right jobs and in structuring organizations to use their people effectively. If I am confirmed, I will review the effectiveness of the numerous personnel management authorities and systems and explore greater efficiencies. The Department must make every effort to create a future-ready, agile and adaptive workforce able to meet the rapidly evolving challenges of the 21st century.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.