

S. HRG. 118–787

**THE NOMINATIONS OF: MR. RONALD T. KEOHANE
TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS; AND
HONORABLE NICKOLAS H. GUERTIN TO BE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR
RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 15, 2023

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This hearing is printed to include all available information
requested or required to be inserted for the record.

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DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m., in room G-50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jack Reed (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Reed, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Warren, Peters, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Scott, Tuberville, Mullin, and Budd.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Chairman REED. Good morning. Let me call a hearing to order. The Committee meets today to consider the nomination of Mr. Ronald Keohane to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and The Honorable Nicholas Guertin to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition.

I thank the nominees for their willingness to serve in these important roles. I would also like to welcome the family members who are here today. Mr. Keohane, I would like to recognize your mother, Teresa, who I know wanted to be here today and is watching proudly from home.

Mr. Guertin, I welcome your wife, Maria, son, Enrico, daughter, Isabella, brother, Joseph, and cousin, Gregory. We are grateful to our nominees' families and loved ones for their continued support. Mr. Keohane, you are nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

As the principal advisor on all matters relating to civilian and military personnel policies, you will be responsible for military community and family policy, and reserve integration, as well as day to day supervision of the Department of Defense Education activity and the Defense Commissary Agency.

Your extensive leadership experience in the Department of Defense, various Federal agencies, and private sector should serve you

very well in this role. First and foremost, you will need to address the military's difficult recruiting environment. The services have struggled to meet their recruiting objectives for several years, and the total force felt tens of thousands of recruits short of its goal last year.

Further, we know from recent survey data that young Americans propensity to serve in the military is at its lowest point in decades. There are many factors contributing to this challenging environment, including competition with the private sector for candidates when the employment rate is at a record low.

Even in the best of times, the military has always struggled to recruit when the labor market is slim. As such, the services have adjusted their testing and qualification strategies to try to overcome these challenges. The Army's Future Prep course has shown reasonable success and may provide useful insights for the other services.

Mr. Keohane, our military's greatest asset is its people and it will be critical for you to dedicate rigorous, sustained efforts toward improving recruitment. I would like to know your ideas for increasing the number of young Americans eligible for and interested in military service.

I would also note that military childcare remains a challenge, with persistent waitlists for child development centers, and in some high-density locations, waitlists for fee assistance programs intended to partially offset costs for private care. The services have made modest progress in shortening these waitlist and hiring cleared providers, but more must be done.

I would ask for your views on how this childcare shortage can be improved. But before we move on, let me make one point. Diversity and inclusion strengthen our military. By every measure, America's military is more lethal and ready than it has ever been. It is also more diverse and inclusive than ever before. This is not a coincidence.

America looks more and more like the Nation it represents, whether in race, gender, creed, sexuality, or any other measure. This is the right direction as America's strength is in its diversity. But greater diversity requires greater understanding within the ranks, and understanding requires learning and regular training. The fundamental bond that assures unit cohesion is the commitment by every member to protect, not exploit, his or her fellow servicemembers, whoever they may be.

This is a state of mind and heart that must be constantly inculcated by training and by example. With that being said, I am alarmed by the nature of some criticism of the military. Healthy oversight of our military is necessary and productive, but undefined accusations are not.

If criticisms are to be made issue made with facts not slogans. There are real consequences to these sorts of accusations, both to the cohesion of our force and civil society, but also to the benefit of our adversaries. This Committee is charged with the solemn privilege of overseeing our Nation's military.

To accomplish this, we must exercise responsible oversight. Mr. Guertin, you are nominated to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition. If confirmed, you

would serve as the Navy's acquisition executive responsible for the development and acquisition of all Navy and Marine Corps platforms and weapons systems, and for enforcement of the Defense Department's acquisition and sustainment procedures.

You currently serve as the Department of Defense Director for Operational Test and Evaluation, having been confirmed to that position by this Committee last year. A recent change to the position for which you are nominated is the responsibility to exercise rather milestone decision authority on behalf of the Navy.

The milestone decision authority, the chief official tasked with determining the entry point of an acquisition program in the acquisition process, was previously held by the Office of the Secretary of Defense but was transferred to the services in the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Act. I would ask for your views on the appropriate balance between acquisition programs at the service level and OSD oversight of such programs.

Also, in 2021, the Navy released its Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program, or SIOP, to address long standing infrastructure issues at the Navy's four public shipyards. The modernization plan is designed to help address growing a maintenance backlog, especially within the submarine fleet.

There is no similar plan for modernizing private shipyards, however, even as these private yards conduct maintenance on almost all of the Navy surface combatants. Both public and private yards are struggling to meet their schedules, and I would like to know how you will ensure the Navy effectively executes the SIOP, given the scale and investment needed.

Thank you again to our nominees. I look forward to your testimonies. Now let me recognize, Ranking Member, Senator Wicker.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our witnesses for being here today and congratulate them on their nominations and appreciate their willingness to serve. Mr. Keohane has been nominated by the President to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

If confirmed, he will therefore be directly responsible for nearly all the policies governing careers in the military and civilian workforce. During this hearing, I would like to learn how he plans to address the most pressing challenge facing the military, which is the current recruiting crisis.

If trends continue this year, the Army, Navy and Air Force will all fail to achieve their respective recruiting missions. The Army and Navy will be short by at least 10,000 recruits each, and the Air Force will fall short on recruits for just the third time in its history. The foundation of the all-volunteer force is a steady supply of young men and women willing to serve their country in uniform.

Without that foundation, the all-volunteer force becomes top heavy and less effective. I expect the Assistant Secretary to be a leader in fixing this problem. I am concerned the Department of Defense is increasingly becoming an instrument of controversial social policies. Most of these policies are influenced by the office Mr. Keohane hopes to lead.

I believe this Administration is exacerbating the recruiting challenge by prioritizing these policies. A large number of Americans do not want to join organization led by people who are often more interested in fighting culture wars than preparing for actual wars, and I was very interested in the Chair's comments just a few moments ago about making sure that we are not creating policies based on unfounded accusations.

As someone who joined the United States military half a century ago as a young college student, and who served on both Active Duty and in the Reserve, I have long ago come to the conclusion that the United States military is the greatest civil rights organization and the greatest equal opportunity program in the history of the world. I believe that has been the case for decades and decades and continues to be so.

So, I do wonder about the unfounded accusations that seem to be driving policy. So, I am interested in what Mr. Keohane might do if confirmed, to restore the Department's focus on its mission, which is to provide military forces needed to deter war and ensure our Nation's security. That is the mission that makes people so enthusiastic about joining our armed services.

Now, Mr. Guertin has been nominated by the President to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition, and he seems to be singularly qualified for this important position. He will be responsible for managing the development of weapons for the Navy and Marine Corps.

During this hearing, I hope to learn how the Navy can bring the latest technology to our warfighters and make sure the systems they currently have are ready to deploy. I am concerned the Department of Defense is not moving fast enough to create a credible deterrent within the next 5 years as the threat from China increases.

I am sure Mr. Guertin shares that concern. Perhaps we will explore that during questions. The Committee has provided means for the Navy to move faster in acquisition, but they are not taking full advantage of those means. Instead, the Navy relies on cautious, slow methods that delay the delivery of critical assets.

By attempting to eliminate risk to acquisition officials, the Navy increases risk on the battlefield, and I think that can be said service wide, not just for the Navy. We must innovate. It is time to make the most of existing acquisition authorities so our speed matches or exceeds that of our adversaries.

Mr. Guertin will be in this new capacity in a position to help us achieve a quantum leap in this regard. I am interested in what Mr. Guertin will do, if confirmed, to change the culture of acquisition workforce, to start accepting measured risks, and delivery capabilities at the scale and pace that our National Defense Strategy requires.

I thank our witnesses, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Wicker, very much, and gentlemen, before I recognize you, there are a series of questions that were asked of all civilian nominees. You may reply in unison. Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes.

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes.

Chairman REED. Have you assumed any duties or taken any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

Mr. KEOHANE. No.

Mr. GUERTIN. No.

Chairman REED. Exercising our legislative and oversight responsibilities makes it important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings, reports, records, and other information from the executive branch on a timely basis. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify before this Committee when requested?

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes.

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes.

Chairman REED. Do you agree to provide records, documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner when requested by this Committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate committees of Congress, and to consult with the requester regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such records?

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes.

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes.

Chairman REED. Will you ensure that your staff complies with deadlines established by this Committee for the production of reports, records, and other information, including timely responding to hearing questions for the record?

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes.

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes.

Chairman REED. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefings in response to congressional requests?

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes.

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes.

Chairman REED. Will those witnesses and briefings be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes.

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes.

Chairman REED. Well, thank you very much. Mr. Keohane, please.

STATEMENT OF RONALD T. KEOHANE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

Mr. KEOHANE. Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished Members of the Committee. I am deeply honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

I am grateful to President Biden, Secretary Austin, Deputy Secretary Hicks, and Undersecretary Cisneros for their trust and confidence in me. I want to start with thanking my family, friends, and mentors for their encouragement and support that has brought me to this place in time.

While my mother is unable to be here in person today, she and my brothers understand the great importance of this moment and

are certainly cheering me on from afar, and last, to my father, who undoubtedly is watching down proudly on these proceedings.

Coming from a family of educators, my parents instilled the values of hard work, empathy, and public service in my siblings and me, which has served as my North Star and given me the passion and commitment to serve our servicemembers, their families, and our career public servants.

I have very vivid memories as a small child loading up in the family station wagon, as we would drive my father to our local armory as he headed off to Fort Drum for his annual training. Equally so, I recall the official military photos of my uncles that sat in a place of prominence on our living room mantle as they served in Vietnam. All a constant reminder of the important sacrifice our servicemembers and their families make for all of us each and every day.

I spent the vast majority of my 30-year career in support of our servicemembers and their families. My first job out of college was as a young Schedule C appointee in the Department of Defense during the Clinton administration.

It was at that time I discovered my passion for working with and for our servicemembers and their families. Throughout my career, I have worked in support of a wide variety of human capital focused efforts to include transition assistance, sexual assault response and prevention, mental health counseling, and support of our wounded, ill, and injured population, among others.

Under the Obama administration, I had the honor and privilege to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for military community and family policy, where I was able to further play an important role in a wide array of programs supporting our servicemembers and families.

Secretary Austin has laid out clear priorities, reaffirming that the men and women of our armed forces are our most valuable asset. I sit here before you today with the full understanding that if confirmed, I will be charged with addressing some of the most important policy decisions in the Department, a responsibility I do not take lightly.

If confirmed for this position, I will pay special focus on a number of major challenges, including recruiting and propensity to serve, as well as several issues impacting retention, including compensation, spousal employment, and access to affordable childcare for our military and our career public servant families.

I have deep appreciation for the hard work this Committee has done on behalf of our servicemembers and their families, and our civilian workforce. If confirmed, I commit to seeking the advice and counsel of this Committee and your staffs regularly to advance our Nation's priorities on these most important issues.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Keohane follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY MR. RONALD KEOHANE

Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Af-

fairs. I am grateful to President Biden, Secretary Austin, Deputy Secretary Hicks and Undersecretary Cisneros for their trust and confidence in me. I want to start with thanking my family, friends and mentors for their encouragement and support that has brought me to this place and time. While my mother is unable to be here in person today, she and my brothers understand the great importance of this moment and are certainly cheering me on from afar, and last, my father who undoubtedly is proudly watching down on these proceedings. Coming from a family of educators my parents instilled the values of hard work, empathy and public service in my siblings and me, which has served as my north star and given me the passion and commitment to serve our servicemembers, their families and our Career Public Servants. I have very vivid memories as a small child loading up in the family station wagon as we would drive my father to our local armory as he headed off to Ft Drum for his annual training each year. Equally so I recall the official military photos of my uncles that sat in a place of prominence on our living room mantel as they served in Vietnam. All a constant reminder of the important sacrifice our servicemembers and their families make for all of us each and every day. While I have never served in uniform, I have spent the vast majority of my 30-year career in support of our servicemembers and their families. My first job out of college was as a young Schedule-C appointee in the Department of Defense during the Clinton administration. It was at that time I discovered my passion for working with and for our servicemembers and their families. Throughout my career I have worked in support of a wide variety of human capital-focused efforts to include transition assistance, sexual assault response and prevention, mental health counseling and support of our Wounded, Ill and Injured population among others. Under the Obama administration I had the honor and privilege to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy where I was able to further play an important role in a wide array of important programs.

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If confirmed for this position I would pay special focus on a number of major challenges including recruitment and propensity to serve, as well as several issues impacting retention including compensation, spouse employment, and access to affordable childcare for our military and our career public servant families.

I have deep appreciation for this Committee and its role in the formation and oversight of our national security policy. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with you regularly to advance our nations priorities in an active, bipartisan and cooperative spirit.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Mr. Keohane. Thank you very much. Mr. Guertin, please, or Director Guertin, I should say.

STATEMENT OF HON. NICKOLAS H. GUERTIN TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION

Mr. GUERTIN. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker—

Chairman REED. Can you bring that microphone as close as possible, please?

Mr. GUERTIN. Thank you. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is a privilege to be here today. I am honored to be before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition.

I would like to thank President Biden and Secretary Austin and Secretary Del Toro for their confidence in nominating me, but I would also like to thank my family who you see behind me, Maria, my loving wife of 21 years, our children, Enrico and Isabella. Please let me recognize my mother and the rest of my family, including my brother Pier and cousin Greg, who are also here today.

Last, I would like to thank the many great mentors and teammates across government, industry, and academia that have helped me to learn and grow throughout my career. I am especially grateful to this Committee to have afforded me the best job I have ever had, my current role as Director for Operational Test and Evaluation. To be in a position, if confirmed, to take on the greatest job I have ever dreamt of to be the Naval Acquisition Executive.

Just as I have enjoyed in my time as DOT&E, I look forward to having an open, frank, and honest conversation with you about how to transform the way the Navy and Marine Corps acquires and sustains our seagoing capabilities. I take this renewed commitment to continue to serve our Nation both very seriously and with great enthusiasm.

It has been about a year and a half since I last introduced myself to you, but please indulge me a moment for a short recap. I spent the past 4 years working on developing, testing, fielding, researching, and improving the acquisition of military systems.

I started my career as an enlisted nuclear power plant operator in submarines, and then completed the Active Duty service, immediately transitioned to the Navy Reserves while attending college, and after graduating, landing a job as a naval civilian engineer.

The citizen sailor pairing would serve me well for the following decades to keep me grounded and what it took to do operations, maintenance, and testing in the fleet while also developing new systems.

There is much vital work to do on behalf of the Navy and Marine Corps team. It is not lost on me, and the enormous challenge ahead. As I look across the Department, I see an aging force in need of modernization. I see existing industrial base challenges exacerbated by and still recovering from the pandemic.

I see a need to innovate solutions to affordably develop and field systems that provide our sailors and marines an advantage in any conflict. Accordingly, I believe that we need to think and act differently in order to field naval capabilities that protect and enable our Nation's strategic interests and economic prosperity.

I made a career centered around acting thoughtfully to change the way we field excellence and warfighting systems. I have had an impact on the methods, outcomes, and spanning the acquisition of testing of naval capabilities for ships, submarines, aircraft, ground vehicles, and the weapon systems that go in them.

I am committed to fulfilling the duties of this office to lead a great team dedicated to designing and building excellence that works and can be delivered and maintained in the quantities needed for the naval force to be effective well into the future.

As a part of that, I intend on collecting their intellect and enthusiasm to accelerate and streamline the delivery of innovation needed to provide unparalleled warfighting advantage at scale. Our enduring requirement must be to foster and embrace change, and in doing so, create mission systems that are also built to change over time.

As Secretary Del Toro recently stated, we must empower our Navy and Marine Corps acquisition professionals to aggressively develop promising technologies into capabilities for warfighter needs to maintain maritime dominance.

If confirmed, it is my objective to live up to that charge, and provide for the best trained, best equipped, and most capable naval force in the world. It would be an honor to contribute to that mission and to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Guertin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY MR. NICKOLAS GUERTIN

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is a privilege to be here today. I am honored to be before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition. I would like to thank President Biden, Secretary Austin, and Secretary DelToro for their confidence in nominating me. I would also like to thank my family who you see behind me; Maria, my loving wife of 21 years and our children Enrico and Isabella. Please let me also recognize my mother and the rest of my family including my brother Pierre and Cousin Greg who are also here today. Last, I would also like to thank the many great mentors and teammates, across Government, industry and academia that have helped me continue to learn and grow throughout my career.

I am especially grateful to this Committee to have afforded me the greatest job I've ever had, my current role as the Director for Operational Test and Evaluation, and to be in a position, if confirmed, to take on the greatest job I've ever dreamed of—to be the Naval Acquisition Executive. Just as I have enjoyed my time as DOT&E, I look forward to having an open and frank conversation with you about how to transform the way the Navy and Marine Corps acquires and sustains our sea-going fighting capabilities.

I take this renewed commitment to continue to serve our Nation both very seriously and with great enthusiasm. It has been about a year and-a-half since I last introduced myself to you, but please indulge me a moment for a short recap. I spent the past four decades working on, developing, testing, fielding, and researching the improvement of acquiring military systems. I started my career as an enlisted nuclear power plant operator on submarines. Having completed my Active Duty service, I immediately transitioned to the Navy Reserves while attending college, and after graduating landed a job as a Navy civilian engineer. This citizen-sailor pairing would serve me well for the following decades by keeping me grounded in what it took to do operations, maintenance and testing in the fleet, while also developing new systems.

There is so much vital work to do on behalf of our Navy and Marine Corps team. It is not lost on me the enormous challenge ahead. As I look across the Department, I see an aging force in need of modernization, I see existing industrial base challenges exacerbated by, and still recovering from the pandemic, and I see a need to develop innovative solutions to affordably develop and field systems that provide our sailors and marines an advantage in any conflict. Accordingly, I believe we need to think and act differently in order to field the Naval capabilities that protect and enable our Nation's strategic interests and economic prosperity.

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As Secretary DelToro stated recently we must: “empower our Navy and Marine Corps acquisition professionals to aggressively develop promising technologies into capabilities our warfighters need to maintain maritime dominance”. If confirmed, it is my objective is to live up to that charge and provide for the best trained, best equipped, and most capable Naval force in the world. It would be an honor to con-

tribute to that mission, and to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, I look forward to your questions.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Guertin, and gentlemen, thank you both for your testimony. Mr. Keohane, as I mentioned in my statement, the Army has an interesting pilot program, the Future Soldier Prep Course, which takes recruits who may not do well on the test or the physical aspects of the process, and puts them in a pilot program, develops them, and if they do make those tests, enlists them in the military.

We also know anecdotally from some recruiters that there are some very talented individuals, particularly first-generation Americans, who may not be as good a tester, but they would be excellent soldiers.

So, do we have to think about the standardized test? Should we reconsider their use? Maybe it should be just one tool, not the tool. Your comments?

Mr. KEOHANE. Senator, I completely agree. I think at this point, everything should be on the table. I think we are at the point in which we need to consider all new approaches.

We want to make sure that we are not lowering our standards, yet being able to provide an opportunity for anyone who wants to serve and is eligible to serve, meets the stringent requirements has that opportunity.

If confirmed for this position, Senator, I would work with my team in the services and indeed this Committee on resolving that issue immediately.

Chairman REED. Thank you. We spent a lot of money on advertising. I do not have a feeling that we really understand it as well as some other larger enterprises, nor do we track it as well. Is that something that would be of interest and concern to you?

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes, sir. I think it's on the top of my list, just personally. I think we need to really look at doing things differently. I think technology has not been embraced necessarily in that particular recruiting environment. We need to readjust, perhaps really engage heavy with some of the technology. If it means coming back to this Committee for additional guidance and approvals and authorizations, we need to be prepared to do that.

Chairman REED. Then again, we are fighting a difficult battle because the demographics of the country continually reduce the pool of eligible individuals. So, every year you are looking at essentially a smaller potential group of enlistees.

We have to recognize that and we have to try means to enlarge that pool, and I hope you can do that or will do that.

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes, sir. My previous boss used to always refer to us as saying, we need to look—we need to fish in different ponds, and I think we need to do that. Our traditional views along the Department to recruit amongst the same similar Southern States. We need to adjust that. We need to look and make sure we are representing the entire country.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much. Director Guertin, as you know, we are having a problem building ships on time and within

budget. We are also having significant difficulties in maintaining ships.

With only a few exceptions, nuclear powered submarines are maintained by the four Navy shipyards at Portsmouth, Norfolk, Puget Sound, and Pearl Harbor. Then we have private shipyards that deal with most of our surface craft. But the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program, SIOP, which I mentioned, is a 20-year, \$21 billion effort.

It is absolutely critical. We need it. In fact, we do not have 20 years. We have got to move very, very quickly. The poster child for this whole issue is the USS Boise that has been tied up since, I think, 2017, waiting for maintenance, denying us a nuclear-powered submarine or attack submarine in the fleet.

So, do you have ideas what we can do to expand our capacity quickly?

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator, this is a topic of immense interest to me. Having worked at several of those shipyards you mentioned and having a strong connection with the shipbuilding community, I want to make sure that we aggressively pursue any method we can, but one of the biggest problems with workforce, attracting and retaining skilled trades crafts and engineers that we need in order to, you know, get them out to the waterfronts so we can build these ships and maintain them on time.

Our ships do not do us a lot of good in ports and dry docks. They need to be able to respond to the Nation's needs, and it is my commitment to make sure that that is aggressively pursued and improved.

Chairman REED. One of the ironies here is you are competing against Mr. Keohane, and I do not think that should be lost upon us because we are looking for essentially the same dedicated, motivated, skilled young man or woman to go into the shipyards as we are to go into the service.

So, we have to do that. But I can not emphasize enough the criticality of accelerating and expanding our shipyards' capacity because, you know, it is nice to have a number of x number of ships, but when only the fraction of them can go to sea, we are fooling ourselves. Thank you very, very much, gentlemen. Senator Wicker, please

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Guertin, you said in your statement, I believe we need to think and act differently in order to fill the naval capabilities that protect and enable our Nation's strategic interests and economic prosperity. So, talk to us about how we need to act differently and be as specific as you can.

Also, I mentioned in my statement that this Committee, through statute, had provided certain authorities that in my judgment have not been fully acted on. Would you comment on that? Do you need additional authorities to become more flexible and nimble?

Mr. GUERTIN. Thank you, Senator. An excellent question. Goes right to the core of why I think I can make a big positive difference to the Navy and Marine Corps.

Some of the more specific things you asked about, or you asked me to comment on was, you know, what exactly does that mean? What does that look like? We live in a world now where almost ev-

everything is software defined or controlled, or even the way we build purely physical things is done through tools and modeling and numerical analysis done in computers.

We need to embrace those digital tools used to make these systems. Model based engineering is a critical element of making sure we can build these things faster, and then also to do some of the things I have been doing in my current role in operational testing evaluation. How do we test them using computers to test things more—in a more automated fashion, using digital twins and other tools of that kind?

There are powerful opportunities to take advantage and we need to make sure we bring those into how we do that technology development so we could rapidly field capabilities that work and can also be built to scale.

Some of the new authorities Congress has afforded us, things like, you know, middle tier of acquisition, rapid prototyping, reaching out to nontraditional businesses, those are all on the table and I am excited about taking advantage of those authorities in order to improve the pace of delivering capability to the fleet.

Senator WICKER. Well, am I anywhere close in saying that the Navy has not fully taken advantage of those authorities this Committee has provided.

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator, I do not have the details on every single program as yet, but I would be happy to give you a more detailed answers as I get deeper into it.

Senator WICKER. Okay. Well, we will do that, and also, if you need further authorities, we mark up a bill and pass it every year. We have a history of doing that for decade after decade, and we have a vehicle available to you in that regard. Mr. Keohane, the Chairman mentioned in his statement basing policies on unfounded allegations which were not helpful.

I guess I came back even a little stronger in re-emphasizing that. So, I want to ask you about that. There has been a—there has been an effort to just say that there was extremism that needed to be rooted out. We had an extremism stand down day.

As far as I am—as I can tell, it turned out that after an extensive study and thousands and thousands of man hours, there were only about 100 examples in the entire military system with all of the services. Do you think that stand down day was a valuable use of man hours?

Mr. KEOHANE. Well, Senator, I have limited visibility into the Department and how that went at the end of the day. However, I think certainly extremism is an important issue that we always need to and always will be looking at in the Department, making sure that we are educating. The smallest type of extremism can certainly be problematic.

Senator WICKER. Do you think it is helpful, though, when we are trying to get young Americans from all demographics and all economic groups to do as the Chairman and I did decades ago and signed up to defend their country, do you think it's helpful to send a message that there is a need for extremism stand down day?

Mr. KEOHANE. Well, Senator, again, I am not familiar with how the whole day went. However, I do believe we need to start our recruiting earlier and making sure that we do citizenship type of ac-

tivities and have folks focus a little bit more on becoming good citizens before they get to a point of extremism issues.

Senator WICKER. Okay. Well, and I acknowledge that this is not a program that you came up with. Let me—but let me just say, Mr. Chairman, and my time has expired, there is a lot of talk about equity.

It has come to mean and in the regard of this Administration, the equal outcome rather than the equal opportunity. I am concerned about that, and perhaps on the record you might comment. As a matter of fact, I would ask you to comment on your views about that issue as you prepare to take on this responsibility. I will just let you do that on the record.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much. Thank you, Senator. Senator HIRONO, please.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Keohane, is that how your name is pronounced?

Mr. KEOHANE. Keohane.

Senator HIRONO. Keohane. Because it looks distinctly Hawaiian to me.

Mr. KEOHANE. I get that often.

Senator HIRONO. You get that a lot, don't you?

Mr. KEOHANE. I get that a lot.

Senator HIRONO. Because in Hawaiian we would say Keo-ha-ne.

Senator WICKER. She means that as a compliment.

[Laughter.]

Mr. KEOHANE. I take it as a compliment.

Senator HIRONO. Yes. So welcome to both of you. To ensure the fitness of nominees to serve, I ask the following two questions of all nominees who come before any of the five committees on which I sit, and these are foundational questions I will ask you both.

Since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

Mr. KEOHANE. No, Senator.

Mr. GUERTIN. No, Senator.

Senator HIRONO. Have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

Mr. KEOHANE. No.

Mr. GUERTIN. No.

Senator HIRONO. Mr. Guertin, as you noted in your responses, the Navy's infrastructure has suffered from chronic underinvestment, and the repercussions are crises like the one communities in Hawaii are facing regarding Red Hill, reduce naval maintenance capacity for our force, and untenable living situations for our servicemembers and their families.

So, the need to repair our basic facilities is urgent. In your prospective position you will be responsible for sustainment matters for the Navy. Mr. Guertin, what is the impact of underfunding the maintenance of the Navy's infrastructure on the sustainable costs and times?

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator—

Senator HIRONO. On sustainment costs and times—

Mr. GUERTIN. Thank you, Senator. So, if we do not take care of how we make our systems to fix our systems, then they are less

able to do that work effectively. That comes under the general context of technical debt, and that is something we always have to keep our eye on. But unfortunately, it appears that we have let our eye off the ball in that area.

The reason we have got now these new programs like SIOP and other efforts that are going on there in Hawaii to improve that infrastructure so we can do a better job of taking care of the people that are going to do this work.

Senator HIRONO. So, these are entrenched problems, and one would hope that there would be some funding to address these, to fix rather, these—the crumbling infrastructure that I would say very persistent in all of our services.

So, what would—are you advocating for—should you get the position, would you advocate for more money for the infrastructure needs of our services or particularly the Navy?

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator is absolutely my intent to go and visit these different shipyards and these activities and see for myself what their conditions are and talk to the teams that are working on these programs like SIOP and find out if they are appropriately funded and if we need to come back and talk to Congress about getting additional resources, if required.

Senator HIRONO. Well, SIOP—thankfully, it is a 20-year program and we have to make sure that we continue to fund the modernization, etcetera, of our shipyards. But for example, Red Hill had very little to do with our shipyards, and yet these were—you know, this is infrastructure built in World War II.

So, my hope is that the Navy, and indeed our entire military, will assess the infrastructure needs to make sure that our pipes are not bursting, our electrical systems are in place. I would look for you to do that for the Navy.

Mr. Keohane, in your prospective role as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, it will be imperative for you to examine all ways to improve the quality of life of our servicemembers and boost retention and recruitment. Both of you have talked about that.

A top reason servicemembers leave the force, particularly women, are the additional challenges a life of uniform service has on family planning. If confirmed, what would you do to address recruitment and retention concerns across the force? I would like you to respond to cryopreservation as a fertility tool for servicemembers who could—which they could use if they wish to have children in the future.

That certainly, I would say, that could add to the retention and recruitment arguments for our military. So, can you—would you support cryo—which, by the way, the British armed forces provides to their members?

Mr. KEOHANE. Excuse me, Senator. I truly believe that providing quality health care to all of our servicemembers is certainly critical and important. I believe that we need to have everything on the table and look at every option. I would certainly be happy to look at that and learn certainly a lot more about it, but I do believe that that does and will impact our recruiting ability with women.

Senator HIRONO. Yes, and I would ask you to familiarize yourself with what the British armed services does. They provide this kind

of option for women and men in their services. I will submit some of their questions for the record, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Hirono. Senator Mullin, please.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Keohane, you said at the beginning in your statement that you want to keep everyone and allow anyone that wants to serve, to serve. Is that correct?

Mr. KEOHANE. That meets our stringent standards, yes, sir.

Senator MULLIN. Underneath the vaccine mandate that was installed on August 24th, 2021, as of November 30, 2022, DOD has discharged 8,123 servicemembers based on the vaccine status. Naval personnel separated based on vaccine status was awarded an honorable discharge.

However, 93.5 percent of our airmen, 85.8 percent of our soldiers, 94.1 percent of our marines were given a general discharge, denying them the GI Bill eligibility. This, obviously, because the Fiscal Year 2023 NDAA, the vaccine mandate was rescinded. Would you consider allowing these individuals, one, to come back and serve, and two, if not at least upgrading them to an honorable discharge?

Mr. KEOHANE. Thank you, Senator. I do understand each of the services does have a process for adjudicating any of these claims. If confirmed, I would certainly encourage any member to petition their individual board to do so.

Senator MULLIN. Would you advocate on their behalf?

Mr. KEOHANE. I would advocate on their behalf, sir.

Senator MULLIN. To bring them back into the service?

Mr. KEOHANE. I would look at all that. I need to become smarter in how the services have adjudicated those individual cases. I would be willing—

Senator MULLIN. What you mean by smarter by it. I mean, it is pretty clear here. I am not trying to be combatant, I am just trying to say, I do not—I am trying to follow that clarify, what you are saying.

Mr. KEOHANE. I understand each of the services adjudicating these cases based on their own policies and procedures. I need to get a little smarter certainly on how they came to that fruition at the end of the day. But we would be certainly, if confirmed, work with the services and your office as well to understand better what those cases were and why they are different from one another.

Senator MULLIN. Would you support bringing them back into the service?

Mr. KEOHANE. If they are eligible. If they are eligible by the standards that we have set forth, the services have set forth, I would.

Senator MULLIN. Okay. Another question for you, in 2018, 30.5 percent of servicemembers reported being sexually harassed and 7 percent reported being sexually assaulted. Had the regulations passed in the wake of the murder of Vanessa Guillen had an impact on how you would continue prevention work?

Mr. KEOHANE. Well, Senator, that topic falls under a different office within the P&R portfolio. However, I acknowledge we work certainly closely together.

Senator MULLIN. What—it does play a factor in servicemembers signing up. As a father of three beautiful young ladies who I would encourage all six of my kids to serve, it is a concern of mine when you hear 30.5 percent of the servicemembers in 2018 had been sexually harassed or 7 percent sexually assaulted.

That is a huge issue, and for you talking about the workforce, this is a big issue and a big challenge moving forward. Vanessa Guillen's murder obviously brought that to the forefront, and we worked hard on making sure we made some changes in the bill with the Vanessa Guillen bill and ultimately a change moving forward. But I believe this is something that you would have to—it would fall in your lap.

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes, sir. I am sure we would work with my—I would work with my colleagues on this. Bottom line is, this is unacceptable and it is offensive that these are happening.

I know Secretary Austin has issued recent guidance on a number of steps with the military academies, but this issue is certainly very upsetting and we certainly need to address it. If confirmed, I will address it immediately with my counterparts.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. Last question has either one of you reached out to the—I know you guys went through this process last year. But has any of you, has either one of you all reached out to the new Senators to set up a meeting with anyone or a phone call on you all's behalf?

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator, the legislative affairs team does that reach out to the Senators. My understanding is they reached out to all members of this Committee.

Senator MULLIN. Did they reach out to your office? I checked before I got here and no one had reached out to us. That is an issue, because if you are wanting our support, it would be a—it would be beneficial to probably reach out to us.

Because I have this kind of unwritten rule in my office. I am not voting for someone that did not take the time to come meet with me, because I want to know who I am voting for. With that, I yield back.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Mullin. Senator Kaine, please.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to the witnesses, thank you for your service. I want to ask Director Guertin a question. You and I talked about this a bit already. Last year we had in the Committee a lot of back and forth-ing over amphibs.

When we had in the Navy posture hearing, and I think it was at the end of April, there had been some churn and a suggestion that the Navy and the Marine Corps, and maybe the SecDef or the White House was not on the same page with respect to amphib requirements that the marines would need.

At the posture hearing, Admiral Gilday, Secretary Del Toro, Commandant Burger said, we are on the same page. You are not going to see us diverge. You are going to get a report from assume that will validate the requirements. That was in April.

We got the report in late December, and I thought it was going to be like War and Peace sized because it had taken so long to get it to us, and it was four pages long. It did say that there is a need

for 31, which is congressionally directed. So, that was good, and it had everybody kind of signed on.

But I was surprised that it took so long and that the analysis, at least what we were given, was so cursory. The President submitted to us his budget last week, and the budget includes only one LHA. No plan to build an LAPD in the FYDP.

So, setting aside that budget, you are not responsible for that budget, but if you are confirmed, how will you approach assessment of the congressionally directed requirements for 31 amphibious ships?

Mr. GUERTIN. So, Senator, it is not lost on me that this controversy about numbers of ships has been exacerbated even earlier this week, with OSD weighing in on, you know, how many ships were going to be in the budget and what—and that matter.

But for my efforts, working directly with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to make sure we have validated requirements and have those, you know, pushed through the budget process, make sure we get the right numbers of ships that meet the needs of the National Security Strategy.

I am perplexed that this has been so controversial, but I am committed to working on that and getting to the root of it, making sure we are building the right number of ships that meet the requirements of the National Security Strategy.

Senator KAINE. I look forward to working with you on that, and I know other Members of the Committee feel the same way. Mr. Keohane, I appreciated our visit yesterday, and one of the things we talked about was mental health care, suicide prevention. We have had a string of really challenging instances in Hampton Roads.

Sailors connected to the George Washington, which has been under a very long refurb, multiple suicides in that portion of the fleet. Then a number of sailors who had been assigned limited duty status at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center on the Norfolk Naval Base, also died by suicide, four within about a 45-day period.

That one caused the light bulb to go off in my head that should have probably gone off before. If somebody is in the Navy and they have an MOS and they really are trained to do this thing, but then they are not doing that job because their ship is in a seemingly endless refurb or because of something, it might be a broken bone or a pregnancy, they are assigned into a limited duty status, and it is unclear exactly when that status will end, will they go back to the fleet, will they receive a med board and exit the military.

Periods where people are not doing the thing, they train for can lead to some sort of hopelessness or confusion, or what is my place. Then that can exacerbate other issues and lead to significant mental health challenges.

Should you be confirmed, talk to me a little bit about what you want to do to have appropriate mental health services available for all of our military members and their families, but particularly maybe some of those who are in a limited duty status or in another status where they are not necessarily doing what they thought they were going to be doing.

Mr. KEOHANE. Thank you, Senator. So, within the Department and under the umbrella of the M&RA shop, there is the military and family life counselor program. It is the largest mental health counseling program in the Department, 2,600 people worldwide.

The great part of that particular process is an individual can go seek counseling on any number of issues without having any PII collected on them. So, it frees up that level of burden on an individual. I think, if confirmed, I would work with the team to promote that better within the Departments, within the services out in the field, so people are more aware of that.

Additionally, I think this is a great opportunity where the family programs can step in and offer external or highlight other M&AR programs, things like that, that would also get some of these servicemembers out and about, out of their box, thinking a little bit differently.

Senator KAINE. I appreciate that. I look forward to working with you on it. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Kaine. Senator Budd, please.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Chairman, and good morning, gentlemen. Director Guertin, assuming for a moment that China intends to invade Taiwan in 2027, you know, this may be the last year to initiate buys on critical capabilities that could make the difference in deterring or denying an amphibious assault across the Taiwan Strait.

So where do you think the Navy can and should assume risk in its acquisition process to field these systems more rapidly? Are there ways to move faster while still buying down the risk?

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator, I am a particularly big fan of using some of the things I have been successful with and projects that I have worked on and led in the past, things like open architectures and using modularity to focus the efforts necessary for delivering capability and making sure it works excellently, and then integrating it into other things that are also used.

As we do that more and more throughout the force and fleet, will be able to upgrade and improve those systems as more of a matter of course, since that is something that is extraordinarily different.

So, using those kinds of engineering tools in order to put those capabilities out where they can be as quickly as possible is something I am particularly interested in.

Senator BUDD. Thank you for that. The Navy is making—and continue on with you, the Navy is making historic investments in munitions and the industrial base, but we are still overly reliant on single production lines for some of the most critical capabilities, and there is a lot of risk in that. So, if confirmed, what will you do to increase the capacity and resilience across our industrial base?

Mr. GUERTIN. So, Senator, that is another great topic of mine. Thank you for both of these questions. One of the things that I want to make sure we do more effectively is to use competition to improve outcomes, and also to be able to produce things with different vendors.

The best way to do that is to more rigorously apply the government's rules on intellectual property so we could share the nec-

essary pieces while preserving industry's ability to innovate and secure their, you know, golden tickets, if you will, but also to use the information coming out of where the government has invested its money so we can get more vendors into the game of building munitions specifically.

Senator BUDD. Very good, thank you. Mr. Keohane, Fort Bragg currently has a waiting list of more than 800 families for childcare. We need more child development centers, we know that, but they take time to build. So, if confirmed, what would you do in the short term to reduce the strain on military families?

Mr. KEOHANE. Thank you, Senator. That certainly, I can tell you, is an issue dear to my heart as a small business owner that plays just as importantly. I think the Department has been doing a good job of late and I would expand upon this. They try to think outside the box with childcare.

Not lowering the standards that we expect of our childcare centers, but working with the States, either spending money, giving money to the States to work with their—to work with the facilities within the State to meet our standards.

I also think that there are other issues such as emergency backup care, that could also play an important role for some of our military families, especially while PCS or exceptional family members. So, there are a number of things that I would look forward to working on, if confirmed.

Senator BUDD. We appreciate that and look forward to your effort in that. Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Budd. Senator Rosen, please.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, Chairman Reed. I appreciate you having this hearing. I want to thank the nominees for testifying today and for your willingness to serve. So, I want to talk—I will talk about childcare, too, in a minute. But first, I want to talk about commuting assistance for servicemembers.

So, Mr. Keohane, I would like to ask you about a problem facing airmen stationed at Creech Air Force Base and also the servicemembers that are stationed in remote areas, rural, remote areas.

They have to commute many miles from the base to where they live. Creech has very limited housing nearby, so the vast majority of the airmen, well they live in Las Vegas, which is about 45 miles away. It is an even longer commute for those who have to drop off their kids, and sometimes they utilize childcare, sometimes it Nellis Air Force Base, which is on the opposite end of town.

To your knowledge, does DOD have the existing authorities to provide these servicemembers with possibly a gas stipend or something similar to make their commute less expensive as they are dealing with rising costs? Or this is something that you might need help from Congress to address? If you are confirmed, can I have your commitment to work with me on easing this type of financial burden and others on our troops?

Mr. KEOHANE. Thank you, Senator. First and foremost, absolutely. If confirmed, I would love to work with you and your staff on this issue. I think it is an important issue.

I think it is one that probably does not get a lot of attention because a lot of our facilities are located in remote areas, and it is an extreme burden, especially during today's economic environment, with high inflation and costs, for our servicemembers and their families.

I am not familiar with the details, to be honest with you. I do not think I can give you an answer that you would deserve. But if confirmed, I would absolutely like to look into that and get back to you.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, and I want to build on what Senator Budd was talking about, because not only are the commuting costs and availability of affordable housing nearby in these remote areas or further away from an urban area. But childcare, accessibility and affordability really important.

So last week, Senator Ernst and I reintroduced our Small Business Child Care Investment Act. This is bipartisan legislation that would increase the availability of affordable, high-quality childcare to families by allowing nonprofits, those nonprofit childcare providers to qualify as small businesses and participate in all the SBA programs that would be available. So, as you are aware, as was mentioned, it is really an acute challenge for our servicemembers to access affordable and high-quality childcare.

I know you said this to Senator Budd, but committing to finding creative solutions like partnering with loan eligible nonprofit childcare providers, other kinds of creative solutions, we want to ease the burden for people to serve in their transportation, in their housing, and in their childcare. Do you have any other suggestions that you might like to share with us today?

Mr. KEOHANE. Senator, I think you are absolutely right. Those are priorities. We need to focus heavily on those. If confirmed, I will do so. Again, I think the Department has done well the last few years trying to think outside the box.

Most importantly, not lowering the standards of our expectations for taking care of our military families and childcare. But certainly, look forward to working with yourself and the services as well, and outside entities to try to brainstorm what makes the most sense, especially post-COVID.

I think we really need to understand better perhaps the voices of the military families and what they need in this environment.

Senator ROSEN. Well, I think this all helps with recruitment and retention of a quality people, and their quality of their ability to serve our and our Nation and protect us. So, really important. I would like to move with the time, a little bit of time I have left, over to the submarine industrial base capacity and workforce needs.

So, Mr. Guertin, and I will turn it over to you. This week the President announced that Australia is expected to purchase at least three, possibly up to five *Virginia*-class submarines in the 2030's. This deal would deepen the AUKUS pact, a landmark defense agreement between the United States, Australia, and the UK, United Kingdom.

In addition, this deal sends a healthy demand signal to our suppliers all along the sort of submarine industrial base. So, construction of *Virginia* and *Columbia*-class submarines is operating under

a schedule dictating that two *Virginia*-class submarines must be delivered per year through 2033 and one *Columbia*-class submarine must be delivered per year beginning in 2026.

Does the U.S. currently have the industrial capacity, the skilled workforce, to keep up with this demand and these deadlines, especially in light of this new agreement? If you are confirmed, how will you address the workforce and capacity issue that we might be facing?

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator, excellent questions. One of the things that I want to make sure that I do, if confirmed to the position, is to review how we are in terms of timeliness of delivery. My understanding is that we have most of the industrial capacity to keep up with the laydown, but we are really struggling in the workforce area, as we have discussed earlier.

We want to make sure that we are getting these skilled trades, new people coming into the workforce, and learning and growing, and have these great careers building these amazing warships. It is a great opportunity for young people that I want to make sure they can find an opportunity to get a part of and be a part of something better—bigger than themselves, by building these kinds of ships that we need so very much.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you very much. I do not—I can tell you, every single committee I am on, every time I testify, I hear from a witness. It is always about the workforce, people, pipeline. No different here. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator King, please.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Guertin, I want to followup on some of the questions that you have had about industrial base. It seems to me that's one of the lessons we have from Ukraine, is maintaining the industrial base and being sure that there are consistent demand signals that will allow the private sector to make the investments necessary to have the industrial base ready and able when we need them. Do you—what do you take from Ukraine?

Mr. GUERTIN. So, Senator, first of all, watching what is happening in Ukraine is a tragedy, and the rigor and fight, the patriotic fight that the Ukrainian people are putting up against this is amazing. What is also amazing is how fast they are burning through munitions.

If we get an opportunity, if we are forced into an opportunity where we have to deny an adversary something we want to be a part of, we are going to have to have deep bunkers.

In order to do that, we are going to have to really ramp up the quantity of weapons that we have available to us. So, if confirmed, I look forward to working with industry to send a strong demand signal, and that extends over time, so they know how to invest and how to position themselves so they can build more affordably and at scale.

Senator KING. Well, the term you used is extend over time. Multi-year procurements, it seems to me, is one way to send that demand signal. Is that—do you agree?

Mr. GUERTIN. Absolutely. My current colleague, Dr. LaPlante, Undersecretary for Acquisition and Sustainment, he has been doing

some excellent work in this area to take advantage of some of the authorities the Congress has provided in order to get those longer-term deals established.

Senator KING. One of the issues that I am concerned about particularly is the transition from the DDG class destroyer to whatever the new surface combatant is, to be sure that there is not a trough, if you will, of demand, which would cause us to lose skilled personnel. You can not, it is very difficult in this economy to get them back. So, I commend to you close management of that process so that there is not a gap between the constructions of the new, of the DDGs, and then moving on to the new surface combatant.

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes, Senator. Absolutely. We want to make sure that we continue that production smoothly from one to the other. My understanding is that right now, the two contractors that are most likely to be in that business are working together with the government, with the Navy, to, you know, bide down risk, to improve the understanding of what that design is going to be so that they can step right into building them effectively when that time comes.

Senator KING. I hope you will support that process.

Mr. GUERTIN. Absolutely, yes, sir.

Senator KING. Final question on procurement. In this day and age, it seems to me when we buy platforms, we should also be sure that we are buying the IP. My vision is a 3D printer on every ship. We should not have to go back to the original manufacturer to make a part of a valve or a pipe or whatever.

So as part of the procurement process, we should be buying the IP so that we can then do a lot of the maintenance and upgrades in our own capacity rather than having to have these long refurbishment programs.

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator, that is a particular interest of mine, is better use of the intellectual property rights the government gets when we have contracts with industry. My commitment to you is to more aggressively utilize those rights.

When those rights do not get us that information just naturally as a part of the business deal, where we need to purchase additional intellectual property, where it is something that is related to, you know, unique investments that industry might do, that we can have a reasonable discussion with industry about how that is in their best interest to make sure that their equipment is managed and maintained effectively over time.

Senator KING. Thank you. Mr. Keohane, one of the issues—I have been meeting with a lot of veterans lately, and one of the issues in personnel is the transition out of the military.

We have the TAP program, but the consensus I am getting is that there are gaps, there are problems with it, and the suggestion is that the military should, the Pentagon should spend as much time and money and effort on transition out as they do on recruitment in.

I hope you will focus on that issue because of the disproportionate number of veteran suicide take place in the first two or 3 years after separation, and things like notifying the State veterans services that people, somebody is coming so they can be literally

met at the airport. I hope that is something you will pay attention to.

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes, sir. Transition assistance and those programs have been something I have paid attention to for years, been very passionate about. I certainly think they have gotten a little bit better, but we need to do a far better job. I think that trying to bridge that educational process earlier in than waiting till the last few months of someone's time within the service is certainly helpful.

When they return home, perhaps they should be required to go to their local armory and pick up their final paperwork. You know, do a soft handoff when appropriate. I think we need to start thinking a little bit different based on how the world really is today.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the team, and certainly you and your staff as well, Senator, to work on this issue.

Senator KING. Thank you. I think this is very important and I agree. I commend your attention to it, and we will look forward to following up with you.

Mr. KEOHANE. Thank you, sir.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator King. Senator Blumenthal, please.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thank you both for your service and welcome to your new jobs. I think you will have overwhelming support for these positions, and you certainly have mine. Mr. Guertin, thanks to your Connecticut family. I hope you will visit Groton, and we can combine our visit with one to East Haddam, where your sister is a teacher.

Public service runs in your family and thank you for your service in the Navy as well as now in the Department of Defense. You have answered many of my questions already, so I am not going to repeat them. But I would like to just focus for a moment on, number one, the industrial base, the need to train the workforce.

I am very glad that you are committed to that challenge and meeting that challenge. Second, in terms of getting the *Virginia*-class submarine production back on track, making sure that we do build two submarines a year. We are a little bit late on that timetable. I have raised with you the indemnification issue.

The Navy has reversed 40 years of precedence. I know you are not responsible for it. But it refuses to provide for and award those already negotiated Block V ships in terms of indemnification. I believe that the delays on the Navy shoulders, I think that there has to be a resolution to this indemnification issue.

Just want to ask you, if you are confirmed, will you commit getting those Block V submarines under contract expeditiously? Will you commit to working with the industry to find a mutually acceptable path toward resolving that indemnification issue?

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes, Senator, you have my commitment on that.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Senator Cotton, please.

Senator COTTON. Mr. Keohane, I know you have already addressed the recruiting crisis a lot this morning. I just want to register my concerns about it as well. We missed our goals last year

by almost 15,000 in the Army and the other services also struggled in various ways.

They are shifting around manpower so they looked like they hit theirs. I do not think there is any signs that this year is going to be better. I worry that the recruiting crisis is soon going to become a retention crisis in the years ahead, as you do not have a pipeline of young soldiers to replace junior NCOs and they—more and more is demanded of them. Can you give me your thoughts on what the key causes for this crisis is?

Mr. KEOHANE. Thank you, Senator. I think there is probably a number of them. Certainly, the last handful of years, our military has not been able to get out and be present with a lot of communities, with our youth, with our teachers, with our coaches. A lot of those typical areas that we would normally build that relationship.

I also think that there have been a number of challenges, even with BRAC and others where we have deserts of places within the country that we do not have a military presence which exacerbates the whole problem in general.

I do think when it comes to the marketing and so forth that has been done traditionally, we need to do a better job. The Department needs to do a better job and utilize technology and think a different way of reaching out to the youth of today, deal with things certainly much differently than I did when I was their age.

Senator COTTON. What role do you think advertising and marketing plays in this? The Army has just debuted a new set of ads harking back to its 1980's, Be All You Can Be ads. What role can different marketing strategies play in trying to recruit more young men and women in the military?

Mr. KEOHANE. Sure, and I think in this instance, Senator, one of the best things to do is also look at the private sector and how they are marketing to their potential new employees and so forth.

I think there is a technology aspect that we probably do not use, the Department does not use well enough, and that is either let's say somebody has been clicking on a number of photos of a submarine. Does the Department capture or marketing process capture those individual's statistics, and be able to push the right marketing materials to them, get them to see if they are interested?

I understand fully that that might require some additional approvals from Congress to make sure that we are staying within the confines of appropriate handling of information. But technology is out there that we need to look at.

Senator COTTON. Okay. We hear a lot, especially from senior uniformed leaders, about a low percentage of young Americans are actually eligible to serve in our military. Do you know what percentage that is? What percentage of young Americans are eligible to serve?

Mr. KEOHANE. Senator, off the top of my head, I think it is fairly low, probably in the 20's.

Senator COTTON. Yes, I think that is right, or maybe even the teens. I have to say, I think that is too low. I mean, do you think that is too low?

Mr. KEOHANE. You know, I think, you know, in the macro level, it could be right. I have not really looked into it, but I know it is—sadly, it is low. It is too low.

Senator COTTON. I just, I mean, all of our recruits should, over time should be honored and celebrated. Maybe my favorite recruit of all time, the teenage boys in World War I and World War II lied about their age so they could enlist and get a shot at the title overseas, and that we should be encouraging as much as we can every young American to join and to be eligible.

I think most of us have probably had experiences of deep frustration with the military services throwing up roadblocks. You know, a young man who was a top tier college athlete and had a knee or a hip injury and recovered, and continued to be a top tier college athlete, yet the Army says he is not eligible.

Or a kid whose parents got divorced when he was 14 and some doctor prescribed some mood-altering drug for 6 months, and 5 years later he is told it is still disqualifying. I am just saying, like we can not have people who are, you know, half blind or fat or flat footed or what have you in the military.

I guess in the second category, they can get in shape and join. But I think we should look at ways to try to make more young men and women eligible, especially those who are trying to serve. So can I just get your commitment that you will look at—this tendency that the service has, it is almost like a boast I think, that like only 14 percent or only 21 percent are eligible.

Again, like, it can not be serious felons or people half blind, but we need to do a better job of opening up a bigger pool of recruits, especially when it comes to problems that are temporary or manageable, like old injuries or old psychological diagnoses when kids were, you know, mere adolescence.

Even kids that have had some run ins with the law, you know, nonviolent or juvenile run ins with the law. I think we need to make a pool bigger so we got a bigger pond to fish in. Can I get your commitment on that?

Mr. KEOHANE. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator COTTON. Okay. Thank you both, gentlemen.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Cotton. In fact, let me associate myself with your remarks. I think they are right on target. Thank you. Senator King, please.

Senator KING. I wanted to followup, Mr. Keohane, on recruitment and retention. So, we had a very interesting hearing yesterday with General Saltzman, the head of the Space Force.

They are doing something that is unheard of in the military, which is lateral hires. They are bringing people in at a higher level because of the expertise that they need. The other thing they are doing is having a relationship with the reserves so people can do their private sector job but then are available when needed given particular skills.

Is that something that could be applied more broadly in order to deal with this recruitment problem?

Mr. KEOHANE. Senator, I think it is absolutely—everything should be on the table. I think that as our military changes, the way in which we fight wars change, we need to have the flexibility, we need to modernize some of our policies so that if you have a cer-

tain MOS, perhaps you can move back and forth easily between the Reserve and Active Duty. But we need to make sure that we have everything on the table to understand how we can better pull those folks in based on what the needs and availability are.

Senator KING. Following up on Senator Cotton's questions, it may be that the physical requirements are not as important if you are going to be a cyber warrior.

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. We need to be thinking about that. On the issue of recruitment, I have seen data recently that it used to be that recruitment and people joining the military were fairly evenly distributed geographically across the country.

That has changed dramatically in the last 10 years, where the military has become essentially Southern and Southwestern. One of the problems in the Northeast is there are no bases anymore so people do not grow up, young people do not grow up seeing, in my hometown of Brunswick, we do not see people with naval uniforms on anymore, and I think that is a real problem.

I hope in your recruitment efforts, you think about this geographic dispersal, concentration actually, which is, I believe, not healthy. We do not want our military to be a regional body. So, can you give me some thoughts on this?

Mr. KEOHANE. Senator, I completely agree. I have heard you speak in the past as well about the unintended consequences of BRAC and exactly what you just described. I think we certainly need to do a better job of making sure that our military is more familiarized to our communities. There is probably a number of ways we can do that, but certainly technology needs to be one of them.

Senator KING. But you can also direct recruitment efforts in certain areas. In Buffalo, New York or in Cleveland, as opposed to the Phoenix and Atlanta.

Mr. KEOHANE. Yes, sir. I think, again, everything should be on the table. We need to really look at this with fresh eyes and figure how we can better reach the population that we need.

Senator KING. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator King. Senator Warren, please.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Guertin, you have been nominated to manage the Navy's acquisition programs. In other words, how the Navy buys things to build and to maintain the fleet.

So, let's start with something easy. When the military makes a purchase, should it pay whatever the company demands, or should we be using taxpayer money only to buy things where a price is justified by costs and we receive a quality product on time?

Mr. GUERTIN. Well, Senator, the nature of the contracts for the things that we use to buy this military equipment absolutely should be rigorously applied. You know, we should make sure we are paying for the things we get. There is a variety of different contract types, and they all have their ways of managing costs to make sure that the work is equitable and fair.

Senator WARREN. Right. But I just want to be sure that we are saying the same thing, that what we are looking for before we

agree to pay for anything is that the price is justified by cost and that we have a right to expect on-time performance. Basically, right?

Mr. GUERTIN. Basically, right. But, Senator, let's make sure we are not talking about, you know, different kinds of animals. There is fixed price contracting, in which case I completely agree with you. Then when we are—there is more technical risk, where the outcome is more uncertain, then that may be a better place to put cost plus contracting, where the cost might not still be—

Senator WARREN. Okay, but that is still justified by costs—

Mr. GUERTIN. Absolutely.

Senator WARREN. They are just different ways to calculate it. That is all I am getting at. Because one of the tools that DOD uses to get things made faster is what is called progress payments.

That is where I want to ask more. So rather than pay for a project when it is fully complete, a company that is getting a progress payment gets advanced funding before they have finish building a ship or a plane so that they can cover the large capital investments that they need to make in order to do the job.

I understand that. One of the ways that DOD responded to the pandemic was to hide the rate of advanced payments to contractors so they got even more upfront. Now, let's be blunt. There was no data to suggest that that was necessary, but I understand that DOD was trying to help workers and the defense industrial base withstand an unprecedented emergency. I get that.

But DOD is conducting a study now to determine how to reform progress payments now that the pandemic has eased. So, do you agree that if the study shows that increased payments did not help DOD, that we should reevaluate using this method?

Mr. GUERTIN. Well Senator, as you might imagine, my current role, it is all about the data. We want to analyze using data and make sound decisions based on actual information. So first of all, I think you are really on to something. I bet there is a pony in there somewhere. But I think we should make sure we have the data that backs it up.

Senator WARREN. Okay. As long as we will act on those data, the data show the progress payments are not really helping us here. You know, I do not say this very often, but I think the Trump Administration had a really smart idea for how to make progress payments work even better.

They were sick of programs being behind schedule and over cost so they proposed tying the size of the progress payment to program performance and then sharing cost and pricing data. Companies that deliver on time and provide all the data would get their money up front.

The industry hated President Trump's reform proposal and they managed to defeat it, but I think it is worth reviving. So, let me ask, would you support conditioning or lowering the progress payment rate if it means that ships and airplanes will be cheaper and are more likely to arrive on time?

Mr. GUERTIN. Senator, first and foremost, I am all about getting the best possible deal for the American people, no question. I am also very interested in innovative business models that get us to

that end. That sounds like a great opportunity, and I would love to explore it.

Senator WARREN. All right. You know, look, failing to conduct proper oversight to control costs hurts our national security, and it hurts our ability to build the force we need to support our National Defense Strategy.

We need to ensure that our acquisition policies are getting a good deal for the military and not just lining the pockets of giant contractors. Let's work together on that. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Warren. Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony. Thank you for your willingness to serve the Nation, and the men and women who defend us every day. I know that is an effort not only individually, but your families also.

We look forward to moving with your nominations, and certainly I think you have my support, and with that, I will adjourn this morning's hearing.

[Whereupon, at 10:49 a.m., the Committee adjourned.]

[Prepared questions submitted to Mr. Ronald T. Keohane by Chairman Reed prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Question. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASD(M&RA))?

Answer. The duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs are to serve as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, with responsibility for overall policies and procedures of Total Force manpower, personnel and reserve affairs to include the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve. As part of the critical duties of this position is the responsibility to coordinate across the Department of Defense, the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, the Military Services as well as Congress and other appropriate stakeholders to set the conditions for a sustainable, seamlessly integrated and complementary total force.

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

Answer. For the better part of my 30-year professional career I have focused my efforts on developing and managing a wide variety of quality of life programs that directly and positively impacted our servicemembers and their families. Programs ranging from drug demand reduction, , transition assistance, SHARP, ESGR, mental health counseling and support of the wounded, ill and injured population, among others, have provided me with a deep, diverse and relevant skill set. Under the Obama administration I had the honor to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP) where I had oversight responsibility for quality-of-life program policy issues which are even more critical in today's environment.

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES (RON)

Question. In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the ASD(M&RA), and how would you address them, if confirmed?

Answer. As the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic the Department of Defense is faced with a number of major challenges. Among the top issues the Department faces are those which fall within the purview of the M&RA, including recruitment and propensity to serve, as well as retention issues including compensation, spouse employment, and access to affordable childcare.

If confirmed as the ASD (M&RA) I would work closely with the experts in the ASD offices, the Services as well as other stakeholders, including Congress, to address each of these important issues.

CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY

Question. If confirmed, how would you use your position to adhere to and further the fundamental principle of civilian control of the armed forces?

Answer. I believe civilian control is a fundamental tenant of our successful democracy, and it cannot just be present at the highest level. If confirmed I will support and advance the principle of civilian control of the armed forces in my words and actions. I will, as I always have, seek the advice and counsel of military and career civil servants, as well as fellow appointees. But in the end, I realize that decisions must be made and oftentimes those are to be made by the civilian leaders of the Department. If confirmed, I will not only support the Secretary and Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness in their decisionmaking, I will make those decisions for the M&RA, the easy and difficult ones, with the advice and counsel of our military advisers.

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure your inclusion in the discussion, debate, and resolution of U.S. defense and national security issues?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure the ASD(M&RA) maintains an active presence and voice on all matters related to the policies and procedures of the Total Force manpower, personnel and reserve affairs for which I will have oversight. Further, I will strive to maintain an ongoing dialog with my counterparts across the Department of Defense, the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and the Services while always providing the best honest and candid advice to the Under Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and the Secretary of Defense.

PERSONNEL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Question. If confirmed, what personnel policies and processes would you implement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources management—both military and civilian—across the Department?

Answer. If confirmed, I would give significant attention to the long-term recruiting challenges that face the Department. While I understand that it is primarily the responsibility of the Military Services to recruit and train, I recognize that there are roles that OSD must perform to better enable success. I believe that we should review the tools that we have to increase propensity to serve in order to achieve our long-term recruitment goals. Similarly, I believe that civilian public service is critical to our national security, and is also an often overlooked career field. It deserves additional focus and outreach.

Within each of the areas above, technology provides us with excellent tools to observe and process mass amounts of data to better understand our workers and recruits' needs and wants and better compare our efforts to those of other organizations, both government and commercial.

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

Answer. I understand that if confirmed, I not only have a responsibility to the legislative branch to inform and consult with Congress and all of the appropriate committees, I consider it smart business to do so. Afterall, this body holds the direct line to the American public and their input through you, coupled with your experience on these issues is vital to any successful policy that I might implement.

NON-DEPLOYABLE SERVICEMEMBERS

Question. In your view, should servicemembers who are non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months be subject either to separation from the service or referral to the Disability Evaluation System, as is current Department policy?

Answer. I am aware that all servicemembers are expected to be deployable and the Department's focus is to maximize the lethality and readiness of the joint force. It is my understanding that the servicemembers who are considered non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months require a retention determination from their Military Department. These individuals should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if continued service is appropriate. Not to do so may adversely impact the force readiness and place an undue burden on the remainder of the force.

Question. In your view, under what circumstances would the retention of a servicemember who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months be "in the best interest of the service"?

Answer. I believe it is appropriate to evaluate each individual on a case-by-case basis. Factors to consider include the individual's ability to perform his/her military duties as well as the likelihood that the servicemember will resolve the condition or reason resulting in the non-deployable status. I believe we must also consider the servicemember's role during a deployment. For example, a wounded warrior who continues to serve as a cyber analyst may not be eligible to deploy, but could still fulfill their combat mission. This, among other potential factors, is why the individual's circumstances must be considered on a case-by-case.

Question. The Department of Defense policy on in-service transitions for transgender servicemembers provides that "any determination that a transgender servicemember is non-deployable at any time will be consistent with established Military Department and Service standards, as applied to other servicemembers whose deployability is similarly affected in comparable circumstances unrelated to gender transition."

Please provide an example of a "comparable circumstance" that would be used to determine deployability of a transgender servicemember.

Answer. Speculation on my part would not be appropriate due to the highly individualized nature of this policy. If confirmed, I will ensure our policies promote dignity and respect for all servicemembers.

Question. On average, how long should a commander of a servicemember undergoing a gender transition expect that servicemember to be non-deployable?

Answer. As every case is highly individualized, I do not think it is appropriate to speculate. However, if confirmed, I will address this issue with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs and other medical professionals in the Department.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Question. In general, what is your assessment of the diversity of the U.S. Armed Forces and of the DOD civilian workforce?

Answer. I believe that diversity is a strength and directly contributes to readiness. I understand that although the Department is fairly diverse across the board, racial/ethnic minorities and women are still underrepresented among the Armed Forces' top leadership, compared with the servicemembers they lead. However, I understand that the Department and the Military Services are implementing initiatives to support a more representative force in the years to come.

Question. According to researchers at the RAND Corporation, African American and Hispanic youth are less likely to be eligible for military service than white and Asian Americans. Why do you think this is the case?

Answer. As I am unfamiliar with the RAND reports, I am not able to provide a thorough response. However, if confirmed, I commit to working with my staff and the Services, to learn what has already been done in this area and to identify any areas where we can make adjustments to ensure we are drawing from the wealth of diversity that today's youth have to offer.

Question. In your judgment, should military accession and commissioning standards be modified to achieve racial diversity goals? Please explain your answer.

Answer. I believe the Department's focus needs to remain on ensuring we have the best qualified military in the world while always working toward a diverse and representative force that reflects our society.

Question. If confirmed, how would you increase diversity and inclusion in the armed forces, and work toward the goal of ensuring that the Nation's military, at all levels, especially within the senior officer ranks, reflects the broad diversity of the nation?

Answer. The future of the All-Volunteer Force and evolving nature of warfare requires a Total Force comprised of diverse backgrounds and skill sets to effectively support future warfighting missions. If confirmed, I will strive to advance the Department's mission and the continued need to recruit, develop, and retain top talent.

Question. If confirmed, how would you increase diversity and inclusion within the Department's civilian workforce, especially at the senior General Schedule and Senior Executive Service levels?

Answer. If confirmed, I will assess the current representation at the senior General Schedule and Senior Executive Service levels, as well as current Department initiatives designed to improve diversity at these levels. As necessary, I will seek to expand these initiatives to promote greater representation in the Department's senior civilian ranks.

Question. Do you believe diversity goals should be prioritized over merit and performance when considering who should be appointed to senior military and civilian positions?

Answer. I believe the Department must recruit and retain a qualified civilian workforce with the right critical skillsets to achieve the Department's mission, and that qualification standards for our military force must remain unmatched in the world. Civilian and military qualifications and standards should ensure we are able to recruit the best and brightest, while also ensuring our civilian workforce and armed forces are diverse and representative of American society.

Question. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to increase geographical diversity in the armed forces, especially from areas of the country and local communities that are currently underrepresented?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with my staff, and the Services, to learn what has already been done in this area and to identify any areas where we can make adjustments to ensure we are drawing from the wealth of diversity that today's youth have to offer.

EXTREMISM

Question. The current DOD policy on "Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces" prohibits servicemembers from "active participation" in organizations "that advocate supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology, or causes; including those that attempt to create illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, ethnicity, or national origin"

What is your view of the prevalence and effect of extremism within the armed forces?

Answer. I believe that the majority of our servicemembers and civilians serve our Nation honorably—that includes their conduct after they leave the military. However, any instance of extremist behavior within any organization (no matter how frequent) degrades the overall effectiveness of that organization. Within the armed forces, without a doubt, good order and discipline is compromised when any extremist behavior or activity presents itself. My personal and professional view is there is no place for any extremist behavior or activity within the armed forces.

Question. If confirmed, what would you direct the Military Services to do to eliminate extremism within the ranks?

Answer. If confirmed, I will meet with the service leaders—civilian, officers and senior enlisted advisors to learn how they presently maintain good order and discipline at all times within the ranks, and where we can help. I will work with my staff and leadership to ensure that the Department continues to focus on keeping the Military Services free from extremist behavior and activity, while maintaining the rights and freedoms for all servicemembers.

MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMIES

Question. What is your assessment of the diversity of cadets and midshipmen in the Military Service Academies? What measures can be taken to increase diversity in the Academies?

Answer. Diversity within our Services is critical. The Military Service Academies produce the future leaders of our military; therefore, it is essential the cadets and midshipmen represent the diversity of our great country. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to explore new marketing, recruiting, and community partnering methods to increase the diversity of Military Service Academy applicants.

Question. What is your assessment of the efficacy of the policies and processes in place across the Military Service Academies to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, and to ensure that cadets and midshipmen who do report assault or harassment are not subject to retaliation—social ostracism and reputation damage—in particular?

Answer. Any form of sexual assault or harassment hinders mission accomplishment and damages unit cohesion. The Military Service Academies, institutions among the top colleges and universities in the country, should be held to the highest standards of conduct and integrity. If confirmed, I will work with Military Department leadership to make sure that they monitor such behavior to ensure the Military Service Academies swiftly and justly address all forms of inappropriate behaviors.

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

Answer. I am aware of recent media reports and understand the Department and Services take this tragic issue very seriously. It has also reached epidemic levels in the United States as suicide rates increased by 30 percent from 2000–2018. If I am confirmed, I will assess the efficacy of efforts taken to date and engage with the Defense Suicide Prevention Office and Service leaders to look at ways to strengthen suicide prevention programs.

Question. Do you believe the current 5-year minimum Active Duty service commitment for Military Service Academy graduates is sufficient return on investment for the U.S. military and the American taxpayer?

Answer. It is my understanding that the current Active Duty service commitment for service academy graduates has remained unchanged for many years. If I am confirmed, I will analyze the current obligations, and verify our Nation is receiving a high return on this important investment of taxpayer dollars.

Question. In your view, do the Military Service Academies contribute to the pool of military officer accessions commensurate with their attendant costs? Why or why not?

Answer. I am unfamiliar with the specifics costs to operate the Military Service Academies, especially in comparison to other accession program costs. However, I am familiar with the excellent reputation of the Service Academies. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the Service Academies' costs and the contributions made by this particular pool of officers.

Question. What is your view of service academy graduates delaying Active Duty service in order to pursue careers in professional sports?

Answer. I'm aware of this issue generally from my past experience in the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I look forward to better understanding the existing policy and recent legislative enactments in this area to determine the appropriate way forward for the Department, Services, cadets/midshipmen, and the American tax payers.

SENIOR RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS (SROTC)

Question. In your view, does the Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC) program remain a viable source of officer accessions?

Answer. While I am not currently well versed in the details of accessions via SROTC, the geographically diverse nature of the SROTC program should provide an officer corps with the wide variety of demographics, backgrounds, and experiences necessary to ensure the continued readiness of the Military Services. If confirmed, I will review the SROTC program to ensure it is an effective and viable source for officer accessions.

Question. What is your assessment of the diversity in our ROTC programs? What measures can be taken to increase diversity in the ROTC?

Answer. A diverse force begins at accessions, and SROTC gives the Services the broadest ability to tap into diverse talent across the country. If confirmed, I will review the SROTC programs and ensure the Department continues to focus on increasing the diversity of the officer corps to take full advantage of their talents through opportunities to serve. In addition, I will strive to improve the DOD's marketing, recruitment, and community partnership efforts to encourage a more diverse applicant pool.

Question. In your view, should the Military Services continue to operate SROTC units at colleges and universities that fail to meet their minimum annual commissioning requirements? If not, please explain the factors you believe should be used to determine which units should be terminated.

Answer. I do not have access to the Department's information regarding this issue. If confirmed, I will review the matter and will look for ways to get the most out of current SROTC programs without losing geographical or cultural representation.

Question. If confirmed, how would you modify the SROTC scholarship program to attract the top talent that our armed forces need to meet national defense?

Answer. As I currently understand, we have SROTC programs at some of the best colleges and universities in the United States, providing an opportunity to reach top talent. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and the Services to ensure SROTC scholarship programs are maximally effective at attracting top talent for the Nation.

MILITARY COMPENSATION

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

Answer. Yes. The Military compensation package must primarily be competitive in order to sustain the recruitment and retention of the high caliber men and women willing to serve the Nation in uniform in order to reach and maintain our national defense objectives.

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

Answer. While my view into the Department's statistical data is limited, current indications are the overall military compensation levels compare favorably with the private sector. However, if confirmed, I would remain open to increased compensation levels in coordination with the overall balancing of these costs against other critical warfighting and readiness needs of the Force.

Question. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the current military pay and benefits package, if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed I would work with my team of experts along with the Services to explore alternatives that could positively impact servicemembers and families, such as more and better access to family care, both child and elder care. Listening to our families is critical to any review and recommendation, but I believe that in this post-COVID environment, families have changed their priorities and we need to be able to adjust benefits to respond.

Question. What specific recommendations do you have for controlling rising military personnel costs, including entitlement spending?

Answer. Military personnel costs equate to roughly one-third of the Department's overall budget. Maintaining a balance between personnel costs and other critical warfighting needs is difficult but necessary for maintaining our Total Force, while meeting recruitment goals. One key element of stabilizing military personnel costs, including unemployment costs is maintaining high retention rates. From what I understand, the Services have been fairly successful in this area, but can always improve and this gets back to my point about listening to the families and their needs in terms of benefits restructuring. This could be a way of controlling some larger costs.

RECRUITING AND RETENTION (RON)

Question. In your view, what are the main reasons that less than 30 percent of 17 to 24-year-olds are eligible for military service, and how would you propose increasing the size of that pool?

Answer. I believe several factors contribute to the low percentage of 17–34 year olds who are eligible to serve. Among the top reasons for ineligibility are obesity and medical reasons as well as past drug use and criminal records. I understand that the Army and maybe the other Military Services have programs for recruits to “get in shape” and eat healthier in order to meet the enlistment standards. I think this is an important step worth exploring, but we must also conduct outreach sooner in the recruitment process. If confirmed, I will work with the experts in my office, the Military Services as well and other stakeholders, to include Congress, to look into the possibility of outreach programs to help America's youth return to a more fit and healthy lifestyle, while also increasing our outreach in vital education programs as well, such as STEM programs. ASVAB scores are also contributors to the low percentage of persons eligible to serve. All of these issues deserve our long-term attention, and if confirmed they will be an area of focused effort for me.

Question. Similarly, why do you believe that the propensity of youth to serve continues to drop and is at its lowest level (about 10 percent according to DOD data) in years?

Answer. I believe the drop in propensity to serve among our youth is due in large part to the lack of relatability with our servicemembers and military life in general. The impact of COVID–19 has compounded the issue as servicemembers were unable to have a presence with youth, teachers, coaches, clergy, etc. that would have assisted in exposing the communities to the military culture.

Question. Do you believe that non-native English speakers are disadvantaged in qualifying for military service by the current testing process?

Answer. I am not familiar enough with the intimate details of the current testing processes for non-native English speakers. If confirmed, I will fully examine the process to ensure non-native English speakers are not disadvantaged.

Question. If confirmed, how would you address any such disadvantages to increase the pool of eligible and interested youth?

Answer. I believe its imperative that our Armed Forces are a reflection of the society for which they serve to protect and defend. If confirmed, I would work with experts in my office as well as the Military Services to ensure we are recruiting from a broader range of pools across the United States, geographically, demographically and economically. I see this position as removing barriers to anyone that is able and willing to serve.

Question. In your view, should existing medical and other qualification standards be reconsidered to accommodate youth willing to enlist for service in certain high-demand specialties, such as remotely piloted aircraft pilots or the cyber workforce?

Answer. I believe, given today's recruiting challenges along with the changing landscape of cyber warfare and other technological advances, that it would be wise to at least consider all aspects of the accessions process.

MILITARY ACCESSIONS VITAL TO NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM

Question. In your view, did the benefits of the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest Program (MAVNI)—recruiting and utilizing those with critical skills vital to the national interest—outweigh the costs to the Department associated with conducting security, suitability, and reliability screenings of applicants?

Answer. I am unfamiliar with the specific benefits and/or challenges of the MAVNI program.

If confirmed, I commit to gaining a better understanding of this program to determine how similar programs may contribute to our national interests. I believe any decision on this program must be centered on maintaining the national security of our country.

Question. In your view, was the program effective in helping the Department to recruit for certain hard-to-fill specialties?

Answer. I am unfamiliar with the specific details of the MAVNI program. If confirmed, I commit to better understanding the program to determine if this program should be reinstated to assist recruiting efforts by enlisting individuals to fill hard-to-fill specialties. I believe any decision on the MAVNI program or any program with similar intent must be centered on maintaining the national security of our country.

Question. If confirmed, would you recommend reactivating the MAVNI program and authorize the enlistment of new applicants? If so, what conditions would you impose on program operations, particularly as regards applicant security, suitability, and reliability screening?

Answer. I am unfamiliar with the specific benefits and/or challenges of the MAVNI program.

If confirmed, I commit to gaining a better understanding of this program to determine whether this program should be reinstated, and what security, suitability and reliability screenings should be imposed to ensure the security of our national interests. I believe any decision on this program or programs of similar intent must be centered on maintaining the national security of our country.

RESERVE COMPONENTS

Question. In your judgment, what has been the effect of increased operational tempo on Reserve component recruiting and retention?

Answer. I am not familiar with the effect increased operational tempo has had on Reserve component recruiting and retention, but if confirmed I will work to ensure the Department is able to recruit and retain an effective Reserve force.

Question. In your view, do the Reserve components serve as an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or both? In light of your answer, should the Reserve components be supported by increased training, improved equipment, and higher levels of overall resourcing for readiness?

Answer. In my view, the Reserve components are both essential to the operational force and provide strategic depth for the Nation. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Reserve components receive the training, equipment, and resources needed to be ready to meet immediate requirements while preparing for future challenges.

Question. In your view, what actions can be taken to improve permeability between the Active and Reserve components?

Answer. Offering a seamless way for individuals to move between the Active and Reserve components can enhance the recruitment and retention of highly skilled personnel. If confirmed, I will review the current policies governing this process and collaborate with the Senate Armed Services Committee to improve transitions between the two components.

Question. In your view, are the current requirements for becoming a Joint Qualified Officer appropriate for Reserve component officers? If not, how should requirements be revised to better meet the needs of Reserve component officers?

Answer. I am not that familiar with this process overall. However, it is my understanding that since most Reserve component officers perform duty periodically they have found the experienced-based joint duty assignment path more practical for fulfilling joint credit requirements.

Question. In your view, is the current professional military education system appropriate for the Reserve components? If not, what changes would you recommend?

Answer. Professional military education plays a critical role in cultivating our leaders. If confirmed, I will review the state of the professional military education

system for the Reserve components to ensure there are processes that allow for the continuous improvement of our people and the education system itself.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE (RON)

Question. If confirmed, what quality of life and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs would you consider to be a priority?

Answer. I am a firm believer, from first hand knowledge as a business owner, that childcare is a critical and increasingly important benefit. With that, I believe that emergency or backup care for military families is also needed. Beyond that direct knowledge, I will rely heavily on the voices of military families concerning the prioritization of their needs, as their willingness to continue to serve directly impacts that overall readiness of our force.

Question. What metric would you apply in determining which MWR and quality of life programs should be sustained or enriched and which should be eliminated or reduced in scope as ineffective or outmoded?

Answer. As I have previously mentioned, I believe a review of current benefits, including quality of life and MWR benefits, is warranted. That review should be heavily influenced by the voices of our military families, Active and Reserve. Additionally, while many MWR programs are self or almost self-sustaining, we are still stewards of the resources. I believe it's imperative to consider the sustainability of each program, while ensuring it is a value add to the overall compensation package for our servicemembers and families.

MILITARY FAMILY READINESS AND SUPPORT (RON)

Question. What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for servicemembers and their families?

Answer. I believe the most important family readiness issue for servicemembers and families is access to quality, affordable childcare.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the experts in my office, along with the Services, to conduct an ongoing review of accessibility and affordability to high-quality childcare. It's imperative the Department consider innovative ways to expand access such as implementing emergency backup care, much like leading private industry does.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY, DOD SCHOOLS, AND DEPENDENT EDUCATION (DODEA)

Question. What is your assessment of the overall quality of DOD schools?

Answer. In my view, the overall quality of DOD schools is extremely high. According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress, DODEA runs the best school system in the Nation. I will continue to support excellence in our schools for military families.

Question. In your view, are DODEA's administrative overhead costs, meaning its funding and employment above the school level, comparable to those found in high-quality public-school districts in the United States?

Answer. From my time as DASD for Military Community and Family Policy, I learned that DODEA operates in a manner similar to that of both a State Education Agency and a Local Education Agency and saw the start of its "Restructuring for Student Achievement" which was intended to focus more resources at the region and school level. If confirmed, I will look at their progress and ensure we are continuing to provide students with the best education possible, while remaining good stewards of the public resources made available to them.

Question. Should the eligibility requirements for military dependents to attend DOD schools be modified in any way, in your opinion? If so, what modifications would you propose, if confirmed?

Answer. I understand that DODEA recently updated its eligibility policy for the first time in over 10 years. I look forward to reviewing the policy and learning about the law that the policy implements.

Question. What lasting impacts, if any, do you believe the COVID-19 pandemic will have on the way DOD schools are run and how DOD dependents who attend those schools learn?

Answer. I understand DODEA operated very effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic and never shut-down their schools after the pandemic hit. I strongly support the continued inclusion of adaptive curriculum and technology to reinforce and

improve educational continuity and to provide individualized instruction to meet students' learning needs with what they need no matter where they are located.

Question. Do you believe that DODEA should further expand its capabilities to deliver online education in the future?

Answer. It is my understanding that DODEA is currently conducting a pilot program pursuant to section 589D of the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act that expands access to its virtual school to a larger student population. If confirmed, I will learn more about the pilot program and work with DODEA to direct resources and education tools to reach its students whether in the classroom or in a remote setting.

Question. In your view, can these programs be improved, and if so, what would you recommend?

Answer. I am aware that DODEA is currently operating a pilot program to expand its ability to provide online education to military dependents around the world. If confirmed, I look forward to learning about the pilot program and how it helps our military-connected students.

Question. What is your assessment of the preparedness of DOD schools to respond and react appropriately to active shooter emergencies?

Answer. Sadly, all schools must remain prepared for active shooter situations, to include DODEA schools that operate on installations. Maintaining a key awareness of emergency procedures and conducting regular training and drills are vital to success. If confirmed, I will continue to support all programs intended to ensure student safety.

Question. How do you assess current class sizes (student to teacher ratios) throughout DODEA schools, and do you recommend they be adjusted? If so, why?

Answer. I do not have access to the Department's data on this matter in order to make such an assessment at this time. However, I believe that we must continue to invest in our military families through our schools, which includes suitably staffing teaching requirements, and I look forward to supporting this goal, if confirmed.

Question. Are you confident that DODEA has in place the policies and processes to ensure that:

Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment by a student in locations under the jurisdiction of DODEA are properly investigated?

Answer. I am aware that DODEA, as with all executive branch agencies, is required to take reasonable steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination in its schools, programs, activities, and workplaces under Executive Order 13160, "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Race, Sex, Color, National Origin, Disability, Religion, Age, Sexual Orientation, and Status as a Parent in Federally Conducted Education and Training Programs." If confirmed, I will continue the work to ensure that the policies and procedures are in place to address allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment, and to hold offenders accountable.

Question. Information documenting such misconduct, if substantiated, is recorded in the permanent record of the offending student and that any school to which that student subsequently transfers is made aware of that information, as appropriate?

Answer. I believe information on substantiated misconduct should be included in a student's record and transferred to a new school, if or when that occurs. If confirmed, I will review DODEA's process and take appropriate action as/if necessary.

Question. If confirmed, what actions would you direct to ensure that DODEA takes all appropriate actions to hold its teachers, other employees, and students accountable for acts of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and unlawful discrimination?

Answer. The elimination of all types of harassment, assault, and discrimination is a perpetual goal that we must strive to achieve in every corner of the Department, including DODEA schools. If confirmed, I will review the training materials and resources that DODEA provides to teachers, staff, and students to guarantee the proper utilization of existing systems, and to ensure that offenders are held responsible when any allegation is substantiated.

Question. In your view, should the quality and availability of local public education factor into Department and military service basing decisions?

Answer. Yes. Quality and availability of local public education are absolutely essential to military family readiness. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to understand how this should factor into basing decisions.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR MILITARY FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (RON)

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure that servicemembers with special needs family members relocate to new duty stations where services are available to address the special needs of members of that family?

Answer. The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) provides critical support to over 100,000 Active Duty military families. Ensuring servicemembers with special needs family members have access to the appropriate resources is critical to maintaining readiness. In order to do so effectively, the unique and specific needs of that family must be considered when new assignments are being determined. Not only does the Department, along with the individual Services, have the responsibility of ensuring necessary services are available at the new duty station, it must insure such assignments do not have a negative impact on the servicemembers career path. If confirmed, I will work with the experts in my office, along with the Services and other stakeholders, to include Congress, to conduct a thorough review of the program using all available data, studies and reviews to make the necessary improvements and provide the support and resources our families need. Providing a consistent, accessible, and reliable process for all servicemembers with special need family members, regardless of their branch of service, is critical and long overdue.

Question. If confirmed, what policies will you implement to assist these families in obtaining these services at their new duty station?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the Services as well as other stakeholders, to include Congress, to expeditiously conduct a thorough review of policies and procedures and implement needed changes. While I cannot address any new policies at this moment, I can attest to my unshaken commitment to our EFMP participating families.

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

Answer. If confirmed I will work with the experts in my department, the Services, as well as across P&R to develop and execute a comprehensive awareness campaign that not only makes servicemembers aware of the EFMP services available to them but would serve as a “one stop shop” for guidance and assistance.

MORALE, WELFARE, AND RECREATION

Question. If confirmed, what challenges do you foresee in sustaining MWR programs in the constrained fiscal environment of the Department?

Answer. I believe it is important to support all aspects of quality of life programs for our servicemembers and their families. If confirmed, I would continue to prioritize quality of life programs that promote the well-being and resilience of servicemembers and their families. Providing the greatest possible access to MWR programs supports and enhances military family readiness, and ultimately mission readiness.

COMMISSARY AND MILITARY EXCHANGE SYSTEMS

Question. What is your view of the need for modernization of business policies and practices in the commissary and exchange systems?

Answer. I am aware that the retail business environment has seen evolutionary changes over the last decade. It is my understanding that online ordering and delivery, especially since the pandemic, have been a paradigm shift for the commissary and exchange systems. If confirmed, I will ensure the commissaries and exchanges have the tools and resources to deliver the benefit most efficiently to our servicemembers and their families.

Question. What are the most promising avenues for change to achieve these modernization goals?

Answer. I believe that concentrating future efforts on a structured collaboration and cooperative efforts is the optimal way to gain additional savings, synergies, and efficiencies. If confirmed, I will work to improve the benefit and provide savings, as a tool to improve recruiting and retention of course, and also to deliver nutritious options to servicemembers and families. I believe every dollar invested in the commissaries has a direct benefit to the overall readiness of the Force.

Question. What should the Department do to make the commissary system more self-sustaining?

Answer. It is my understanding that the commissaries, in-line with the Secretary of Defense's Taking Care of Military and Family Members memo, will maintain at least a 25 percent savings on grocery purchases. If confirmed, I will evaluate the savings and efficiencies created as a result of the memo and will work to sustain the required savings. Sometimes the question is asked: “is the commissary a business, or a benefit?” The answer seems clear—it is a benefit that is best served when operated as an efficient business. We owe our Military families all the support we can give them while they serve our country; and we owe it to the tax payers to ensure our commissaries are run as efficiently as possible.

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

Answer. Although I do not know all of the details, I am aware that the Department has looked at this before—numerous times—and determined each time that merging the resale organizations does not provide an economic benefit and is not feasible. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the studies already done in this area and will consider any new information that merits another look.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE MATTERS

Question. How would you describe the current state of the Department's civilian workforce, including its morale and the Department's ability to successfully recruit and retain top talent?

Answer. I do not have sufficient details at this time to adequately comment on the civilian workforce's morale, or the Department's ability to successfully recruit and retain top talent. If confirmed, this will be one of my top priorities to ensure the civilian workforce is supported to achieve the Department's mission. I believe this should be a coordinated effort with other DOD leaders, and I will work closely with them to address workforce needs, as appropriate.

Question. In your judgment, what are the biggest challenges facing the DOD in effectively and efficiently managing its civilian workforce?

Answer. I do not have enough information at this time to thoroughly comment on the challenges facing the DOD in managing its civilian workforce; however, considering the Department's complex and technical mission, I expect that the competition for highly skilled talent and maintaining up-to-date skill sets for the existing workforce are major challenges. If confirmed, I will work closely with stakeholders across the Department to assess civilian workforce needs, and develop the plans and strategies necessary to ensure DOD is effectively and efficiently managing this critical workforce segment.

Question. What is your view of both the favorable and adverse effects that borrowed military manpower can have on participating military personnel and on the performance of civilian functions?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Department's Total Force policies are aimed at providing local commanders and managers a maximum amount of flexibility within the law. Additionally, these policies are aimed at ensuring military personnel execute military essential functions in order to maximize the operational capability of the Department.

Question. Would there be any value to the Department, in your view, in eliminating the moratorium on the use of A-76 public/private competitions that has been in effect since 2009?

Answer. It is my understanding that if the moratorium were lifted, the Department could find value in exploring areas where there has been significant commercial change and development since 2009. However, it is my understanding that the Department is not currently postured to take advantage of the lifting of the moratorium.

Question. The Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act required the Department of Defense to implement a probationary period of at least 2 years for new civilian employees. How does this requirement benefit the Department, in your view?

Answer. I have not been involved with the Department's implementation of the probationary period provision. If confirmed, I will review probationary policies to assess their effectiveness toward meeting DOD civilian workforce objectives.

Question. In your view, what role should the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower & Reserve Affairs play in establishing the "return to work" policies for DOD civilians who have been operating in a "telework" environment for lengthy periods of time due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer. I believe the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower & Reserve Affairs should play a major role in the deliberate development of the appropriate "return to work" and "telework" policies for the Department, with input from other DOD leaders and employees, as appropriate. I believe such efforts must consider lessons learned from the pandemic as well as workplace options necessary to balance support for employees while achieving mission results.

Question. In your view, what challenges will this "return to work" effort engender and how would you address each of these challenges, if confirmed?

Answer. As for many organizations, I believe the "return to work" effort will be to ensure the Department can be an employer of choice while continuing to achieve

its mission with excellence. If confirmed, I will conduct the necessary assessment to address this and other challenges, and develop strategies to address each one.

CYBER WORKFORCE

Question. What is your view of the appropriate mix between the uniformed cyber workforce and civilian employees?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Department is committed to improving Total Force Management to ensure that compelling non-military needs are met with the most cost-effective mix of civilian employees and contract services. I believe that there is no “one size fits all” workforce. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department’s approach to defining the “right” workforce mix (to include the cyber community) depends on the Department’s current missions and goals. Effective Total Force Management should give the Military Services (and their subordinate organizations) the flexibility to determine how best to meet the missions that are being asked of them.

Question. In your view, how effective is the Cyber Excepted Service Workforce authority under section 1599f of title 10, United States Code, in meeting the requirements for a highly qualified and competent cyber workforce?

Answer. I do not have enough information to comment on the effectiveness of the Cyber Excepted Service. I understand that the DOD Chief Information Officer (CIO) has responsibility for overseeing its implementation, and if confirmed, I will work with that official to ensure the Department is meeting requirements for a highly qualified and competent cyber workforce.

Question. What actions would you take, if confirmed, to mitigate any gaps between cyber workforce capacity and capability?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with officials in the office of the DOD CIO to mitigate any cyber workforce capacity and capability gaps. I believe this would involve assessing the skills of the existing workforce, identifying future positions and skills requirements, and developing strategies to address capability gaps, if any.

TECHNICAL WORKFORCE (RON)

Question. In your view, what are the pros and cons of having Active Duty military personnel (as compared to civilian employees) trained and working as scientists, engineers, software coders, and in other technical positions across the DOD research, development, and acquisition enterprise?

Answer. Wide-ranging qualifications and expertise among Active Duty military personnel is an asset to the capability of the fighting force. Such diversity of skills adds to the Department’s overall strength and ability to be flexible in an ever changing world. However, maintaining the lethality and readiness of the Department’s fighting forces must remain the highest priority.

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the directors of DOD science and technology reinvention labs (STRs) have the civilian workforce management tools they need to shape their science, technology, and engineering workforces?

Answer. I recognize that there are unique needs in supporting a highly qualified workforce with these desired talents. We must be flexible to accommodate these needs.

If confirmed, I will work with the experts in my office along with the Military Departments and other stakeholders, to include Congress, to ensure adequate resources are available and the necessary policy infrastructure is maintained to recruit, develop and retain this important workforce.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE (RON)

Question. Given that competent and caring leadership is one of the most significant factors in shaping a high-performing DOD civilian workforce, if confirmed, what factors and characteristics would be most important to you in selecting candidates for appointment to the Senior Executive Service?

Answer. If confirmed, ensuring the selection of Senior Executive Service candidates who demonstrate the ability to comprehend and manage complex issues and organizations will be critical. Of equal importance is one’s ability to lead with empathy, respect and the willingness to invest in growing the skills and abilities of all team members to ensure the Department is committed to growing and nurturing the next generation of leadership.

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure that SES under your authority are held accountable for both organizational performance and the rigorous performance management of their subordinate employees?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that members of the SES under my authority have clearly defined and measurable organizational, management and performance standards for themselves and their workforce.

ACQUISITION WORKFORCE (RON)

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure the maximum use of AcqDemo personnel flexibilities provided by Congress to improve the quality of the Department of Defense's acquisition workforce?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues supporting the acquisition workforce to facilitate maximum use of AcqDemo personnel flexibilities.

Question. In your view, in what ways can DOD better train military personnel to be acquisition professionals?

Answer. In order to better train military personnel, to include acquisition professionals, the military must continue to innovate and grow training curriculum and technology training platforms to ensure DOD has the most lethal and ready force.

Question. In your view, what role should the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower & Reserve Affairs play in developing, executing, and overseeing such training?

Answer. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower & Reserve Affairs ensures civilian personnel and military personnel policy aligns with providing the highest level of administrative support.

Question. How can acquisition workforce management policies be modified to make leaders accountable for cost overruns on procurement contracts?

Answer. Acquisition workforce management policies can be tested and reviewed to look for additional ways to make leaders accountable for cost overruns on procurement contracts.

Question. In your judgment, what factors should program offices consider in determining which tasks are best accomplished by civilian employees, military personnel, or support contractors?

Answer. Commanders at all levels should consider unit readiness, complexity of task and continuity of work when determining which tasks are best accomplished by civilian employees, military personnel, or support contractors.

Question. Does the DOD have a metric for workload per acquisition employee in order to baseline the current needs, as well as to determine the adequacy of the size of the workforce (in comparison to projected workforce needs for future years)? If so, how does that compare to the current size of the acquisition workforce?

Answer. I believe the DOD puts measures in place to get metrics for workload. Each position duty description has qualification standards that can be rated against for performance. In addition, manpower provides studies to determine the required size of the workforce based on current and future mission sets. If confirmed, I can work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment to determine the current size of the workforce and ensure that the acquisition workforce is sized appropriately to be able to sustain its current and future missions.

STEM EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY DEPENDENTS (RON) SBS

Question. In your view, what role should the Military Departments play in supporting STEM educational opportunities for military children?

Answer. Many of the men and women of our Armed Forces are highly trained in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Some participate in the Office of the ASD(M&RA) program, called STARBASE, which supports STEM educational opportunities for civilian youth. This program may be a model for a new program which specifically supports military children.

Question. If confirmed, how would you work with the Department of Defense research and development organizations to increase STEM educational opportunities for children of military personnel?

Answer. The DOD STARBASE program, run out of the office of the ASD(M&RA), is a program where civilian children interact with military personnel to explore and observe STEM applications as they relate to our every day world. If confirmed, I will work with the experts in my office to explore how this program may be expanded to increase STEM educational opportunities for military children.

LABORATORY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND TEST RANGE STEM PERSONNEL (RON)

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure the maximum use of personnel flexibilities provided by Congress to improve the quality of the Department of Defense's STEM workforce?

Answer. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower & Reserve Affairs can ensure civilian personnel and military personnel policy aligns with pro-

viding the highest level of administrative support to ensure the maximum use of personnel flexibilities to improve the quality of the DODs STEM workforce.

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that such personnel flexibilities can be employed at the lowest appropriate level?

Answer. Centralized control and decentralized execution is a core tenant of the military's ability to operate in any environment. I will ensure that where feasible, flexibilities are employed at the lowest appropriate level through empowering my team and delegating.

STEM EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY DEPENDENTS

Question. In your view, what role should the Military Departments play in supporting STEM educational opportunities for military children?

Answer. To the greatest extent possible Military Departments should be supporting STARBASE, which introduces fifth grade students from low-income families to STEM.

Question. If confirmed, how would you work with the Department of Defense research and development organizations to increase STEM educational opportunities for children of military personnel?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with the Reserve Integration team to lead more efforts similar to STARBASE, as well as programs to support internships with industry partners, to ensure we are continuing to increase STEM educational opportunities.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT (RON) DJG

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

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

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

MENTAL HEALTH

1. Senator KAINE. Mr. Keohane, you noted during your testimony the importance of Military Family and Life Counselors (MFLC) as a key component of combatting the mental health crisis in addition to supporting suicide prevention efforts, however it has come to our attention that there is a shortage of 700 MFLCs. I've recently become aware of a bill aimed at addressing the shortage of MFLCs, particularly license portability across State lines, which already applies for Department of Defense (DOD) medical providers and Tricare contractors, but not for non-medical counselors. Additionally, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) also authorizes license portability for providers who work at their hospitals and clinics. This could be one common sense solution for addressing access to mental health care. Do you see any challenges or concerns with this proposal to help expand access to MFLCs?

Mr. KEOHANE. While I am not aware of a specific number associated with the shortage of MFLCs, I am aware that the Department has experienced critical behavioral health demand-supply challenges. I believe that solutions which strengthen the Department's flexibility and capacity to connect servicemembers and their families to non-medical counselors should be considered.

ACCESS TO CARE IN JAPAN

2. Senator KAINE. Mr. Keohane, we've received several reports of DOD civilians in Japan, particularly those working for DODEA, that are currently facing serious barriers to accessing healthcare. If confirmed, how would you work within DOD to address policies that fall under other assistant secretaries of defense (ASD) but that have significant impact on programs and policies under Manpower and Reserve Affairs' (M&RA) purview?

Mr. KEOHANE. Although I am not familiar with the details, it is my understanding that the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) has been fully engaged with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (P&R), and the ASD for Health Affairs, with respect to the civilian access to health care matter in Japan.

If confirmed, I will engage directly with my colleagues within the Office of the Under Secretary of Personnel and Readiness (P&R), as well as with other organizations outside of P&R, on all issues and policies that fall under other P&R ASDs and offices, or other organizations outside of P&R, but have significant impact on programs and policies under M&RA's purview.

NON-DEPLOYABLE ASSIGNMENT AND CARE

3. Senator KAINE. Mr. Keohane, as discussed during our office call, mental healthcare and suicide prevention are two of my top priorities. One contributing factor that I am considering is how the Services are addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, such as servicemembers on limited duty. For example, it came to my attention during visits to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center following the suicides of 4 sailors that Navy manning policy allows for a 60 percent increase in the assignment of personnel (30 percent for limited duty and 30 percent for pregnancy/post-partum) but does not address the additional resources needed to support a population that requires specialized time and attention. How do you plan to assess and address these factors should you be confirmed?

Mr. KEOHANE. If confirmed, I will work directly with my counterpart in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs to ensure that necessary action is taken to provide timely access to behavioral health resources needed to support vulnerable populations, such as servicemembers on limited duty.

COMMISSARIES

4. Senator KAINE. Mr. Keohane, I commend the administration for its support of commissaries. With the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) headquartered in Virginia, it not only provides well-paying jobs in one of the most economically dis-

tressed areas of Virginia, but it helps to address food insecurity among our servicemembers. If confirmed, what measures of effectiveness/measures of performance will you use to ensure that our commissaries are addressing food insecurity challenges?

Mr. KEOHANE. If confirmed, I will work with DeCA leadership to provide efficient and convenient delivery of a benefit that enhances quality of life and readiness for military servicemembers, retirees, and disabled veterans. I will also work with Department leadership to ensure DeCA remains a valuable resource for military personnel and their families, offering healthy food options at a significant cost savings (at least 25 percent). Additionally, I will encourage DeCA to continue education efforts focused on the value and savings generated by shopping the local commissary. Finally, I will keep a close watch on DeCA's customer satisfaction survey results to ensure they are maintaining the level of customer service our military personnel and their families deserve.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

MILITARY FAMILY LIFE COUNSELORS

5. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Keohane, I am sure you're well aware of the suicide problem within our military and DOD's recently released report on suicide prevention. Last year, Senator Lisa Murkowski and I introduced the Don Young Arctic Warrior Act to alleviate some of the hardships faced by our servicemembers in Alaska. Both the Arctic Warrior Act and the DOD's new study addressed servicemembers' access to counseling services. Right now, Military Family Life Counselors (MFLCs) provide confidential, non-medical counseling to servicemembers and their families but they are limited to doing so only in States where the provider is licensed. MFLCs are in high demand in Alaska so much so that they cannot meet demand. We can ensure more servicemembers and families have access counseling by allowing license reciprocity, which would allow a MFLC licensed in Montana to provide service to servicemembers and families in Alaska. If you are confirmed, will you work to ensure license reciprocity for MFLCs?

Mr. KEOHANE. I believe it is important to ensure servicemembers have access to non-medical counseling services, particularly in isolated locations like Alaska. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to explore ways to facilitate access to MFLCs.

RECRUITING VETERANS

6. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Keohane, the U.S. military's current recruiting crisis is well-documented, with the Army missing its recruiting goal by 25 percent last year and the other branches barely meeting theirs. DOD has cited health issues, criminal records, low ASVAB [Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery] scores, and a lack of interest in military service as some of the recruiting barriers Services are currently facing. While I agree that we must work to meet the manpower goals by bringing new recruits into the military, I believe we must also seek to re-engage veterans who have since left the service to bring them back. One program I would like to highlight is the Marine Corps Reserve's new Marine Innovation Unit, which has successfully recruited veterans with strong consulting, technology, venture capital, and startup backgrounds back to the service in a Reserve capacity to work on some of the Marine Corps' toughest problems. Do you think a focus on recruiting veterans is a complementary effort to other DOD-wide recruitment strategies?

Mr. KEOHANE. It is my understanding that the Services continue to explore several different approaches to help improve recruiting outcomes. It is also my understanding that veterans have always been a big component in the Department's recruiting efforts. I believe that a focus on veterans in DOD's recruiting efforts is a force multiplier and is complementary to ongoing recruiting efforts.

RECRUITING SHORTFALL RESPONSES

7. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Keohane, the Army deserves some credit for developing its Soldier Prep Course, which took recruits otherwise precluded from serving because of test scores and weight, addressing those shortcomings in a military environment, and ultimately producing several thousand recruits qualified to attend basic training. The Navy is taking a different approach by dropping its recruit quality standards to the lowest legal level. Of the 77 percent of youth unqualified for military service, 11 percent are only overweight; 1 percent have an aptitude deficiency. It seems the Army's methodology is better aligned to moving people from dis-

qualified for service to eligible without lowering the standard. What are your impressions of Service efforts to address recruiting shortfalls?

Mr. KEOHANE. I believe the Services have pulled out all the stops and are laser focused on ensuring there are sufficient people in the force to meet the missions required under the National Defense Strategy. I am aware that the Services have worked together, and independently, to explore how best to improve recruiting outcomes. It is my understanding that, like the Army did, the Navy plans to implement a "Sailor Preparatory Course" that is rooted in best practices by the Army and still ensures those individuals enlisted are qualified for Service in their chosen ratings.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ERIC SCHMITT

PERSONNEL APPOINTMENT ADJUDICATION CRITERIA

8. Senator SCHMITT. Mr. Keohane, in reviewing your advance policy question (APQ) responses, one answer struck me. The Committee asked, "Do you believe diversity goals should be prioritized over merit and performance when considering who should be appointed to senior military and civilian positions?" Your response contains 69 words, yet does not clearly articulate your position. Please answer the question with a simple "yes" or "no." Do you believe diversity should be prioritized over merit and performance when considering senior military and civilian appointments?

Mr. KEOHANE. No. I believe merit and performance are primary. However, I do believe diversity efforts are very important; diversity in all forms, including at the leadership level, will help the Department achieve the best and brightest military and civilian workforce to accomplish its critical mission.

[The nomination reference of Mr. Ronald T. Keohane follows:]

NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT

PN7

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
January 3, 2023.

Ordered, That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

Ronald T. Keohane, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice James N. Stewart.

_____, 2023.
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Reed _____
(Signature)

with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed.

☐ The nominee has agreed to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

[The biographical sketch of Mr. Ronald T. Keohane, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

Bio
Ronald T. Keohane

Education:

- Canisius College
 - 1990-1992
 - BS, Political Science
- D' Youville College
 - 1984-1987

Employment Record:

- Clinton for President
 - Little Rock Arkansas
 - Position: Advance
 - Date of employment: August 1992 – November 1992
- Clinton Gore Inaugural Committee
 - Washington DC
 - Position: Director, Other Events
 - Date of employment: December 1992 – February 1993
- Department of Defense
 - The Pentagon
 - Position: Schedule C appointment
 - Date of employment: February 1993 – September 1996
- Department of Commerce
 - Washington, DC
 - Position: Schedule C appointment
 - Date of employment: September 1996 – January 2001
- Long and Foster Real Estate
 - Alexandria, VA
 - Position: Realtor
 - Date of employment: 2002-2012
- Arrowpoint Corporation
 - Alexandria, VA
 - Position: Contractor
 - Date of employment: 2002-2010
- Mark Burnett Productions
 - Los Angeles, CA
 - Position: Locations Manager
 - Date of Employment: May 2006 – October 2006

- Armed Forces Services Corporation
 - Arlington, VA
 - Position: Director
 - Date of employment: 2010-2016
- Keller Williams Real Estate
 - Alexandria, VA
 - Position: Realtor
 - Date of employment: 2012-2012
- Arlington Premier Realty
 - Arlington, VA
 - Position: Realtor
 - Date of employment: 2012-2016, 2019-Present
- Department of Defense
 - The Pentagon
 - Position: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Military Community and Family Policy
 - Date of employment: 2016-2017
- Century 21 Redwood Realty
 - Arlington, VA
 - Position: Realtor
 - Date of employment: 2016-2019
- Self Employed
 - Arlington, VA
 - Position: Consultant
 - Date of employment: 2017-2019
- Blue Rose Consulting Group
 - Washington, DC
 - Position: Managing Director
 - Date of employment: 2019-2021
- Biden for President
 - Philadelphia, PA
 - Position: Advance Staff
 - Date of employment: 2019-2021
- Blue Rose Consulting Group
 - Washington, DC
 - Position: Managing Partner
 - Date of employment: 2021-Present
- Biden-Harris Administration
 - Washington, DC
 - Position: Advance Associate
 - Date of employment: 2021-Present

Honors and Awards:

- The Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service

[The Committee on Armed Services requires all individuals nominated from civilian life by the President to positions requiring the advice and consent of the Senate to complete a form that details the biographical, financial, and other information of the nominee.

The form executed by Mr. Ronald T. Keohane in connection with his nomination follows:]

118th CONGRESS, 2023 -- 2024
UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
ROOM SR228 WASHINGTON, D.C.
205106050 (202) 2243871

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOMINEE: Answer all questions and provide all requested information. If more space is needed, attach an additional sheet of paper to the Questionnaire and cite the part of the Questionnaire and the question number (e.g., A-9, B-4) to which the continuation of your answer applies. Unless otherwise required, an answer of "yes", "no", or "not applicable" is appropriate.

QUESTIONNAIRE, PART A

NOTE: Information furnished in this part of the Questionnaire will be made available in Committee offices for public inspection prior to the hearing, if any, and will be entered in the hearing record, also available to the public.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION TO BE MADE PUBLIC

1. **Name (Include any former names you have used):** Ronald T. Keohane
 - a. **Position to which nominated:** Assistant Secretary of Defense, Manpower and Reserve Affairs
2. **Date of nomination:** January 03, 2023
3. **Education (List names of secondary and higher education institution attended, type of school [vocational, technical, trade school, college, university, military college, correspondence, distance, extension, and online], dates attended, degree received, and date degree granted):**

Kenmore West Senior High School
33 Highland Parkway, Buffalo, NY 14223
Attended: 1980-1984
Degree: HS Diploma

D'Youville College
320 Porter Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14201

Attended: 1984-1987
Degree: None (transferred credits)

Canisius College
2001 Main Street. Buffalo, NY 14208-1517
Attended: 1990-1992
Degree: BS, Political Science

4. Employment record (List all jobs held since college, or in the last 10 years, whichever is less, including the title or description of the job, name of employer, location of work, and dates of employment. If the employment activity was military duty, show each change of military duty station as a separate period of employment):

Armed Forces Services Corporation
2800 S. Shirlington Road,
Arlington, VA 22206
Title: Director
Date of employment: 2010-2016

Department of Defense
4000 Defense Pentagon, Room 5A726
Washington, DC 20301-4000
Title: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense,
Military Community and Family Policy
Date of employment: 2016-2017

Self-Employed
2606 S. Kenmore CT,
Arlington, VA 22206
Title: Consultant
Date of employment: 2017-2019

Blue Rose Consulting Group, Inc.
2200 Pennsylvania Avenue, 4th Floor East
Washington, DC 20037
Title: Managing Director/Managing Partner
Date of employment: 2019- Present

5. **Government experience (List any advisory, consultative, honorary, and other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed in response to question 5, above):**

None.

6. **Business relationships (List all positions currently held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, firm, partnership, or other business enterprise, and of any educational or other institution):**

Blue Rose Consulting Group, Inc
Managing Partner

Arlington Premier Realty
Realtor

7. **Memberships (List all memberships and offices that you currently hold, as well as any memberships and offices you have previously held in professional, fraternal, scholarly, civic, business, charitable and other organizations):**

Crossroads Adaptive Athletic Alliance
Dates: 2017-2019
Nature of Membership: Volunteer.
Advised on adaptive sports programs available to service members within the DoD.

National Security Dems for Biden
Dates: 2020
Nature of Membership: Support the Biden-Harris policy goals. Only attended calls. Did not write/publish any materials or give any interviews/speeches.

Vintage East Condominium Association
Miami FL 33139
Dates: May 2012 – July 2022
Nature of Membership: Member of HOA
Board at residential property I owned but rented out.

Shirlington Crest Homeowners Association
Arlington, VA 22206
Dates: August 2020 – September 2022
Nature of Membership: Member of HOA
Board for my residence.

8. Political affiliations and activities:

- a. If you have ever been a candidate for, or have been elected or appointed to a political office, list the name of the office(s); whether you were a candidate/elected/appointed; the year(s) during which you were a candidate, or in which the election was held or the appointment was made; and the term of office (if applicable):

Schedule C appointment
Clinton/Gore Administration
1993-2001

Non-Career SEC appointment
Obama/Biden Administration
2016-2017

- b. List all memberships and offices held in, and services rendered to, all political parties or election committees during the last 5 years: None.

- c. Itemize all individual political contributions of \$100 or more to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity during the past 5 years. List each individual contribution (not the total amount contributed to the person or entity) over this period: None.

9. Honors and awards (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognition received for outstanding service or achievements): Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service.

10. Published writings (List the titles, publishers, and dates of books, articles, reports, or other published materials that you have written or for which you served as co-author or editor, including articles and blogs published on the internet): None.

11. Speeches (Provide the Committee with two copies of any formal speeches you have delivered during the last 5 years—of which you have copies—in which you addressed matters relevant to the position to which you have been nominated). None.

COMMITMENTS IN FURTHERANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

NOTE: In order to exercise their legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress timely receive testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch. A simple “yes” or “no” response is appropriate.

13. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress? Yes.
14. Do you agree, 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 timely? Yes.
15. Do you agree, 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? Yes.
16. Do you agree, 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? Yes.
17. Do you agree, 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? Yes.

18. Do you agree, 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? Yes.
19. Do you agree, 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? Yes.

[The nominee responded to Parts B-F of the committee questionnaire. The text of the questionnaire is set forth in the Appendix to this volume. The nominee's answers to Parts B-F are contained in the committee's executive files.]

SIGNATURE AND DATE

I hereby state that I have read and signed Parts A and B of the foregoing Senate Armed Services Committee Questionnaire, and that the information provided therein and in any document appended thereto, is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, current, accurate, and complete.

This 19th day of January, 2023



[The nomination of Mr. Ronald T. Keohane was reported to the Senate by Chairman Reed on February 8, 2024, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on March 6, 2024.]

[Prepared questions submitted to Honorable Nickolas H. Guertin by Chairman Reed prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

DUTIES

Question. Section 8016 of Title 10, United States Code, states the Assistant Secretaries of the Navy shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of the Navy may prescribe and that the principal duty of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASN (RDA)) shall be the overall supervision of research, development, acquisition, and sustainment (including maintenance) matters of the Department of the Navy.

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the ASN(RDA)?

Answer. Under 10 U.S.C.8016, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASN (RDA)) is responsible for the overall supervision of research, development, acquisition, and sustainment (including maintenance) matters of the Department of the Navy (DON). ASN (RDA) serves as the Service Acquisition Executive for the DON with the authority, responsibility, and accountability for all acquisition functions and programs within the Department, and for enforcement of Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD (A&S)) procedures. As such, ASN (RDA) represents the Department of the Navy to USD (A&S) and to Congress on all matters relating to acquisition policy and programs, establishes policies and procedures, and manages the Navy's research, development, acquisition, and sustainment activities in accordance with governing statutes, acquisition regulations, Department of Defense policies and instructions, and Department of the Navy policies and instructions.

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

Answer. In 2018, Congress wisely added duties related to sustainment and maintenance of Naval weapon systems. If confirmed, I look forward to examining how that transition is progressing and to reviewing the other statutes and regulations, then recommend changes (if any) to the Department that may warrant consideration.

Question. If confirmed, what additional duties, if any, do you expect will be prescribed for you?

Answer. If confirmed, I expect the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy to assign me duties and functions commensurate with the ASN (RDA) position, and others they deem appropriate.

Question. Do you believe that there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the ASN(RDA)?

Answer. I believe that the Naval acquisition community is well positioned to transform the way technology is quickly transitioned from idea to prototype to scalable quality products for the fleet and force. As a part of that, if confirmed, I intend on continuing to press the government/industry/academia team to innovate to more quickly deliver affordable and effective capability.

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

Question. In your view, what are the major challenges that you would confront, if confirmed?

Answer. The most pressing issue appears to be in the public and private shipyards to quickly and affordably build and maintain the fleet. Also, if confirmed, I also intend on examining the foundations of how designs are instantiated to position the Naval acquisition community to respond to maximize the time platforms are able to be deployed, to quickly integrate changes in capability needs, or to flexibly adapt game-changing technologies in platforms, weapons, sensors, combat management systems across all operational domains.

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

Answer. I intend, if confirmed, to invigorate a sense of urgency throughout the acquisition community and to empower all elements of the team to think and act differently to bring about the transformation that is needed to outpace our pacing challenges to overcome shortfalls in warfighting performance and, empowered by appropriate authorities from Congress—to deliver game changing capability.

Question. If confirmed, what management actions and timelines would you establish to address these problems?

Answer. The first step in any leadership position like this is to take stock of the team and listen to what they think their problems are. I have ideas too that, if confirmed, I will use to evaluate what they have to say, but their inputs must be taken in and valued in order to gain trust and engender a spirit of collaboration. Coupled with this will be to ensure I have deep and honest relationships with the Commandant, the CNO and most importantly, the Secretary of the Navy on which to build openness, honesty and trust.

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

Answer. As you might surmise from my past leadership initiatives and research, I intend, if confirmed, to take a hard look at the way the Navy and Marine Corps thinks and acts on establishing open business and technical architectures with industry, government labs and academic researchers. The Naval acquisition team must nurture fruitful relationships while preserving the opportunity for bringing in new ideas and designs throughout the portfolio. This balancing act is something that the Naval team has had some success in, but appears not to have fully embraced across all programs. Also, a clear message to industry needs to be sent that the Naval acquisition environment is business-friendly, while also being a demanding customer that will act on the best interest of the American Taxpayer as a primary responsibility. As taxpayers themselves, they should expect nothing less.

RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS

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

Answer. If confirmed, it is my intention to be open and honest with Congress first and foremost. If you ask me to appear before you, I will make haste to do so. If you want someone from the Naval acquisition team to come brief you, I will see to it that you get them. If there is information that you want to see from the team, I will see to it that you get it, consistent with executive branch obligations. If there are delays in getting you any briefings or information, or if there is new data that substantially impacts prior discussions, I will be forthright about it and be as responsive as possible. Last, I will make sure that for any testimony given that there are no acts of retaliation against members of the Naval acquisition team and that they will be protected.

BUDGET

Question. If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of the Navy's funding for the programs under your purview?

Answer. I would measure the adequacy of the Department's budget to support the Navy and Marine Corps team based on how it supports the National Strategic Objectives set forth by the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

Fundamental to this would be an assessment on how the budget provides the weapons, systems, platforms, and readiness enablers to the men and women in the Navy and Marine Corps to successfully carry out the mission this Nation asks them to execute. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) to ensure our investment accounts provide affordable and effective capabilities to meet Combatant Commander mission.

ACQUISITION

Question. If confirmed, what would be your plan for improving Navy acquisition activities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will assess the operations of the Department of the Navy research, development, and acquisition enterprise in order to make recommendations for improving acquisition activities. I will make recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy as necessary.

Question. What do you perceive to be the recent successes and shortfalls in Navy acquisition activities?

Answer. There are two aspects to answering this question. To achieve more reliable long-term successes, the Navy and Marine Corps is more readily embracing the inherent need to improve capability over time as a fundamental design requirement. My understanding is that the DDG(X) design will have more capacity to incorporate capability than the current set of surface combatants. However, acquisition enterprises have often underestimated the maturity and readiness of technologies to begin production. This can lead to over committing to concurrent development of the required technologies while simultaneously entering production. History is clear that over-reliance on concurrent development has led to significant cost increase and schedule delays. These include DDG-1000, CVN-78, and the Littoral Combat Ship programs. I believe the Navy is reversing this trend by adopting other proved design practices such as; early prototyping, incorporation of land-based test sites, and ensuring designs are mature prior to production. If confirmed, I would look to assess the effectiveness of these actions, and where needed, apply leadership to reduce risk to ensure programs meet cost and schedule objectives.

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

Answer. In my view, it is critical to balance resources, requirements, and acquisition management processes to ensure the timely delivery of capability to the warfighter. If confirmed, I will work with the CNO, CMC, and the Naval acquisition team to identify potential improvements in these processes and communicate those recommendations to OSD and the Joint Requirements Oversight Council. When appropriate, I will ensure that recommended changes are coordinated for implementation in Department of the Navy policy.

Question. How can the Department of Defense and the Navy better access and integrate commercial and military technology to remain ahead of potential adversaries?

Answer. In my view, the key to accessing and integrating commercial and military technology is to both embrace collaboration and innovation and to foster a culture of integration of new capability as a life cycle strategy in order to prioritize speed and agility in the procurement process. By doing so, the Department of Defense and the DON will be able to catch up (where necessary) or remain ahead of potential adversaries to maintain our warfighting edge. If confirmed, I will examine options such as: fostering partnerships with commercial technology companies to leverage their expertise and access cutting-edge technologies; investing in research and development initiatives to create new technologies and aggressively apply open architectures to adapt new capabilities to meet warfighter needs. In doing so, if confirmed, we can further develop a culture of innovation by encouraging experimentation, risk-taking, and creative thinking.

Question. What roles do you see for developmental planning, prototyping, and experimentation in the fielding of future Navy capabilities?

Answer. My goal would be to establish the technical and business models in our acquisition architectures to flexibly and fluidly bring in needed capabilities and execute programs through the powers of the available acquisition pathways. Still there will be instances that require urgency of action that can only be achieved using the more accelerated acquisition authorities provided by Congress. If confirmed, I will balance the ability to mainstream new functionality and also take advantage of rapid acquisition to achieve a best-match on delivering against the urgency of

warfighting needs. I will work to foster a strong partnership with the CNO and CMC and work together to determine the best process to address those mechanisms.

Question. How would you propose better integrating successful outcomes from experimentation exercises like Task Force 59 and SCOUT into acquisition programs?

Answer. Experimentation is a foundational learning tool used across the full spectrum of technology maturity and CONOPS refinement. Experimentation exercises like Task Force 59 and SCOUT bring together discovery-based exploration of emerging technologies and rigorous evaluation of specific technology. If confirmed, I am fully committed to evaluating the lessons learned from these efforts and working with our industrial base partners to productionize, integrate and scale successful outcomes into acquisition programs.

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

Answer. In 2018, Congress expanded the SAE responsibilities to include maintenance and sustainment. If confirmed, I will be using this lens to enable the development teams to establish design requirements about these life cycle aspects much earlier in the life cycle. In addition, to improve future readiness and control sustainment costs, the Department needs to trace acquisition activities and investments to the outcomes that matter in sustainment. If confirmed, I will work to optimize measurable sustainment outcomes with proven metrics such as maintenance turn-around-time and supply effectiveness at the lowest possible life cycle cost. I will strengthen our governance of sustainment activities and investments throughout the lifecycle through rigorous, focused early design considerations, Independent Logistics Assessments, and Sustainment Reviews.

COST AND SCHEDULE ESTIMATES

Question. The Government Accountability Office has reported that the Navy's use of unrealistically optimistic cost and schedule estimates is a major contributor to cost growth and program failure.

What institutional factors do you perceive to contribute to the Navy's use of unrealistically optimistic cost and schedule estimates?

Answer. Based on my experience, I understand that immature design, immature technology development, immature planning, or industrial base readiness can contribute to inaccurate cost and schedule estimates. I believe that prior to committing the Nations resources to an acquisition decision, we must ensure we have characterized the development risk across every facet of the program and have realistic maturation efforts in place to ensure we have stable and mature designs. This includes, where appropriate, a design requirement for incorporating new technologies as a part of a life cycle strategy. We must start to look at our platforms and systems as landing pads for evolving performance and hosts for improving technologies when they are robust and ready to support the program. This includes more aggressive use of modeling the use of well-understood open systems architectures to smooth integration issues, and to make sure industry has both the capability and capacity to produce the capability, with quality and at scale. It is my understanding that the DON has a robust and multi-layered cost estimate process, which includes estimates from program offices, independent estimators from the Systems Commands, and review at the Echelon 1 level, along with active engagement and participation with the Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation for the Department's largest and high-interest programs. If confirmed, you have my commitment to ensure we will do due diligence prior to making acquisition recommendations and that we continue to strengthen Navy/Marine Corp's robust cost estimating procedures.

Question. If confirmed, how would you propose to counter or mitigate these factors leading to unrealistic estimates?

Answer. It is my understanding the Navy has implemented best practices in major acquisition programs to ensure realistic estimates. This includes the use of mature designs, prototyping new technologies at land-based test sites where appropriate, and developing a collaborative environment with industry early in the design process to ensure producibility of a program. If confirmed, I would assess the effectiveness of these efforts and make necessary adjustments to ensure programs meet established cost and schedule benchmarks.

Question. What steps do you believe the Navy can and should take to ensure that cost and schedule estimates are based on adequate empirical evidence, and that such estimates provide a sound basis for decisionmaking on Navy programs?

Answer. The formulation of cost estimates for major programs should be based on sound data and analysis. Underlying assumptions, approaches, risk, and data supporting the independent component cost estimate and the program office estimate is compared through the Cost Review Board process to understand the differences

in order to better inform the program budget and acquisition strategies to mitigate risk. If confirmed, you have my commitment to provide a fresh look at Navy processes to ensure that we are taking full advantage of evolving capability delivery methods, modern development practices and that our assumptions, estimates, and execution of programs are based on sound data and analysis.

SOFTWARE ACTIVITIES AND ACQUISITION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Question. What is your understanding of the role of the ASN (RDA) with respect to IT acquisition and software activities of the Department of the Navy?

Answer. As the Acquisition Executive for the Navy, I understand that ASN (RDA) is responsible for all IT and software acquisitions for the Department of the Navy. If confirmed, I would work very closely with the Department's Chief Information Officer, Principal Cyber Advisor, and Service Chiefs to procure affordable, effective, and cyber-survivable systems that meet mission requirements.

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

Answer. The United States' IT industrial base is the preeminent world leader in IT systems and software innovation. The Department of the Navy's IT and software systems must embrace these state-of-the-practice methods to be agile and adaptable in order to respond to a rapidly changing environment. A critical enabler in remaining agile and adaptable will be to harness commercial systems, software applications and robust development methods, where applicable. I am particularly supportive of using the evolving acquisition tools, such as the software and business acquisition pathways, to ensure we are using the best-fit methods for acquiring this kind of technology. If confirmed, I will look at things like these best practices for working with our laboratories, academia, industry and other government agencies to drive a culture that values this mindset.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Navy's Chief Information Officer and the Principal Cyber Adviser to develop a testing framework that embraces iterative capability improvement, manages risk based on commercial accreditation, to include cyber-safe certification, as well as other industry and government best practices. The DON's Zero Trust initiative is a fundamental paradigm change to improve cyber survivability while empowering appropriate data sharing across DON's networks. This trust-but-verify strategy will enable the Department to have better control and visibility, while increasing safety and decreasing security risk. Additionally, if confirmed, I will reach across the Military Services to ensure alignment, sharing of information and capturing of lessons learned to benefit all the Military Services.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's Chief Information Officer and Service Requirements Officers to ensure that the Department is fielding modern enterprise IT systems. One of the key areas that I would look to better understand is how to transition unique or "stove-piped" systems to an enterprise solution that transforms the organization into a data informed culture, enabled by IT that evolves as the Naval force evolves.

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

Answer. If confirmed as the Navy's Acquisition Executive, I will work with the Department's Chief Information Officer and Service Requirements Officers to identify priority IT and software needs and then work to deliver and scale those priorities in a cost effective and timely manner.

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

Answer. It is my understanding that Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) is the provider of DoD enterprise services and tools which are available to all the Services to leverage. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Naval team to review these tools and services to ensure they are cost effective and operationally responsive to the DON and to determine if provided services are meeting mission requirements.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's Chief Information Officer to assess the DON's current approach to business system development and ensure business process reengineering is accomplished as a critical initial step in business system development.

Question. If confirmed, how would you coordinate the development or procurement of cloud computing services within the Navy with other Department of Defense and Federal Government cloud computing initiatives?

Answer. I believe that cloud computing is an incredibly useful approach to transforming how the DON delivers, protects, and manages access to data and applications across all mission areas—business, warfighting, and intelligence. However, in the bandwidth-limited environments at sea or in the field, we often have to basically take a cloud with us, but even so, cloud computing should be exhaustively examined as a first-option method fulfill our requirements. If confirmed, I will work with Department leaders to assess the DON's current policies and processes for development, procurement, and delivery of cloud services to ensure that they are consistent with industry best practices and support the evolving needs of the warfighter. I will also assess DoD's recently awarded Joint Warfighting Cloud Capability (JWCC) multi-vendor contract to determine the most appropriate and effective way to leverage the JWCC to meet the Department of the Navy's enterprise cloud requirements.

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

Answer. Cloud computing provides significant benefits compared to traditionally acquired business systems. These include increased productivity, collaboration, portability, upgradability, connectivity, and security. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Navy's acquisition and research leaders to understand areas where cloud computing can improve business processes across the entire Research, Development, and Acquisition enterprise.

Question. Where do you believe the best opportunities for collaboration and joint execution between the Navy and the Chief Data and AI Officer (CDAO) might exist?

Answer. The Department of the Navy is embracing machine learning, artificial intelligence (ML/AI) and data analytics to increase speed of decision, drive innovation, and improve both operational and business processes. As these technologies and tools improve overtime, I believe there must be alignment across the DoD to ensure enterprise-level infrastructure and services are available to advance adoption of data collection, curation, related analytics, cross-organization transparency and thoughtful application of ML/AI. The CDAO is also working on the challenges with data interoperability and the mechanisms for how we communicate as a joint force and also with our allies and partners to achieve the objectives of Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2). If confirmed, I would work closely with the Department of the Navy's Chief Information Officer and the DoD Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office to share best practices, ensure alignment and collaborate to improve interoperability.

Question. In your view, what is the role of Navy software factories and how do you plan to assure the success of these entities?

Answer. It is my understanding that software factories have become a key piece of the DON's approach to promulgate a Development, Security, and Operations (DevSecOps) culture which invests in and leverages state-of-the-practice methods such as continuous integration / continuous delivery (CI/CD) as a preferred approach to instantiate agile development practices and speed capability to the fleet. If confirmed, I intend to continue implementing the DON's vision to provide mission-driven and user-focused software to our sailors and marines through the ever-evolving software development practices like these. As such the community will need to move these capabilities forward while continuing to assess and rationalize the software factory capability ecosystem.

CONTRACTING

Question. What are the major challenges facing the Navy with respect to contracting activities?

Answer. If confirmed, I want to evaluate the current challenges by meeting with the DON contracting activities as well as members from industry to gain a full perspective on their current limitations, trends and future needs. Based on my past experience, challenges in contracting will need to address talent management, capability and capacity gaps for long-range planning, requirements definition, speed to contract, oversight, and overarching acquisition workforce.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage the acquisition workforce to utilize the tools Congress has authorized to maximize flexibility. These reforms provide military departments with valuable tools to increase innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness in responding to the needs of the warfighter. I will ensure the DON continues to have an educated and trained acquisition workforce and to utilize accountability and oversight processes to ensure there are appropriate checks and balances throughout the acquisition lifecycle.

Question. What factors drive procurement administrative lead time, and what actions will you take to reduce lead times?

Answer. Based upon my experience in the DON, I have seen several areas that drive procurement lead times from requirements definition, proposal preparation, negotiations, and post award administration. If confirmed, I will meet with the DON contracting activities, program offices, and industry partners to identify and remove barriers that are contributing to excessive procurement lead times.

Question. In what instances do you believe the Navy should use fixed price contracts for development programs?

Answer. It is my understanding that there are guidelines for using the appropriate contract type and if confirmed I will ensure that DON contracting professionals continue to use sound judgment when determining the most appropriate contract type for each action based on the risks inherent to the specific requirements. Traditionally, programs in the development phase have more inherent cost, schedule and performance risk, driving a need to have thoughtful use of contract types and incentives that are best-matched for the business and technical problem at hand.

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

Answer. I support the use of every tool in the acquisition toolbox. If confirmed, I will encourage the continued use of non-FAR based contracting approaches as they provide the military departments with valuable tools to increase innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness in responding to the needs of the warfighter. Use of these non-FAR based contracting approaches removes barriers to entry for non-traditional defense contractors, providing access to critical and emerging technologies in the execution of our mission.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will assess the sufficiency of the training to the Department's acquisition workforce to ensure they are fully trained to enable the DON to successfully leverage non-FAR based contracting methodologies to deliver improved program outcomes. I will leverage the use of resources from sources such as DAU, DIU, and DARPA, and other organizations that have used these methods effectively.

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

Answer. Both contracting approaches provide benefits in meeting the Department's mission. Contracts governed by the FAR provide standard terms and conditions for use which are built upon decades of acquisition experiences but which may create barriers to entry. Whereas use of non-FAR based contracting approaches provide military departments access to critical technologies from non-traditional defense sources and offer more flexibility than the traditional government acquisition process allows. If confirmed, I will encourage the use of all tools available to the acquisition workforce.

MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS

Question. Section 3501 of title 10, United States Code, provides the criteria Congress expects will be met to exercise multiyear contract authority.

What types of programs are appropriate for the use of multiyear contracts?

Answer. Multiyear contracts are appropriate for programs that have a stable requirements, realistic cost estimates, stable designs, and that could result in significant savings for the Department when compared with annual contracting. Department of Navy programs such as the *Virginia*-class submarine program, DDG 51 Destroyer program, and V-22 Tilt Rotor Aircraft have allowed the Department to take advantage of mature designs and continuing requirements to realize savings for the government.

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps fully comply with the requirements of section 3501?

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. It is my understanding that multiyear procurements should achieve “significant” savings compared to annual procurements. What constitutes significant savings of the total anticipated costs of carrying out the program through annual contracts will vary for each individual program. It is my understanding that the “significant savings” standard is not based upon any particular percentage of savings. However, a benchmark of 10 percent has historically been used as a starting point.

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

Answer. It is my understanding that, in the ordinary course, the Department of Defense typically requests statutory authority to enter into a multiyear procurement contract with the President’s Budget in either the fiscal year in which the contract will be initiated or in the year prior.

Question. The Navy budget request for fiscal year 2022 included insufficient funding to avoid breaking a multiyear contract for the DDG–51 destroyer program. The Committee views such actions as breaking a moral commitment from the Department to fully fund multiyear procurement programs for the duration of the contract. Such an action should only be taken in the direst of circumstances.

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

Answer. Yes.

MIDDLE TIER ACQUISITION

Question. Section 804 of the Fiscal Year 202016 NDAA authorized DOD to employ an acquisition approach (“Middle Tier Acquisition”) that was intended to support the rapid delivery of new capability to meet emerging operational needs.

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

Answer. In my view, the Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) is an important tool to rapidly develop prototypes, demonstrate new capabilities and rapidly field production quantities of systems with proven technologies that require minimal development. It is my understanding that the DON is using these authorities to drive capability to the hands of sailors and marines. MTAs can also improve affordability by facilitating a tailored approach to program oversight, and empowering programs to leverage data, use innovative strategies, and actively manage risk to improve responsiveness to the warfighter. If confirmed, I am committed to responsible use of this pathway, and I will engage with Congress to ensure proper oversight as the Department learns and adapts.

Question. What risks have accrued and been accepted by the Navy as a consequence of the use of these authorities?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Department of the Navy has been very judicious in using these authorities to reduce technical risk, validate designs and feasibility of design concepts, obtain early feedback from warfighters, and obtain information on potential costs, challenges, and other similar factors. If confirmed, I will be committed to ensuring the Department remains diligent with the management of MTA processes and policies so that any risks remain manageable and are quickly addressed.

Question. If confirmed, how would you balance the need to rapidly prototype and field systems with the need for appropriate oversight of the Department’s use of 804 authorities? Please explain your answer.

Answer. If confirmed, I will closely examine the Department’s use of these authorities to ensure that we achieve the appropriate balance between flexibility and oversight. I will remain vigilant in ensuring all programs aligns with both DoD and DON policies through open communication with our stakeholders, lessons learned across the Department and Services, and maintaining management rigor. I am confident that the benefits of Section 804 authorities outweigh the risks associated with the Department’s need to learn and adapt to oversight of this new pathway.

TEST AND EVALUATION

Question. Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe it appropriate—for the test community to take risk and modify its assessments of operational effectiveness and suitability to support continuous development or rapid fielding?

Answer. My current position requires me to establish policy to assess programs' operational effectiveness, suitability, survivability, and lethality that informs both acquisition and fielding. I do, and will continue, to work closely with program managers and warfighters to make risk-based decisions that balance the desire to go fast with managing a balance between technical and operational risk.

One of my points of leadership with DOT&E was to update our forward-looking strategy to better position my current organization for the future. Over the past year, we have been working with the Services and the other stakeholder organizations in DoD to explore how the T&E community engages earlier in the development life cycle (shift left) to establish testability requirements and operational test considerations when a design is being established. We have also begun to establish the foundation of practices associated with thinking into the future about what test needs should be positioned in order to ensure that, in the end, the warfighter has quality weapons that are effective and work when they use them (look right). By having the T&E community involved early—to shift left—and by working with the acquisition community to plan around how to adequately test in the future—to look right—we seek a strong and effective collaboration between the developers, testers and users to ensure we can move fast into the future for delivering excellence at the speed of need.

If confirmed, I intend to bring that experience to the Naval acquisition team to continuously improve our methods and products to deliver game-winning capability at the speed of need.

Question. 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?

Answer. The test and evaluation community plays a significant role in all aspects of acquisition, especially as it pertains to fully utilizing all the acquisition processes that are available to creative program managers to deliver working capability, at scale, rapidly. The recently updated SECNAV acquisition policy, SECNAVINST 5000.2G, provides guidance regarding the development of tailored, capability focused test and evaluation for each of the DoD acquisition paths, including Middle Tier and Urgent Capability Acquisition. This approach ensures that each program has adequate levels of test and evaluation rigor and related strategies designed to provide the data required to inform the analysis necessary for making sound acquisition and fielding decisions.

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

Answer. As the current Department of Defense Director for Operational Test and Evaluation, I have identified areas that require improved test and evaluation capabilities. One example is how we carry out live fire test and evaluation. Due to the enormous cost of some weapon systems and increased ranges of weapons, it may not be practical or affordable to carry out a representative live fire test and evaluation. We must look to innovative solutions that provide us the assurance that testing results are reflective of the performance expected in the operational environment. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the Navy's test and evaluation capabilities and sharing best practices I have learned as DoD Director for Operational Test and Evaluation with the DON.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSITION

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

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

Answer. One of my key focus areas, should I be confirmed, will be to examine the methods used to mature innovative technologies that can be smoothly integrated into scalable, quality solutions. I would also ensure a tight coupling between the science and technology community and the program managers who would be charged with transitioning those technologies. In addition, building a strong foundation of research requires talented and committed people in the Department, and

with partners in government, academia and industry. My experience as a senior leader in DoD acquisition is that many of the roadblocks to change and rapid transition of new technologies are slowed by a lack of an enabling environment (technical, business and cultural). These impediments include slow adoption of state-of-the-practice technology trends (particularly when they are commercially driven), self-limiting impediments for adopting the authorities provided by Congress and taking advantage of the multiple pathways now available and lack of training in the acquisition workforce. If confirmed, I will assess these and other factors that hamper technology transition within the DON, and work with the Defense Industrial Base, commercial/non-traditional suppliers, academia and the Naval Research and Development community to investigate avenues to accelerate and transition technology to the warfighter.

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

Answer. The Navy Research Laboratory and Systems Engineering Commands provide a vital role in the evaluation, development, assessment and oversight of technologies intended to fill warfighting capabilities gaps or to exploit gaps in our potential opponents. Should I be confirmed, I will ensure that technology developed at our research laboratories has the best chance to transition by making sure the foundational elements (technical architectures, business models, transition agreements, etc.) for speeding technology insertion into programs of record. The community also needs to constantly be introspective about fostering increased collaboration between the government stakeholders such as the PEO, resource sponsor, and project leads.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will assess existing Department of the Navy technical and business processes to ensure effective transition mechanisms are in place and that a robust dialog exists between the Naval Research and Development community and the acquisition programs of record to enhance the effectiveness of the technology transition efforts. I will also review the training of the DON acquisition workforce to ensure the workforce has the training needed to effectively transition technologies into acquisition programs.

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

Answer. In recent years, Congress has given the Navy additional authorities needed to facilitate technology transition from the Science and Technology community to acquisition programs and the warfighters. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Naval Research and Development community, industry, academia and acquisition programs to assess the processes in the Department of the Navy to ensure these new authorities are being fully utilized to facilitate greater collaboration and to ensure the warfighters maintain technological superiority. In instances where we identify additional authorities that can improve in this area, you have my commitment to bring it to congressional attention for consideration.

NAVY-RELATED DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE

Question. In recent years, the Navy has been struggling with manpower shortages and other supply chain issues within the industrial base supporting Navy acquisition and sustainment activities. Congress has responded by implementing such programs as additional funding to support second and third tier vendors in the submarine production supply chain.

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

Answer. Our industrial base is made up of essential partners for delivering capability and maintaining the Nation's enduring advantage. It is my understanding the DON has made it a priority to understand the entities that comprise its industrial base and supply chain. If confirmed, I will continue the DON's investment in tools and data analysis products to further illuminate the current supply chain risk and identify ways to prioritize areas of investment in the industrial base. This effort requires continued focus and measurement to ensure the DON is focusing investments

in the industrial base to those areas where it will most effectively assure resiliency and support industrial base/supplier expansion.

Question. What is your view of the current health of the industrial base that supports the Navy?

Answer. I would like to better understand the challenges that are being experienced by our industrial base. If confirmed, I would personally visit their facilities and engage with their supplier base, then come back to you with my observations and some recommendations.

As a general observation, I believe that the most important area that our industrial base partners would request is a clear and steady demand-signal to plan around. Without a clear and sustainable demand, it is very difficult for our industrial base partners to plan what capital projects will be required, what investments need to be made to support future demand, and how many workers they will require. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary of the Navy, CNO and CMC to support a predictable workload that allows our industrial base partners to plan effectively.

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

Answer. Recapitalization and modernization programs are critical to keeping platforms relevant to meet future threats. If confirmed, I would work closely with government and industry partners to incorporate innovative solutions that enable recapitalization and modernization of major end items in an affordable and timely manner. I would carefully consider the industrial base as part of the acquisition strategy development and future procurement plans to ensure we have the industrial base capacity to develop, produce, and field major end items, such as aircraft, munitions, and the key repair parts required to support warfighting requirements.

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

Answer. It is my understanding that the Navy is proactively improving visibility into its industrial base and associated workforce and is actively identifying risks and fragilities within those entities. It is also my understanding that the Navy is working in close partnership with contractors to support supply chain monitoring and health assessments to improve industrial base health and outcomes. If confirmed, I will work with industry and government partners to continue the framework of policies, procedures, and tools used to address our collective challenges in Navy-relevant sectors of the industrial base.

Question. In your view, what actions should the Navy take to maintain access to critical elements of the defense industrial base, including special programs to ensure that of manpower resources sufficient to meet the Navy's needs?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Navy is collaborating with industry and government stakeholders to ensure a skilled workforce is available to support Navy shipbuilding, aviation, and repair capacity needs through ongoing workforce initiatives in key maritime and aviation regions and supply base centers of gravity. I recognize and support the Department's work with local, State, and national organizations to identify opportunities to generate resiliency and productivity in the defense industrial workforce and in the supply chain. If confirmed, I will add my voice and ensure that messaging, incentives and policies are in place to continue to identify and monitor Navy's access to the people needed to support our critical supply chain. If required, I would also seek additional measures, in consultation with Congress, which would enable the Department to reconstitute critical industrial capabilities which may include, when necessary, the acquisition of intellectual property and special manufacturing equipment.

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

Answer. Small businesses play a crucial role in any economy as they often form the backbone of local communities, create jobs, and promote innovation and diversity. In my past acquisition experience, I have enjoyed great outcomes in working with small businesses. They are a foundational element of the Defense ecosystem, and many directly support the larger prime contractors. It is my understanding that since I left the Department of the Navy, it has continued to be a strong performer in utilization of small business, and I am aware that DON has several ongoing initiatives to increase that utilization at both the prime and subcontractor levels. If confirmed, I will renew my commitment to ensuring that the Navy continues to advocate for small businesses and promote the critical role these businesses play in support of the DON and strive to continue to lead the DOD in this area.

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

Answer. The pace of technological change dictates that we look to all sources for technologies that can, with minimal additional investment, be repurposed to address warfighting gaps or to improve existing capability. It is my understanding that DIU provides increased opportunities for the DON to leverage private sector investments in innovation to rapidly deploy capability to meet defense needs. If confirmed, I will work with our operational community to prioritize those proven technologies for scalability through DIU and other similar organizations.

NAVY SHIPBUILDING

Question. Congress has adopted a goal of 355 ships for the Navy fleet based on previous Navy Force Structure Assessments (FSA). The previous FSA requirement was 308 ships. The Navy's current naval battle force contains roughly 285 ships, and will not achieve a force level goal of 308 ships until at least 2035 at the earliest.

In your view, what size Navy, consisting of what mix of ships, will be needed in coming years to adequately perform Navy missions?

Answer. I am committed to building a naval force with sufficient size and capability to campaign effectively, deter aggression, and, if required, win decisively in combat. It is my understanding the Navy continuously reviews the numbers and types of ships—and the capabilities they require—to meet the evolving demands of the National Defense Strategy. Although I have not had the opportunity to review the Force Structure Assessment that established the number of ships, if confirmed, I am committed to working closely with the Secretary of the Navy, the CNO and CMC to deliver the most relevant capabilities and platforms on schedule.

Question. What steps would you recommend evaluating to achieve a 355-ship Navy, particularly related to additional ship procurement and the funding required?

Answer. I am committed to building a naval force of sufficient size. If confirmed, a key task would be to work closely with industrial base partners to ensure they have a consistent and predictable demand signal to support the Navy this Nation requires. We must balance the industrial base capacity across the entire enterprise to ensure they can build and deliver the required capabilities needed in the future on time and on cost.

The Navy recently made a commitment to procuring large uncrewed surface vessels that could be used to augment crewed platforms as a way of bringing more firepower to the point of need while minimizing complexity and cost, which would in turn affect future force structure assessments. Should the CNO and CMC require these types of vessels, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy and Congress to get the right mix of crewed/uncrewed platforms and to invigorate the shipbuilding community (government and industry) to accelerate this concept.

Last, modernization programs are important to keeping existing ships relevant to meet future threats, especially ships which have a 30–40 year service life. I believe that these upgrades must be accomplished early in a ship's life cycle and at a regular interval. As threats change, we must have the ability to quickly adapt our ship platforms to meet these new threats. If confirmed, I would work closely with our government and industry teams to seek innovative solutions that enable us to modernize ships in an affordable and timely manner.

Question. The Navy has begun acquiring the replacements for the *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). The new *Columbia*-class boats are projected to have an acquisition cost of \$10 billion per ship. The Navy has stated publicly that it could not afford to buy both the new SSBNs and maintain other required procurements under expected funding topline.

What steps do you believe will be necessary to enable the Navy to expand to a 355-ship fleet, while also procuring the *Columbia*-class SSBNs?

Answer. I support the *Columbia*-class SSBN as the Navy's number one acquisition priority and most survivable leg of the nuclear triad. Continuing to fully fund the program will be essential to ensure on time delivery, so that the Nation's sea based strategic deterrent requirements continue to be met as the *Ohio*-class is retired. To minimize the impact to the rest of the fleet, I believe in continuing to prioritize efforts to reduce cost and schedule risk, increase the capacity of the submarine industrial base, and improve affordability. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress on delivering this important strategic capability while also modernizing and expanding the rest of the Fleet.

Question. In the 1970's and 1980's, the United States procured the current *Ohio*-class SSBN submarines within the Navy's shipbuilding (SCN) account. In 2015, Congress created a special fund, the National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund (NSBDF), for procurement of *Columbia*-class SSBNs.

Do you have a view on how the cost of *Columbia*-class SSBNs should be funded—solely from Navy resources, from a combination of Navy and other-than-Navy (e.g., OMB and other Defense) sources, or with a different approach? If so, please explain.

Answer. I understand that the Navy has budgeted for the *Columbia*-class program in the Shipbuilding and Conversion account and then used the authorized National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund to execute the program. I support this approach for implementing this important program, as it maximizes transparency and provides valuable authorities to control costs.

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy and Congress to determine the best approach for funding the program and ensure the proper acquisition authorities are used to make this critical program more affordable.

LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP (LCS) AND *CONSTELLATION*-CLASS FRIGATE (FFG-62)

Question. The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program has had mixed success at best. Last year, the Navy proposed to retire most of the LCS-1 class of ships substantially before they would have been tired under normal circumstances. To replace many of the capabilities the Navy had expected from the LCS program, the Navy has begun the *Constellation*-class frigate (FFG-62) program.

What is your view of the lesson that should be learned from the experience of the LCS program?

Answer. From a sustainment perspective, the experience of LCS highlighted the logistical challenges caused by over-reliance on Contractor Furnished Equipment (CFE), over-commitment to reducing crew size, and dependence on original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) for maintenance support. Utilization of Navy programs of record that can be maintained and sustained organically provides a more maintainable, sustainable, reliable, and available capability. In addition, utilizing mature designs and technologies from the outset, as well as employment of a Land-Based Engineering Site (LBES), will minimize engineering changes, promote a smooth transition to fleet introduction, and ultimately improve operational availability.

Question. What is your understanding of the FFG(X) program and how it will differ from LCS?

Answer. I understand that the *Constellation*-class Frigate (FFG 62) is the evolution of Small Surface Combatants with increased lethality, survivability, and improved capability to operate in more severely contested environments. The first ship of the class was awarded with full and open competition and leveraged mature and sustainable designs and technologies. It is my understanding that the program ensured sufficient design maturity and production planning prior to the start of production, reducing concurrency risk. I am aware that the ship will be equipped with Navy standard Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) systems, leveraging proven program of record combat, control, communication, computing, and intelligence systems. Additionally, the FFG 62 class is utilizing a proven hull form to minimize Hull, Mechanical, and Electrical (HM&E) risk. The program is aligned with Congress' intent on land-based testing and is establishing an FFG 62 land-based test site to validate power and propulsion systems prior to lead ship delivery.

Question. Do you support the current FFG-62 class acquisition strategy?

Answer. Yes.

NAVAL AVIATION

Question. What is your assessment of the most important challenges facing naval aviation? If confirmed, what steps would you take to meet those challenges?

Answer. Naval aviation must work to build a modern and sustainable capability, balancing readiness of the force today while modernizing an aging fleet and developing the Air Wing of the Future. This challenge is not unique to the NAE community. If confirmed, I will work with the NAE to ensure our investments support continued readiness improvement efforts and incremental capability improvement programs to order to meet the evolving aircraft mission performance needs and deliver greater capability to the fleet to meet the next generation of security challenges.

Question. Does the Navy have a sufficient number of strike-fighter aircraft? If not, if confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure they do?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Department has stated they have a sufficient number of 4th Generation Strike Fighters. In my view, further investment in 5th Generation procurement and development of 6th Generation platforms should be the focus moving forward. If confirmed, I will review the current strike fighter inventory and projected procurements to ensure the DON is using all available levers to achieve the correct capability and capacity to meet current Global Force Management requirements and manage strike fighter inventory.

Question. What is your understanding of the physiological episodes that the naval aviation community is confronting and plans to address such episodes?

Answer. Providing for the safety of our sailors and marines is of the utmost priority. I understand that the DON has taken a comprehensive approach to both evaluate the causes of and mitigate the occurrences of Physiological Episodes (PEs). These efforts have resulted in a steady decline in the incidence of PEs, and the rate is now the lowest it has been in 10 years. I assure you that I will continue this commitment to safety, if confirmed, and will work with the NAE to ensure that the necessary resources are applied to ongoing modifications to the aircraft, improved maintenance practices, and improved aircrew interface.

MARINE CORPS AVIATION

Question. What is your assessment of the most important challenges facing Marine Corps aviation? If confirmed, what steps would you take to meet those challenges?

Answer. Marine Corps aviation challenges are similar to those facing Naval Aviation and the Department as a whole. The DON must continue to invest in readiness and sustainment, modernization of the Marine Corps aircraft fleet, and 5th Generation strike fighter aircraft that incorporate advanced capabilities to support the objectives of the National Defense Strategy and the Commandant's Force Design 2030. If confirmed, I will work with Marine Corps leadership to ensure our resources are invested to deliver the most effective Marine Corps aviation capabilities and capacity.

Question. Is Marine Corps aviation readiness at an acceptable level? If not, if confirmed, what steps would you take to improve aviation readiness?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Marine Corps has made measurable improvements in aviation readiness due to a comprehensive readiness recovery plan that includes changes in resourcing and multiple initiatives to improve material readiness across all type/model/series. If confirmed, I will work with Marine Corps and DON leadership to ensure readiness accounts are adequately funded and that investment accounts are sufficiently resourced to build on these efforts in accordance with the 2022 Marine Corps Aviation Plan.

F-35 JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

Question. What is your assessment of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program? If confirmed, what changes would you seek to implement in the program?

Answer. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is a dominant, multirole, fifth-generation aircraft capable of projecting U.S. power and deterring potential adversaries. In my current capacity as Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, I am aware that the F-35 presents unique challenges in areas such as development, testing, fielding, and sustainment. If confirmed, my role will be to serve as the Service Acquisition Executive for this critical program. I will be committed to working with the Joint Program Office the Services and Partners to increase capabilities, reduce costs, and complete all required testing.

Question. In your view, what are the considerations for the Department of the Navy should take into account in evaluating alternatives to purchasing 340 F-35C fighter aircraft, such as purchasing advanced fourth generation fighters still in production, such as enhanced F-18s, or developing a next generation fighter aircraft beyond the F-35's capabilities?

Answer. The F-35 is currently the most technological advanced fighter in the DON inventory and is needed to fight and win in the future fight. If confirmed, you have my commitment that I will evaluate all capabilities and technology available and under development to ensure an effective and efficient Naval force. I also believe unmanned systems are and will continue to play an important role in the future of warfare. If confirmed, it would be my intent to evaluate all available technology.

CARRIER AIR WING

Question. Do you believe the Navy's carrier air wing is designed to provide the capability we expect it to contribute to the carrier strike group? Specifically, will the projected air wing have sufficient available strike range, available payload, electronic warfare capability, and command and control capability? Why or why not? If not, if confirmed, what steps would you take to address any gaps?

Answer. In my view, the carrier air-wing (CVW) has been designed with the right mix of capabilities. However, it is critical that those capabilities continue to be reviewed and modernized to stay ahead of the threat. It is my understanding that today's Air Wing is transitioning to a mixture of 4th and 5th Generation strike fighter

aircraft that incorporate advanced capabilities to support the objectives of the National Defense Strategy (NDS). If confirmed, I will work with the CNO and the Commandant to review CVW capabilities to ensure they are adequately meeting current requirements and are properly resourced to ensure the CVW will remain lethal and viable against future threats.

UNMANNED AVIATION

Question. What is your assessment of the appropriate role unmanned aviation should play in Naval and Marine Corps aviation? If confirmed, what steps would you take to achieve that vision?

Answer. It is my understanding that the DON is undertaking fundamental shift in naval aviation operations by continuing to integrate unmanned systems into the Fleet. These efforts provide signification advantages including decreased risk to personnel, greater persistence, longer ranges, improved data speed and accuracy, and a faster decision cycle. If confirmed, I will work with the CNO and Commandant to support development and test of these capabilities that increase operational opportunities and tactical advantages to the warfighters.

UNMANNED SURFACE VESSELS AND UNMANNED UNDERWATER VESSELS

Question. What is your assessment of the maturity of unmanned vessels in the surface and underwater domains? Do you support the Navy's autonomy roadmap? If confirmed, what steps would you take to reduce risk and transition one or more programs of record?

Answer. My understanding is that the Navy is in the prototyping and experimentation phase for examining all sizes of unmanned surface vessels in order to mature the technology prior to committing the Nation to official programs of record. The exception to this is the Mine Counter Measure Unmanned Surface Vessel, which is an Acquisition Category II program in the production and deployment phase. I also understand that prototyping and experimentation is progressing with large and extra-large unmanned undersea vehicles, including their core enabling technologies.

In my view, autonomy will provide additional warfighting capability and capacity to augment the traditional combatant force, allowing the option to take on greater operational risk while maintaining a tactical and strategic advantage. If confirmed, I will support the development of an autonomy roadmap that will lay out an approach to address our technology gaps, reduce development risk and optimize manned/unmanned teaming. If confirmed, I will also support continued land and sea-based experimentation, and ensure the core and enabling technologies are at the appropriate level prior to committing into programs of record.

AMPHIBIOUS COMBAT VEHICLE

Question. Since canceling the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) in 2011 after spending \$3 billion, the Marine Corps has chosen to pursue a more measured multi-phase acquisition strategy to fulfill their amphibious combat vehicle (ACV) modernization requirements.

What is your understanding of the ACV acquisition strategy?

Answer. With the cancellation of the EFV Program in 2011, the Marine Corps shifted its strategy to focus on mature, commercially available technologies for the ACV program, which I currently have under DOT&E oversight. It is my understanding that the first phases concentrated on a personnel variant and a command and control variant. Follow-on phases incorporate technologies to develop and test a medium caliber cannon variant and a recovery variant.

Question. Do you support this acquisition strategy?

Answer. Yes, the acquisition strategy for the ACV program is an example of expeditiously executing a competitive major acquisition program to provide the warfighter a much needed capability. If confirmed, I will support the fielding of ACV personnel and command and control variants, and the continued development of the medium caliber cannon and recovery variants.

GROUND/AIR TASK-ORIENTED RADAR (G/ATOR)

Question. With development initiated more than a decade ago, the Marine Corps is moving forward with a long-delayed and expensive radar system, the Ground/Air Task-Oriented Radar (G/ATOR), which will replace a number of older radars and will protect marines from rockets, artillery, cruise missiles, and UAVs while also serving as an air-traffic control system.

What is your understanding of the G/ATOR acquisition strategy?

Answer. It is my understanding that the G/ATOR program provides a next generation radar using one hardware configuration for multiple operational capabilities. The Air Surveillance/Air Defense and Counter-fire capabilities began fielding in 2018 and 2019 respectively, and an Air Traffic Control variant is on the near horizon.

Question. Do you support this acquisition strategy?

Answer. Yes. I understand that the acquisition strategy for the G/ATOR program developed a state-of-the-art radar that is providing the Marine Corps an enhanced multi-function capability. If confirmed, and when appropriate, I will support the Full Rate Production of this program and the development of the Air Traffic Control capability and other system upgrades.

MUNITIONS

Question. Munitions inventories, particularly those of precision guided munitions, have declined significantly due to high operational usage, insufficient procurement, and a requirements system that does not adequately account for the ongoing need to transfer munitions to our allies and operations short of major combat, such as in the current operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. In addition, we also now have to replace munitions stocks drawn down to support Ukraine.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure we have sufficient inventories of munitions to meet our combatant commanders' needs?

Answer. Because munitions are a critical national priority, if confirmed I will support investments in the industrial base that increase capacity of critical components and work with suppliers to identify opportunities to increase resiliency. Aggressively supporting critical outsourcing and engaging with small and non-traditional businesses will help the DON expand the industrial base to remove chokepoints in production and supply. In addition, I will look for opportunities to leverage the new authorities provided in the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act that provide temporary acquisition flexibilities to increase the Department's stocks of critical munitions.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Question. What is your understanding and assessment of the role that science and technology programs have played and will play in developing capabilities for current and future Navy and Marine Corps systems?

Answer. DON investment in science and technology is critical to ensuring future Naval superiority, preventing technological surprise and developing the science needed to outpace our adversaries and other threats to mission readiness. Investments in academia support the world's most productive research and development ecosystem, increase diversity in the workforce, and leverage funding from other Federal agencies to accomplish the DON mission. These investments are the source of both evolutionary capabilities for programs of record and revolutionary game changing capabilities for the Navy and Marine Corps. If confirmed, I will work across the broader Research and Development community of industry, academia, and government to ensure the Department maintains its scientific and technical advantage.

Question. If confirmed, how would you ensure that successful Navy and Marine Corps science and technology programs will have a pathway for a timely transition to operational warfighting capabilities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will investigate the tools and methods being used for transitioning technology and work to strengthen collaboration between the science and technology community and the program managers who transition the technologies to operational warfighting capabilities. In addition, I will leverage title 10 USC 4123 authority which provides Naval Warfare Centers and Labs a valuable tool to enhance the speed of technology transition. The goal that I would set would be to continue to develop capabilities while reducing cost and increasing the speed and scale of integrating technology into the fleet and force.

LABORATORIES AND WARFARE CENTERS

Question. What has been your experience in working with the Navy's labs and warfare centers?

Answer. The Naval Warfare Centers and Laboratories house a world-class workforce and capabilities that provide innovative solutions for rapid prototyping, fielding and technical execution for programs of record. Having served in several of these facilities, I have seen how they serve an essential role in all aspects of developing and delivering critical capabilities to the warfighter as we compete with near-peer adversaries for technological advantage. We need to renew a sense of urgency with

our laboratory personnel and ensure our investments develop cutting-edge technologies for our warfighter at the speed of need.

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to assess and enhance the interaction between Navy labs and warfare centers and with the acquisition community?

Answer. It is my understanding that the ASN (RDA) organization is structured to ensure close coordination between Programs of Record and the research and development communities, including in some cases being geographically co-located. This provides synergy across the Acquisition lifecycle as well as opportunities to infuse new technologies developed by Scientists and Engineers into Programs of Records to meet strategic needs. If confirmed, I will work to ensure this synergy continues to grow.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will partner with our Nation's Educational Institutions to develop science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) talent. I will enable our Naval Warfare Centers and Laboratories to further leverage the authorities provided under the Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory (STRL) congressional authority. These authorities allow Naval Warfare Centers and Laboratories to quickly attract, recruit, and retain our Nation's best and brightest STEM talent. I will continue to revitalize Navy's culture to foster a greater level of collaboration across the Enterprise, which will result in greater speed and lethality to meet our warfighter's need.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I would support the use of current authorities—such as Capital Investment Program and 10 U.S.C. 4123 authority (also known as Naval Innovation Science and Engineering) to acquire and maintain the required infrastructure and equipment. I would continue to support additional financial flexibilities offered to the STRLs to allow resourcing infrastructure and equipment requirements. Finally, I would pursue the development of a long-range infrastructure plan that would utilize a programmatic approach to optimize laboratory infrastructure over the coming decades.

INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Question. Witnesses appearing before this Committee in the past have testified that the Services under-invest in both the maintenance and recapitalization of facilities and infrastructure compared to private industry standards. Decades of underinvestment in Defense Department installations have led to substantial backlogs of facility maintenance activities, created substandard living and working conditions, and made it harder to take advantage of new technologies that could increase productivity. These challenges have been exacerbated by current budget pressures.

What is your view of Navy and Marine Corps infrastructure investment?

Answer. I understand that the DON infrastructure portfolio carries risk due to chronic underinvestment in facilities sustainment and recapitalization. If confirmed, I look to better understand the challenges that the Navy and Marine Corps have balancing investments for current and future infrastructure to meet the Department's urgent readiness needs, future force requirements, and business reforms.

Question. If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you propose to increase resources to reduce the backlog and improve Navy and Marine Corps facilities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with leaders across the Department to address infrastructure needs and challenges across the enterprise. I will support reviews of Department requirements to ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps are focusing resources on the most critical and highest priority projects.

SENIOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ACCOUNTABILITY

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to improve individual and organizational accountability in acquisition management?

Answer. Accountability is the fundamental foundation for every action taken to facilitate trust and confidence. I am committed to being accountable and transparent in executing the duties of ASN(RDA), if confirmed, in accordance with all governing laws, policies, and regulations. I would expect the same for every individual within Navy's acquisition organization. I would also ensure there is clear and unambiguous guidance on the conduct and expectations that governs our actions.

Question. If confirmed, how would you propose to hold acquisition officers accountable for using authorities to accelerate the fielding of critical capabilities and within all applicable acquisition laws and regulations?

Answer. Acquisition officers must have the responsibilities, authorities, and accountability to carry out their assigned mission. I expect acquisition officers to execute their duties in accordance with the laws directed by Congress and the policies and regulations within the Department. If confirmed, I would ensure that I provide direct oversight to ensure that the authorities being requested or used are appropriate and consistent with laws and policy.

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

Answer. Every action we take on behalf of the American public must be consistent with the laws, policies, and regulations that govern our actions. If confirmed, I would ensure that senior leaders under my supervision clearly understand the standards of conduct that govern our actions. If an accountable individual fails to uphold these standards, I would recommend actions to enforce the accountability.

MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

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

What is your vision for the management and development of the Navy and Marine Corps acquisition workforce, including the scientific and technical fields?

Answer. This is an exciting time to be leading the acquisition of Naval capabilities. I have researched and published on how to improve delivery of capability at the speed of need. My most recent efforts in this area include an updated strategy for the improvement of operational test and evaluation, the center focus of which is to acknowledge that capability improvement as a life cycle strategy is a growing aspect of the military portfolio. If confirmed, I would explore how to develop the acquisition workforce to take full advantage of new tools and methods now available to accelerate excellence in performance, at scale. If confirmed, I will work with the Naval acquisition team to meld their innovations with validated research, proven best practices, past successes from both the Navy and other elements of the DOD to bring excellence to the warfighter.

Question. Do you believe that the Department of the Navy has an appropriately sized acquisition workforce, with the proper skills, to manage the Department into the future?

Answer. If confirmed, I would examine the current needs of the Naval acquisition workforce and analyze that against the demands being made of them for technical and business excellence, both now and in the future. If there are noted weaknesses, I will utilize available authorities to close those gaps, and where necessary work with the Secretary of the Navy and Congress to get any other authorities that might be needed to ensure the acquisition community can live up to the high standards necessary to support our sailors and marines.

Question. Do you recommend any changes to the statutes, regulations, or policies regarding the Department of the Navy's acquisition workforce? If so, please describe.

Answer. At this time, I do not recommend any changes to statutes, regulations, or policies. If confirmed, I will carefully examine the statutes, regulations, and policies governing the DON's acquisition workforce and make any necessary recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy.

Question. How will you work with the Defense Acquisition University and other educational institutions to improve the education and training of acquisition officials?

Answer. If confirmed, I will collaborate with the Defense Acquisition University to influence the continued creation of credentials necessary for DON military and civilians in the Acquisition Workforce. Professional currency is a mainstay to ensure acquisition professionals have the necessary tools to perform their mission.

Question. In your judgment, how should decisionmakers determine which acquisition tasks are best accomplished by government employees, military personnel, and support contractors?

Answer. In order to acquire systems and services, the DON must have an acquisition workforce with the best combination of skill and experience. If confirmed, I will review the processes in place to ensure the Department is selecting the right team members for the task.

ANTI-ACCESS/AREA DENIAL

Question. Do you believe emerging anti-access and area denial capabilities have been given appropriate concern by the Navy?

Answer. Yes, the CNO's 2022 Navigation Plan specifically highlights the importance of free and open access to the seas, and China's designs to deny United States Navy access to the western Pacific and beyond. I believe that Sea control and power projection provide freedom of maneuver and deter aggression, and are foundational to the CNO's priority to strengthen integrated deterrence.

Question. What additional steps do you believe the Navy and Marine Corps need to be taking now and in the next few years to ensure continued access to all strategically important segments of the maritime domain?

Answer. I fully support the National Defense Strategy, which highlights key actions to mitigate adversary anti-access/area-denial (A2AD) capabilities, including: developing concepts and capabilities that improve our ability to reliably hold at risk those military forces and assets that are essential to adversary operational success, while managing escalations; building a lethal force that possesses A2AD-insensitive strike capabilities that can penetrate adversary defenses at range; seeking new technologies and hedging against continuing adversary missile developments and emerging capabilities; and collaborating with Allies and partners to strengthen defensive A2AD capabilities and indications and warnings. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Navy and Marine Corps in executing the National Defense Strategy and ensuring open access to the seas.

SUSTAINING AIR POWER AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT IN GREAT POWER CONFLICTS

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

Broadly speaking, what technical and operational approaches do you think are viable to operate from locations that are within PRC missile ranges? What relative priority and importance do you ascribe to these approaches?

Answer. I understand that China is the pacing challenge to United States national security, and the pacing challenge of the National Defense Strategy. They continue to rapidly advance and expand their warfighting capabilities. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Joint Staff and CNO to better understand the threats from our adversaries, and the technical and operational approaches that the Department of Defense is developing to counter such threats. I intend to play an active role in developing and delivering the capabilities needed to protect United States national interests in the critical Indo-Pacific region.

ENERGY AND ACQUISITION

Question. How can our acquisition systems better incorporate improved efficiency and conservation of energy in military platforms, and how, if at all, are assessments of future requirements taking into account energy demands as a key performance parameter?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Department leaders to pursue a comprehensive approach to improving our platforms and weapons systems operational reach, reducing their fuel requirements, and enhancing their lethality. Improving the energy performance of platforms and weapons systems is essential to providing a combat effective force that is capable in wartime and efficient in day-to-day operations. In my view, the acquisition system can be improved to increase the efficiency of platforms by focusing not only on policy improvements, but improvements in engineering, design tools, and organization.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

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

Answer. I am not aware of any complaints or grievances associated with sexual harassment or gender discrimination within ASN (RDA). However, if confirmed, it

is my intent to stay attuned to the operating environment and morale of the workforce to ensure the safety and mutual respect of all assigned employees through enforcement of all current DoD and DON policies regarding these matters.

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

Answer. The DON's policy on sexual harassment, misconduct and discrimination is very clear in emphasizing that any of these actions will result in immediate corrective, administrative, and/or disciplinary action. If confirmed, I will clearly support this and make it a top priority to stay abreast of the organization's continuous implementation of the policy. If made aware of any complaints, I will ensure swift action is taken to lawfully investigate and that appropriate measures are carried out in accordance with DON policy while continuing to promote an environment of trust in the Department.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

Question. 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 executive branch.

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

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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.

Answer. Yes.

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

SHIPBUILDING

1. Senator KAINE. Mr. Guertin, if confirmed, what role do you see for you and your office in building the 30-year shipbuilding plan?

Mr. GUERTIN. I am committed to building a naval force with sufficient size and capability to campaign effectively, deter aggression, and, if required, win decisively in combat. The 30-year shipbuilding plan is an important planning document for both the Department and our industrial base partners. If confirmed I will work closely with the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) to continuously review the quantities and types of ships—and the capabilities/mission they support—to meet the evolving demands of the National Defense Strategy and deliver an initial set of capabilities integrated into flexible platforms that are relevant to the current challenges of the fleet while also preserving the ability to grow and improve over the life cycle. In addition, I will work closely with industrial base partners to ensure they have a consistent and predictable demand signal and are aligned to support the goals of the 30-year shipbuilding and sustainment plans. I will work to balance the industrial base capacity across the entire enterprise to ensure industry can build deliver and support the required capabilities needed in the future on time with predictable cost.

2. Senator KAINE. Mr. Guertin, how can the Navy get creative to address program delays and ship delivery delays?

Mr. GUERTIN. In my view, it is critical to balance resources, requirements, and acquisition management processes to ensure the timely delivery of capability to the warfighter. To achieve more reliable long-term successes, the Navy and Marine Corps must do two things; compose functionality in risk-prudent deployable elements, and embrace the inherent need to improve capability over time. Both of these must be addressed as fundamental design requirements, to ensure that the Fleet and Force can fluidly integrate evolving technologies as they reach sufficient maturity and readiness levels such that they can risk-prudently moved to production and affordably deployed at scale.

If confirmed, I will work with the CNO, CMC, and the Naval acquisition team to identify potential improvements in acquisition processes and adopt other proven practices such as open architecture precepts, early prototyping, incorporation of land-based test sites, leveraging parent designs, embracing of rigorously researched design practices to ensure that designs are mature prior to production

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

AMPHIBIOUS SHIP ACQUISITION

3. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Guertin, the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) required the Navy to maintain a fleet of 31 amphibious ships. The Navy's fiscal year 2024 budget treats that requirement like more of a suggestion. It retires three LSDs (land ship, docks) and provides for exactly one amphibious ship over the next 5 years. I am told that the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) is conducting yet another amphibious ship study to determine the path forward. The Navy risks a massive disruption to the amphibious ships industrial base with a 5 year pause, one that will assuredly drive up cost and decrease readiness at a time when the Nation needs the Marine Corps and Navy to be the most ready. If confirmed, will you commit to developing an acquisition strategy for amphibious ships that follows that law in a threat-informed timelines?

Mr. GUERTIN. If confirmed I am committed to developing an acquisition strategy that delivers the required amphibious ship capabilities on schedule and on cost. I understand the importance of providing industry a clear and steady demand-signal so they can effectively support future demand, and will work to balance industrial base capacity across the entire enterprise to ensure they can build and deliver the required capabilities needed in the future.

4. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Guertin, do you believe that multi-year contracts for amphibious ships are a viable way to lower costs and ensure industrial base stability?

Mr. GUERTIN. In my view, multi-year and multi-ship contracts are examples of smart acquisition strategies that support achieving best value. Multi-year and multi-ship contracts provide long-term stability to the industrial base and have shown the ability to provide significant savings over single-ship procurements. If

confirmed, I will evaluate all procurement strategies to ensure consideration of the most affordable and predictable methods authorized by Congress.

NAVY UNMANNED SURFACE VESSEL ACQUISITION

5. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Guertin, last week, Task Force-59 (TF-59) and the United Arab Emirates completed the first ever unmanned surface vessel (USV) bilateral exercise. In early fall, TF-59 conducted joint USV and surface ship exercises alongside many of our Middle Eastern partners and the United Kingdom. USVs allow us to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to develop domain awareness with little risk to human life. TF-59's model can be replicated with 7th Fleet in the Pacific and 6th Fleet in Europe. Do you think the Navy's acquisition process is capable of acquiring and maintaining unmanned surface vessels around the globe like TF-59 is doing in U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)?

Mr. GUERTIN. The Navy and broader Department of Defense have long used experimentation to support innovation and develop solutions to challenging military problems. At their core, experimentation and exercises are foundational learning tools to inform and assess maturing technologies into warfighting capabilities, and to refine technology Concepts of Employment (CONEMPs) into Concepts of Operations (CONOPS). Operational experiments and technology demonstrating exercises—like Task Force-59 (TF-59) efforts—are bringing together discovery-based exploration of emerging warfighting capabilities and rigorous evaluation of associated technologies. If confirmed, I am fully committed to evaluating the outputs from these efforts and working with our industrial base partners to produce, integrate, operationalize, and scale successful outcomes into acquisition programs.

6. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Guertin, if confirmed, will you commit to developing an acquisition strategy that can scale the TF-59 model to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) and U.S. European Command (EUCOM)?

Mr. GUERTIN. Yes. If confirmed, I am fully committed to working with the CNO and CMC to ensure that the acquisition community and industrial base can deliver on the operational needs and strategies that TF-59 and others have shown great creativity in building. With the lessons learned from TF-59 and other experimentation events, I will work closely with the Service Chiefs to integrate and scale successful outcomes into appropriate acquisition strategies.

[The nomination reference of Honorable Nickolas H. Guertin follows:]

NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT

PN4

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
January 3, 2023.

Ordered, That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

Nickolas Guertin, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, vice James F. Geurts.

_____, 2023.
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Reed _____
(Signature)

with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed.

☐ The nominee has agreed to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

[The biographical sketch of Honorable Nickolas H. Guertin, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

Senate Armed Services Committee Bio
Nickolas H. Guertin, PE, LCDR, USNR (Ret.)

Education:

- Bryant University, Smithfield, RI
 - Aug 1999 – Jun 2002
 - Master of Business Administration
- University of Washington, Seattle, WA,
 - Sep 1988 - Jun 1990,
 - Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering
- Olympic College, Bremerton, WA,
 - Sep 1985 – Jun 1988
 - Associates of Science, Pre-Engineering

Employment Record:

- Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering, Arlington, VA
 - Senior Software Systems Engineer
 - 10/2017 – present
- Systems, Planning and Analysis, Inc., Alexandria, VA
 - Senior Systems Engineer:
 - 1/2017 – 10/2017
- Naval Surface Warfare Center, Division Carderock, West Bethesda, MD
 - Director of Rapid Prototyping and Strategic Planning:
 - 7/2016 - 12/2016
- Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Pentagon
 - Director for Transformation (Rapid Prototyping and Open Systems Architecture)
 - 2011 – 2016
- Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Integrated Warfare Systems, Washington Navy Yard
 - Principal Assistant Program Manager for Systems Engineering, Cyber Security and Open Architecture
 - 2007 – 2011
- PEO Submarines and Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Washington Navy Yard
 - Chief Engineer for Combat Control and Sonar Systems Engineer
 - 6/1990 – 2006

- Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, WA
 - Shift Test Engineering Technician,
 - 1988 – 1990
- US Navy (Active Duty)
 - Electrician's Mate, Nuclear Propulsion on USS Thomas Jefferson (SSN-618) and USS Silversides (SSN-679)
 - 1979 – 1985

Honors and Awards:

- Military Awards
 - Qualified in Submarines (enlisted), 1983
 - Qualified Engineering Duty Officer, 1993
 - Navy Achievement Medal (three awards), Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Sea Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with bronze hourglass)
- Civilian Awards
 - Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award. For continuous innovation and expansion of acquisition reform initiatives, business performance changes, technical impact, and enterprise value, Apr 2011
 - The Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics) Award for Excellence in design and construction of the Better Buying Power 2.0 Initiatives Mar 2014
 - Navy's Acquisition Excellence Award, for improving competition of software-intensive systems throughout the Navy, Sep 2009
 - Vice President's Hammer Award for the Acoustic Rapid COTS Insertion (ARCI) program. Lauded as a successful software-intensive program and exemplar for lowering acquisition costs and the use of new software development methods, middleware standards, and open architectures. Feb 1999
- Licensure/Certification
 - Secure Agile Framework (SAFe) Certified Agilist, 2018 - present
 - Defense Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) Certified in Program Management (2008)
 - Defense Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) Certified in Engineering (2004)
 - Professional Engineer's License, Mechanical, Washington State, 1995 – present

[The Committee on Armed Services requires all individuals nominated from civilian life by the President to positions requiring the advice and consent of the Senate to complete a form that details the biographical, financial, and other information of the nominee.

The form executed by Honorable Nickolas H. Guertin in connection with his nomination follows:]

118th CONGRESS, 2023 -- 2024
UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
ROOM SR-228
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510-6050
(202) 224-3871

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE
INFORMATION REQUESTED OF CIVILIAN NOMINEES

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOMINEE: Answer all questions and provide all requested information. If more space is needed, attach an additional sheet of paper to the Questionnaire and cite the part of the Questionnaire and the question number (e.g., A-9, B-4) to which the continuation of your answer applies. Unless otherwise required, an answer of "yes", "no", or "not applicable" is appropriate.

QUESTIONNAIRE, PART A

NOTE: Information furnished in this part of the Questionnaire will be made available in Committee offices for public inspection prior to the hearing, if any, and will be entered in the hearing record, also available to the public.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION TO BE MADE PUBLIC

1. Name: Nickolas Henri Guertin (a.k.a. Henri Nickolas Guertin)
2. Position to which nominated: Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition
3. Date of nomination: January 03, 2023
4. Education:
George Washington University, Washington, DC
 - Courses in Machine Learning and International Technology Commercialization, Fall 2020Bryant University, Smithfield, RI

- Master of Business Administration, Jun 2002

Defense Acquisition University, Ft. Belvoir, VA,

- Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act Certified in Engineering and Program Management, 2000, 2008

Engineering Duty Officer School (Reserve Course)

- Qualified in ship construction, overhaul and repair, 1996

University of Washington, Seattle, WA,

- Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering, Jun 1990

Olympic College, Bremerton, WA,

- Associates of Science, Pre-Engineering, Jun 1988

Navy Nuclear Propulsion, pipeline training (enlisted). 1979-1981

- Qualified in Submarines. Qualified Electrical Operator and Engineering Watch Supervisor on USS Thomas Jefferson (SSN-618) 1981-1984, and USS Silversides (SSN-679), 1985

Joel Barlow High School, Redding, CT.

- High School Diploma, June 1979

5. Employment record:

Department of Defense, 12/2021 – present

- Provide independent and objective assessments of warfighting systems. Implementing a transformation initiative to incorporate evolving test and evaluation practices to ensure warfighters have combat credible systems at the speed of relevance. Specific areas of focus include; securing software and addressing cyber survivability, integrated test and evaluation, improving test infrastructure, greater use of modeling and simulation and evolving a capable workforce.

Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute • 10/2017 – 12/2021

- Senior Software Systems Engineer: Engineering for digital transformation and programmatic thought leadership. Researching and practicing new and effective software and systems development practices and bringing them to the Department of Defense for implementation at the enterprise level. Arlington, VA

Systems, Planning and Analysis, Inc. • 1/2017 – 10/2017

- Senior Systems Engineer: Engineering and Program Management for innovative undersea capabilities, future surface ship design, and transformative software and hardware acquisition strategies. Alexandria, VA

Naval Surface Warfare Center, Division Carderock • 7/2016 - 12/2016

- Director of Rapid Prototyping and Strategic Planning: Established a rapid prototyping, experimentation and demonstration strategy for use across the Naval Research and Development Establishment. Carderock, MD

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, Test & Evaluation • 2011 - 2016

- Rapid Prototyping, Experimentation and Demonstration: Program Manager of a strategically selected set of cyber-physical designs to rapidly mature and transition new military capability, while reducing risk and cost. Pentagon.
- Director for Transformation; Established a business, technical and cultural change strategy affecting \$17.9 billion in research and development spending on cyber-physical systems. Responsible for transformation efforts that impact all DoD warfare mission areas. Washington Navy Yard and Pentagon

Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Integrated Warfare Systems • 2007 - 2016

- Principal Assistant Program Manager for Systems Engineering; Directed the Navy and Marine Corps Open Architecture initiative, Oversaw modeling and simulation interoperability for the PEO, Supervised the implementation of the Naval Sea Systems Command cyber security policy. Washington Navy Yard

6. Government Experience:

- No additional experience beyond that provided in question 5.

7. Business relationships:

Member of the Technical Advisory Board

- Consultant for the non-profit Concurrent Technologies Corporation.

Standards Body Board Member • 2012 - present

- Voting Member of the Governing Board for The Open Group, (Dec 2013 – July 2015) - a global IT consortium, with more than 500 members.
- Chair of the Future Airborne Capability Environment (FACE) Advisory Board (Jan 2012 – present). Fostered new technical and business opportunities, for both civilian and military use of the real-time software FACE Reference Architecture and product line strategy.
- American Society of Naval Engineering, Global Shipbuilding Executive Summit (2015 to 2019). Exploring innovative ship building concepts from around the world to inform US warship construction concepts.

8. Memberships;

- Scouts BSA, National Capital Area Council. 2012 – Present. Cub Scout Den Leader (2012), Cubmaster for Pack 1867 (2013-2016), Scoutmaster for Girl's Troop 128 (2018-2020), Merit Badge Counselor for Troops 163 and 128 (Girls and Boys) and now Committee Chair for Troop 128 (2022 - present).
- Saint Agnes Catholic Church. 2018 – present. Parishioner
- International Council of Systems Engineers. 2018 – 2022. Chair for the Software and Systems Interface Working Group
- American Society of Naval Engineers. 1991 – present. Flexible Modular Ships working group and Member
- Naval Submarine League. 2015 – present. Life Member
- Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. 2020 – 2022. Member
- Surface Navy Association. 2008 – present. Life Member
- Navy League. ~ 2010 – present. Life Member
- The Open Group's, Future Airborne Capability Environment consortium. 2010 – present. Chair of the Advisory Board.
- The Open Group. 2013-2015. Board Member (in accordance with OMB Circular A-119)
- US Technology Leadership Council. 2017 - Present. Member
- US Naval Institute. 1991 – present. Member
- Society of Naval and Marine Architects. 2018 – 2020. Member
- United Serviceman's Organization. 2005 – present. Member
- American Legion Post 130. 2014 – Present
- American Association of Retired Persons. 2019 – Present. Member
- National Association of Retired Federal Employees. 2017 – Present. Member
- Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church. 2014-2016. Catechist.
- Goodspeed Opera House. 2018 – Present. Member
- Highlands Swim and Tennis Club. 2013 – Present. Member
- Parent Teacher Association. Chesterbrook Elementary and Longfellow Middle Schools. 2011 – 2021.

9. Political affiliations and activities:

- a. I have never been a candidate for, nor have been elected or appointed to a political office.
- b. Memberships: Fairfax County Democratic Committee. 2020 – present. Member
- c. Political contributions:
 - o Benjamin Todd Jealous Campaign Committee, \$100, 10/2018

10. Honors and awards:

- The Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics) Award for Excellence in design and construction of the Better Buying Power 2.0 Initiatives Mar 2014
- Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award. For continuous innovation and expansion of acquisition reform initiatives, business performance changes, technical impact, and enterprise value, Apr 2011
- Navy's Acquisition Excellence Award, for improving competition of software-intensive systems throughout the Navy, Sep 2009
- Vice President's Hammer Award for the Acoustic Rapid COTS Insertion (ARCI) program. Lauded as a successful software-intensive program and exemplar for lowering acquisition costs and the use of new software development methods, middleware standards, and open architectures. Feb 1999
- Professional Engineer's License, Mechanical, Washington State, 1995 – present
- Military awards include: Qualified in Submarines, three Navy Achievement Medals, Navy Good Conduct (enlisted), National Defense Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with bronze hourglass, Sea Service Ribbon. 1979 - 2002

11. Published writings:

- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C. Six Acquisition Pathways for Large-Scale Complex Systems. *Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute Blog*, Feb 2022
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C. Toward Technical Reference Frameworks to Support Large-Scale Systems of Systems. *Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute Blog*, Dec 2021
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schenker, A.R. Using Value Engineering to Propel Cyber-Physical Systems Acquisition. *DoD Acquisition Research Symposium Proceeding*, Apr 2021
- Nielsen, P.D. et. al. Air Force Software Sustainment and Maintenance of Weapons Systems (2020). The National Academies Press, Jul 2020

- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C., Scherlis, W. Impacts and Recommendations for Achieving Modular Open Systems Architectures – Fifth in a Series, *Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute Insights*, Sep 2019
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C., Scherlis, W. The Technical Architecture for Product Line Acquisition in the DoD - Fourth in a Series, *Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute Insights*, May 2019
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C., Scherlis, W. The Organizational Impact of a Modular Product Line Architecture in DoD Acquisition - Third in a Series, *Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute Insights*, Apr 2019
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C., Scherlis, W. Towards a New Model of Acquisition: Product-Line Architectures for the DoD - Second in a Series, *Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute Insights*, Mar 2019
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C., Scherlis, W. Emerging Opportunities in Modularity and Open Systems Architectures - First in a Series, *Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute Insights*, Oct 2018
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C., Levinson, H.L. Business and Organizational Impacts for Modular Flexible Ships, *American Society of Naval Engineers Flexible Ships Symposium*, Oct 2018
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Schmidt, D.C., Scherlis, W. Capability Composition and Data Interoperability to Achieve More Effective Results than DoD System-of-Systems Strategies, *DoD Acquisition Research Symposium Proceeding*, Apr 2018
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Hunt, G., Captain, US Navy. Transformation of Test and Evaluation: The Natural Consequences of Model Based Systems Engineering, Modularity and Open Architecture, *DoD Acquisition Research Symposium Proceeding*, Apr 2017
- **Guertin, N.H.** VanBentham, P. Modularity and Open Systems Architecture as Applied to Flexible Modular Warship, *Naval Engineer's Journal*, Dec 2016
- Craft, J.P., **Guertin, N.H.** Open Architecture Opens Opportunities for Acquisition Reform, *Satcom Frontier*, Aug 2016
- Schmidt, D. A Naval Perspective on Open-Systems Architecture, *Software Engineering Institute*, July 2016

- **Guertin, N.H.**, H. Reichel. Open Architecture License Right, a New Era for the Public-Private Marketplace, *Acquisition Research Symposium Proceedings*, Apr 2016
- Antipas, W., Bruhns, P., **Guertin, N.H.**, Porter, A., (SEI/University of Maryland) Schmidt D. (SEI/Vanderbilt Univ.) and Womble, B. Management Strategies for Software Infrastructure in Large-Scale Cyber-Physical Systems for the US Navy, *Cutter IT Journal*, May 2015
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Sweeney, R. Schmidt, D. How the Navy Can Revolutionize Capability Acquisition, *Acquisition Research Symposium Proceedings*, Apr 2015
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Vanbentham, P.J. Payloads and Platforms as Applied to the Flexible Modular Warship, *ASNE Day 2015 Proceedings*, Jan 2015
- **Guertin, N.H.**, et. al. USD(AT&L)'s Guidelines for Creating and Maintaining Competitive Environments for Supplies and Services in the DoD. *USD (AT&L) publication* Dec 2014
- **Guertin, N.H.**, et. al. Department of the Navy (DON) SBIR/STTR Phase III Guidebook *Navy Small Business Programs publication* Jul 2014
- Bruhns, P., **Guertin, N.H.**, Porter, A., (SEI/University of Maryland) Schmidt D. (SEI/Vanderbilt Univ.) Experience Using On-line War Games to Improve the Business of Naval Systems Acquisition *Cutter IT Journal*, May 2014
- **Guertin, N.H.**, et. al. DoD Open Systems Architecture Contract Guidebook for Program Managers, *Office of the Secretary of Defense, USD (AT&L) publication*, Jun 2013
- **Guertin N.H.**, Haskell, V., Womble, B. Naval Open Systems Architecture (OSA) Strategy, *SPIE Conference Proceedings*, Apr 2013.
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Hurt, T. DoD's Open Systems Architecture Contract Guidebook: A Tool for Effective Competition, *Defense AT&L Magazine*, Sep-Oct 2013
- Doerry, N. Cohen, J., **Guertin, N.H.**, Scherer, T. Open Architecture Machinery Control, *ASNE Naval Engineers Journal*, Mar 2012
- Bruhns, P., **Guertin N.H.**, Comparing Acquisition Strategies: Maintenance Free Operating Period vs. Traditional Integrated Logistics Support, *Acquisition Research Symposium proceedings*, Apr 2011

- Clements, P., **Guertin, N.H.** Comparing Acquisition Strategies: Product Lines vs. Open Architecture, *DoD Acquisition Research Symposium Proceedings*, Apr 2010
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Womble, B. Competition and the DoD Marketplace *9th Annual Acquisition Research Symposium Proceedings*, April 2012
- **Guertin, N.H.**, et. al. US Navy Service Acquisition Executive's Software Process Improvement Initiative. Policy on shaping the IT workforce tasked with software development, systems engineering, and acquisition professional training and career development. *Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition)* Jun 2008
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Kalisz, M.S. *Submarine Combat Control System Development with a Focus on Human Systems Integration. Human Systems Integration Symposium*, May 2004
- **Guertin, N.H.**, Miller, R.W. Making Choice Possible, the Right Way to Acoustic Superiority, *American Society of Naval Engineer's Journal*, Oct 1998

12. Speeches Interviews and Presentations

1. "Test and Evaluation Initiatives"; Defense Innovation Days, Southeaster New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEDIA), Aug 2022
2. "Cyber Survivability" at DoD: The intersection of IT modernization and cybersecurity", FedScoop, Apr 2022
3. "Using Value Engineering to Propel Cyber-Physical Systems Acquisition", DoD Acquisition Research Symposium, May 2021
4. "Capability Innovation Model for Software-Intensive Systems", National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, Apr 2019
5. "Business and Organizational Impacts for Modular Flexible Ships", American Society of Naval Engineers Flexible Ships Design Series, Nov 2018
6. "Transformation of Test and Evaluation: The Natural Consequences of Model Based Systems Engineering, Modularity and Open Architecture", Acquisition Research Symposium, Monterey, CA, Apr 2017
7. "Agility-at-Scale for Safety- and Mission-Critical Industrial-Scale Systems", with Dr. Douglas Schmidt, INFORMS Annual Conference, Nashville, TN November 13, 2016.
8. "Innovation and Speed: The Rise of Open Systems", with Dr. Douglas Schmidt, the United States Technology Leadership Council, Reston, VA, August 24, 2016.

COMMITMENTS IN FURTHERANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

NOTE: In order to exercise their legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress timely receive testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch. A simple “yes” or “no” response is appropriate.

13. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress?
Yes.
14. Do you agree, 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 timely?
Yes.
15. Do you agree, 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?
Yes.
16. Do you agree, 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?
Yes.
17. Do you agree, 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?
Yes.
18. Do you agree, 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?
Yes.

19. Do you agree, 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?
Yes.

[The nominee responded to Parts B-F of the committee questionnaire. The text of the questionnaire is set forth in the Appendix to this volume. The nominee's answers to Parts B-F are contained in the committee's executive files.]

SIGNATURE AND DATE

I hereby state that I have read and signed Parts A and B of the foregoing Senate Armed Services Committee Questionnaire, and that the information provided therein and in any document appended thereto, is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, current, accurate, and complete.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicholas H. Guertin", written over a horizontal line.

This 19th day of January, 2023

[The nomination of Honorable Nickolas H. Guertin was reported to the Senate by Chairman Reed on March 28, 2023, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on December 13, 2023.]

