

**TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF: MR.  
MICHAEL P. CADENAZZI, JR. TO BE ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INDUSTRIAL  
BASE POLICY; AND VICE ADMIRAL SCOTT  
W. PAPPANO, USN TO BE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY  
ADMINISTRATOR NATIONAL NUCLEAR SEC-  
URITY ADMINISTRATION**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

APRIL 29, 2025

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**TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2025**

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m. in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Roger Wicker (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Wicker, Fischer, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan, Scott, Budd, Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Warren, Rosen, and Kelly.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER**

Chairman WICKER. Good morning. This hearing will come to order. I welcome our witnesses and their families and I thank them for being here this morning.

The United States is up against the most dangerous threat environment we've faced since World War II. I say it frequently, but it needs to be said even more frequently. I'm grateful that these two individuals have stepped up to help us in these challenging times.

Mr. Scott Pappano has been nominated to be Principal Deputy Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). In this position, Mr. Pappano will help lead an organization tasked with rebuilding and modernizing our long, neglected nuclear weapons stock pile. He must be up to the task because our nuclear dangers are more complex than ever.

Over the past several years, we've watched as Russia, China, and North Korea have rapidly expanded their nuclear arsenals and developed new types of weapons, weapons for which we are not prepared. In his previous position, Mr. Pappano saw firsthand that the U.S. is far behind in ship building. I hope he'll bring important lessons from that experience and apply them to this role. Modernizing our nuclear deterrent is a national imperative, and this Committee expects to see results. I look forward to hearing how Mr. Pappano intends to drive NNSA to achieve this objective.

Mr. Michael Cadenazzi has been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of Defense for industrial based policy at the Department of Defense (DOD). Mr. Cadenazzi served 10 years in the U.S. Navy as a cryptologic officer, and then took his talents to private industry. He spent 20 years addressing strategic and operational defense and aerospace challenges. He has launched or participated in startups working on analytics, technical service, and artificial intelligence (AI).

He has been nominated to a position that is relatively new, but it must not be overlooked. As a matter of fact, it should be given very serious attention. The Office of Industrial Base Policy is one of the most important posts in the Pentagon. We need a large and capable cohort of defense industrial policy analysts who can bring serious options to the Secretary of Defense and the Congress, and we need those analysts to be guided by a capable leader.

I look forward to hearing Mr. Cadenazzi's opinions on how we can improve and simplify the department's analytic capacity and investment authorities to build a more resilient industrial base. I look forward to their testimony.

I now turn to my dear friend and Ranking Member, Senator Reed.

#### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED**

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me welcome Mr. Cadenazzi and Admiral Pappano. Thank you, gentlemen. Welcome. Congratulations on your nomination.

Also, this is a special moment because we have a reunion of Rogers High School in Newport, Rhode Island here, and I want to recognize all the Rhode Islanders.

Chairman WICKER. We're pressed for time.

[Laughter.]

Senator REED. I know. Well, I can name them one by one if you'd like, but all right, I will move on.

Mr. Cadenazzi, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy serves as a principal advisor to the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, for all industrial base policies and related matters. The position has a wide scope of responsibilities from ensuring supply chain security, to guiding Department-wide investments into critical defense technology sectors, to coordinating small business programs.

If you are confirmed, you'll be the second person to hold this office. As such, there are a number of important challenges you will need to address. In particular, the Defense Department needs a coordinated strategy for working with the defense industry to expand production capacity of weapon systems, munitions, and key technologies such as microelectronics, hyper sonics, and biomanufacturing. These technologies will be crucial for maintaining America's global competitiveness and will require working with industry across the broad from prime contractors to sub-tier suppliers and producers of raw materials. I would ask for your plans for addressing this significant challenge as we go forward.

Further, as we've seen with greater clarity over the past several years, ensuring supply chain security and access to strategic minerals such as rare earth elements is critical for the Department

and the defense industrial base. The Defense Department must take a proactive approach to identifying threats and vulnerabilities for its supply chains and develop plans and tools to mitigate those risks.

I would note that doing so will require the Department to work across the inter-agency with multiple other Federal agencies. I would like to know your thoughts on how you would address this challenge. Mr. Cadenazzi, if confirmed, your experience as a Navy officer and as a business leader in a high-tech field will be valuable for meeting these challenges.

However, I would indicate too that you'll have to pick up and grow your knowledge very rapidly because these fields are changing so rapidly. You have a challenging task and I wish you well.

Admiral Pappano, you have been nominated to be Deputy Administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administrator or NNSA. You retired last month as the Vice Admiral after a 36-year career in the Navy. Thank you for your service, sir. You were a principal leader and military deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research. So, you come well equipped to this task.

If confirmed, you'll lead the day-to-day operations of the NNSA. Most importantly, you'll lead efforts to modernize the warheads and our nuclear triad of submarines, heavy bombers, and intercontinental ballistic missiles. The NNSA has been working for years to complete this modernization, but the Department is experiencing tremendous workload as it simultaneously recapitalizes warhead programs and undertakes the major rebuilding of its nuclear infrastructure, much of which dates back to the Manhattan Project.

I would note that the NNSA's workforce is specialized nuclear scientists and engineers is fundamental to accomplishing these missions. I'm concerned that morale in the Department has been badly harmed in recent months as hundreds of employees have been fired or threatened with firing. Mr. Pappano, as a career Navy officer, I would like to know how you will approach these challenges, including how you'll work to retain the skilled civil servants to maintain our nuclear deterrent.

Thank you again to our nominees and I look forward to your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Reed, and I too am delighted that the State of Rhode Island is so well represented—

Senator REED. Thank you.

Chairman WICKER.—by individuals. At this point we will recognize our guests for their opening statements. Mr. Cadenazzi, you are recognized for your opening statements, sir.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL P. CADENAZZI, JR., NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INDUSTRIAL BASE POLICY**

Mr. CADENAZZI. Thank you, Senator. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would like to thank President Trump, the Administration, Secretary Hegseth, and his team, for their support of my nomination to serve

as the next Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy.

I must also thank and acknowledge my family. My father, retired Navy Commander Michael Sr., my mother Joanne, and my sister Marisa. My three daughters, Mhairi, Hannah, and Iona. Their energy and laughter give my life color and their successes fill me with immeasurable pride. I want to thank my wife, Sarah. I would not be anywhere, much less here, without her.

My entire adult life has been spent in the defense sector and in support of the effort to address the critical needs of our industrial base. From my oath to the Nation as a Tulane NROTC midshipman in August 1991, through 10 years of Active Duty service as a naval cryptologic officer, I had the privilege to serve with dedicated military professionals of every rank and branch. Over the past 2 decades, I have been fortunate enough to work with the defense industrial base from the primes down into the supply chain while tackling myriad business issues.

At this critical time, I see the scale of challenges facing our military while competing with a near peer pacing us in many ways. In my view, the U.S. Defense Industrial Base, we face constraints in crucial and exquisite capabilities delivered in uncomfortably limited quantities over long timelines, experiencing delivery delays, and increasing costs. There are simply not enough weapons or platforms and our readiness is inadequate. These are national level challenges that undermine our lethality and security.

Senators, I want this role because I want America to win. I want to contribute to America's future victories, and I want to take part in overcoming these challenges and forging a more resilient, innovative, and responsive version of the industrial machine that has underpinned our natural security since World War II.

This role is critical to Secretary Hegseth's commitment to rebuild the military by revitalizing the defense industrial base. If confirmed, I will execute the role with three guiding principles: prioritization, productivity, and production.

First, prioritization. We must focus on the urgent needs of war fighters today while positioning for the challenges of tomorrow. There are immediate problems in lethality, lower tier supply chain, and readiness. There is the need for long-term transformation flowing from increased private capital, invigorated domestic manufacturing, and secure access to vital materials and minerals.

There is an abundance of analysis on our industrial problems and thankfully, an equally abundant set of proposed solutions, all of which outstrip our cash and capabilities to respond. Hard choices await us as a department and as a Nation.

Second, productivity. This office must be a catalyst to increase industrial productivity at every level. If confirmed, I will collaborate across government and industry to target critical investment into the most pressing supply chain gaps and bottlenecks. I believe we must accelerate adoption of today's digital tools to secure the leap ahead benefits of AI and quantum for the future. Our goal must be to maximize the productive impact of every defense dollar.

Third, production. The DOD must accelerate and scale industrial base production now in advance of major conflict, and we must position industry to surge in fulfillment of future demands. Progress

against these objectives will make a measurable difference in our national security.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the outpouring of support and my pursuit of this effort. It has been truly humbling. What has been equally gratifying is the unabashed commitment of individuals across government and industry to work together to make the industrial base better. We have done this work before and now we must do it again.

Senators, I respectfully request your support for my confirmation and for the vital tasks that lie ahead to reawaken the innovative spirit of the American industrial base and to ensure that our Nation remains a force for peace and stability through strength. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Michael P. Cadenazzi, Jr. follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY MR. MICHAEL P. CADENAZZI, JR.

I would like to thank President Trump, the Administration, Secretary Hegseth and his team for their support of my nomination to serve as the next Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy.

I must also thank and acknowledge my family.

My father, retired Navy Commander Michael Sr, my mother Joanne, and my sister Marisa.

My three daughters, Mhairi, Hannah and Iona. Their energy and laughter give my life color. Their successes fill me with immeasurable pride.

And I want to thank my wife, Sarah. I would not be anywhere, much less here, without her.

My entire adult life has been spent in the defense sector and in support of the effort to address the critical needs of our industrial base. From my oath to the Nation as a Tulane NROTC midshipman in August 1991 through 10 years of Active Duty service as a Naval Cryptologic officer, I had the privilege of serving with dedicated military professionals of every rank and branch. And over the past two decades I have been fortunate enough to work with the defense industrial base from the primes down into the supply chain while tackling myriad business issues.

At this critical time, I see the scale of challenges facing our military while competing with a near peer pacing us in many ways. In my view of the U.S. Defense Industrial Base, we face constraints *in crucial and exquisite capabilities, delivered in uncomfortably limited quantities over long timelines, while experiencing delivery delays and increasing costs*. There are simply not enough weapons or platforms. And our readiness is inadequate.

These are national level challenges that undermine our lethality and security.

Senators, I want this role because I want America to win. I want to contribute to America's future victories. And I want to take part in overcoming these challenges and forging a more resilient, innovative, and responsive version of the industrial machine that has underpinned our national security since World War II.

This role is critical to Secretary Hegseth's commitment to "Rebuild the Military" by "Revitalizing the defense industrial base".

If confirmed, I will execute the role with three guiding principles:

Prioritization. Productivity. And Production.

First, *Prioritization*: We must focus on the urgent needs of warfighters today, while positioning for the challenges of tomorrow. There are immediate problems in lethality, lower tier supply chains & readiness. And there is the need for long-term transformation flowing from increased private capital, invigorated domestic manufacturing, and secure access to vital materials and minerals.

There is an abundance of analysis on our industrial problems. And, thankfully, an equally abundant set of proposed solutions. All of which outstrip our cash and capabilities to respond. Hard choices await us as a Department and a Nation.

Second, *Productivity*: This office must be a catalyst to increase industrial productivity at every level. If confirmed, I will collaborate across government and industry to target critical investment into the most pressing supply chain gaps and bottlenecks. And I believe we must accelerate adoption of today's digital tools to secure the leap-ahead benefits of AI and quantum. Our goal must be to maximize the productive impact of every defense dollar.

Third, *Production*: The DOD must accelerate and scale industrial base production now in advance of conflict. And we must position industry to surge in fulfillment of future demands. Progress against these objectives will make a measurable difference in our national security.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the outpouring of support in my pursuit of this role—it has been humbling. What has been equally gratifying is the unabashed commitment of individuals across government and industry committed to “work together to make the industrial base better.” We have done this work before, and now we must do it again.

Senators, I respectfully request your support for my confirmation and for the vital tasks that lie ahead: to reawaken the innovative spirit of the American Industrial Base and to ensure that our Nation remains a force for peace and stability through strength.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Mr. Cadenazzi. Vice Admiral Pappano.

**STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL SCOTT W. PAPPANO, USN,  
NOMINATED TO BE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR  
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and Members of the Committee, thank you for your consideration of my nomination to be the Principal Deputy Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, NNSA at the U.S. Department of Energy.

Since first taking the oath of office in July, 1985, I have devoted my entire adult life to serving our Nation as commissioned officer in the Navy. I thank President Trump and Energy Secretary Wright for affording me the opportunity to shift course and continue my public service in a greater and more impactful capacity.

I also need to thank my wife of 34 years, Kate, for joining me here today and for her service to the Nation as the commander-in-chief of the Pappano household. Nothing I have achieved would’ve been possible without her love and support, and her commitment to raising our children throughout my frequent absences is a testament to her strength and resilience. We are both proud of the adults our children have grown up to be.

Foundational qualifications to serve as the principal deputy administrator of NNSA, include an extensive background in organizational management and being well qualified to manage nuclear weapons, infrastructure, construction and maintenance, non-proliferation, material disposition programs, in a manner to enhance and protect U.S. national security through the military application of nuclear energy.

I believe that, if confirmed, my background, experience, and expertise would be well suited to execute the duties of this office. I also believe deeply in the mission. Strategic nuclear deterrence is fundamental to our national security and modernizing our Nation’s nuclear weapons stockpile, nuclear forces, and supporting infrastructure is a critical national security priority.

My qualifications are founded upon the bedrock of a strong technical education, with an undergraduate degree in marine engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy, and a graduate degree in nuclear engineering for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Both my education and leadership were honed across a 36-year career as a nuclear submarine officer and a military acquisition professional.

I have humbly led exceptional teams at all levels with the understanding that my calling was to make the people around me more effective and achieve greater outcomes than they otherwise could have achieved by empowering them, building esprit de corps, fostering deep technical competence, and removing barriers to their success. As a submarine line officer, I completed sea rotations on five submarines across all classes, culminating in command of a nuclear attack submarine. I also served as military assistant for Assistant Secretary of Defense, charged with both strategic nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation policy.

As a military acquisition professional, I served as major program manager for lifecycle sustainment of operational, strategic, and attack submarines, oversaw research and development activities of the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Laboratories, established a program executive office to focus on cradle to grave of lifecycle activities for all nuclear strategic ballistic missile submarines, and eventually served as a principal deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, charged with overseeing the procurement and sustainment of all Navy and Marine Corps weapon systems.

This has all led me to this unique moment in time where, if confirmed, my expertise and experience would align well with the leadership necessary for NNSA, to overcome generational challenges and deliver programs of record to meet national security needs. I understand the complexity of the threats and the critical importance of the NNSA mission. I have a deep understanding of naval nuclear propulsion, from construction and testing, through operations, lifecycle sustainment, and eventual decommissioning.

I oversaw the recapitalization of our sea-based strategic nuclear deterrent and work closely with other stakeholders engaged in nuclear modernization efforts to include United States Strategic Command (STRATCOM) Strategic Assistance Programs, the United Kingdom Dreadnought Alliance, and other legs of the U.S. nuclear triad.

I supervised contract performance in our nuclear ship builders and led the standup of a navy industrial based team to spearhead data driven assessment of the submarine supply chain, and collaboration across U.S. Department of Defense and Congress to target industrial base investment in critical infrastructure, supply chain capacity and resilience, manufacturing, technology, workforce attraction, recruitment, training, and retention.

I believe that if confirmed the lessons I have learned on my Navy journey would translate well to the NNSA journey that must ultimately modernize the nuclear stockpile in supporting infrastructure without disrupting production activities to ensure that the Nation maintains a safe, secure, reliable, and credible strategic nuclear deterrent.

I understand this is a no fail mission. I am honored and humbled to be considered for this nomination and look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Vice Admiral Pappano follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY VICE ADMIRAL SCOTT PAPPANO

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of the committee, thank for your consideration of my nomination to be the Principal Deputy Administrator

of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) at the U.S. Department of Energy. Since first taking the Oath of Office in July 1985, I have devoted my entire adult life to serving our Nation as a commissioned officer in the Navy, and I thank President Trump and Energy Secretary Wright for affording me the opportunity to shift course and continue my public service in a greater and more impactful capacity. I also need to thank my wife of 34 years—Kate—for joining me here today and for her service to the Nation as commander-in-chief of the Pappano household. Nothing I have achieved would have been possible without her love and support, and her commitment to raising our children throughout my frequent absences is a testament to her strength and resilience—we are both proud of the adults our children have grown up to be.

Foundational qualifications to serve as Principal Deputy Administrator of NNSA include an extensive background in organizational management and being well-qualified to manage nuclear weapons, infrastructure construction and maintenance, non-proliferation, and material disposition programs in a manner to enhance and protect U.S. national security through the military application of nuclear energy. I believe that, if confirmed, my background, experience, and expertise would be well-suited to execute the duties of this office. I also believe deeply in the mission—strategic nuclear deterrence is fundamental to our national security and modernizing our Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile, nuclear forces, and supporting infrastructure is a critical national security priority.

My qualifications are founded upon the bedrock of a strong technical education with an undergraduate degree in marine engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy and a graduate degree in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Both my education and leadership were honed across a 36-year career as a nuclear submarine officer and military acquisition professional. I have humbly led exceptional teams at all levels with the understanding that my calling was to make the people around me more effective and achieve greater outcomes than they otherwise could have achieved by empowering them, building esprit de corps, fostering deep technical competence, and identifying and removing barriers to their success. As a submarine line officer, I completed sea rotations on five submarines across all classes, culminating in command of a nuclear attack submarine. I also served as a Military Assistant for an Assistant Secretary of Defense charged with both strategic nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation policy. As a military acquisition professional, I served as major program manager for lifecycle sustainment of operational strategic and attack submarines, oversaw research and development activities of the Naval Undersea Warfare Center labs, established a program executive office to focus on cradle-to-grave lifecycle activities for all nuclear strategic ballistic missile submarines, and eventually served as Principal Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy charged with overseeing the procurement and sustainment of all Navy and Marine Corps weapon systems.

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I believe that, if confirmed, the lessons I have learned on my Navy journey would translate well to the NNSA journey that must ultimately modernize the nuclear stockpile and supporting infrastructure—without disrupting production activities—to ensure the Nation maintains a safe, secure, reliable, and credible strategic nuclear deterrent.

I understand this is a no fail mission. I am honored and humbled to be considered for this nomination, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you both for your excellent testimony.

At this point, I am required to ask standard questions that we ask of every civilian nominee. So, if both of you would turn your mics on and just answer yes or no into the microphone.

Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

[Both witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

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

[Both witnesses answered in the negative.]

Chairman WICKER. 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?

[Both witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Chairman WICKER. 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?

[Both witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Chairman WICKER. 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?

[Both witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Chairman WICKER. There may be some from this hearing. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests?

[Both witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

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

[Both witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much.

Now we'll proceed to questions. I'm going to defer my questions until later and recognize for the first questions, Chairwoman Fischer, who is chair of the Strategic Subcommittee and along with Senator King has done yeoman work in the subject matter of nuclear security. So, Madam Chairwoman, you are recognized.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Reed. Thank you, gentlemen for being here today and for your willingness to continue to serve this country. Admiral, thank you for coming in to visit. I appreciated you taking time and the conversation that we had.

If confirmed, can you tell me how you will work to ensure that NNSA weapons production remains on schedule?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Senator. Yes, if confirmed, obviously, shifting to production is a key element right now for us to modernize the nuclear weapons stockpile right now. We've done a very good job of stockpile management in a science-based manner and kept that over the years. However, now we have to transition that from the science-based stockpile management to actual pro-

duction facilities and make sure we modernize those facilities, making sure that we don't lose the science in the process and continue that going forward.

I'll do that by looking across how we are modernizing our facilities right now, and try to bring as much advanced manufacturing capability as we can. As we look at the Manhattan Era Project buildings that we're dealing with, a lot of these facilities as we modernize those, bring in modern technology so that we can be much more effective going forward in our production of nuclear weapons stockpile.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

We talked a little bit about NNSA's 25-year Enterprise Blueprint, a roadmap to modernize the infrastructure there, and some of which as you brought up in our discussion, it dates back to the Manhattan Project. We won't be able to produce the weapons that we need without the facilities needed to process materials like uranium, lithium, high explosives that go in those nuclear weapons. So, anything we can do as you look at that modernization process, please let us know.

Mr.—can you say your last name? I think the chairman mispronounced it.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No, not at all. I heard it all, ma'am. Cadenazzi.

Senator FISCHER. Cadenazzi.

Chairman WICKER. Take that back.

[Laughter.]

Senator FISCHER. I take that back. Both the Department of Defense and NNSA have similar challenges with their industrial bases, and I believe that we have an opportunity now to address underlying issues in a way that strengthens both the nuclear industrial base and the defense industrial base.

If confirmed, do you commit to working closely with NNSA and the Department of Energy on policies like increasing our skilled manufacturing workforce that would impact both of those industrial bases?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question. The significance of it, particularly in light of the workforce issues and access to materials that we're facing across the industrial base, these are major challenges that both the NNSA and the broader defense industry face and are dealing with. If confirmed, I'm thrilled at the opportunity to speak to you about how and where the Industrial Base Policy Office and I might be able to focus.

Senator FISCHER. Great. What we've seen happen in the Ukraine war has shown us that militaries and modern conflicts, they expend munitions at a much faster pace than we ever expected before. Our stockpiles must be adjusted to account for this, and we must expand our munitions production capacity. We have to expand that.

We've taken some steps to address it in recent years, and we have the opportunity to make those generational investments through the reconciliation process. In your opening statement, sir, you said that production must be scaled now before conflict starts. I agree with that. If confirmed, what steps would you take to accomplish that goal?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Appreciate the question again, Senator. The issue of munitions production, is the top of the priority list and something I've discussed with multiple Senators on this Committee. I'm excited to work with the Committee, if confirmed, on this topic.

There are a couple of major things that I think will drive this. One is predictable and stable defense budget and program spend. So, the more we can stabilize that, the more industry we'll be able to align around it. A better understanding of industry, of what the expectations for surge capacity are, will make it clear what the potential opportunities are for them and the level of capital required to increase facilities and workforce.

That's a major opportunity for the Department to articulate what would be a big, hairy, audacious goal in business school terms. To go ahead and say, we need a lot more capability from you and we need to agree then on the investment required to meet that point.

We need to scale the workforce as well. There are many initiatives underway to improve workforce capabilities across the country. We need to grow those and take advantage of small businesses as well. If confirmed, these are all exciting opportunities for us to help address what is an obvious and well-reported gap on this issue.

Senator FISCHER. Are you familiar with the Department's National Defense Industrial Strategy?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I am Senator, yes.

Senator FISCHER. Do you have any concerns with that strategy or think that there are gaps there that still need to be addressed?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I think the strategy is solid. Given the expectations of the previous Administration and the goals they were looking to achieve, I've reviewed the external open-source material for that and the associated implementation plan. If confirmed, I'm eager to work with the Industrial Base Policy Office, the Administration, and the committees to understand what changes we believe are necessary. I'm happy to work with you on that and to make sure that we tune that to meet the current needs of the moment, particularly in light of the changing requirements of the new Administration.

Senator FISCHER. Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Madam Chairwoman, it may not be adequately staffed at the Department, and that's something we'll want to talk about. The way I understood how to pronounce the witness's name, was he said it rhymes with snazzy. I now recognize my distinguished Ranking Member, Mr. Reed from Rhode Island.

Senator REED. Well, thank you. I'm just amazed that you can't pronounce a simple name like Cadenazzi and Pappano. Hey, this is amazing.

[Laughter.]

Senator REED. Okay. Mr. Cadenazzi.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Cadenazzi.

Senator REED. Cadenazzi. I have an Italian—I grew up in Cranston and Knightsville with all the Italians from Itri.

The recent tariffs enacted by the Trump administration will have a definite impact on the defense industrial base, and if they're matched by reciprocal tariffs, that will exacerbate the impact on

the supply chain, the cost of materiel. So, how will you assess the impacts of the tariffs on DOD and the defense industrial base, and how do you intend to work with the industrial base to deal with this issue?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question and the significance of it. The tariffs were a complicated non-linear set of decisions being made on the global scale. I do think you're right that there are impacts to the industrial base. However, I'm not currently aware of any particular analysis regarding the particular impacts on the aerospace and defense industrial base. I understand that the purpose of the tariffs for a whole-of-government approach to reshape certain elements of the economy, manufacturing, access to materials, some of which we agree are good. Increased domestic manufacturing, increased domestic production are good things. Where we can achieve those ends, we should be pleased to work on that subject.

If confirmed, I'm excited to work with the Committee, with you, and with the industrial base to understand what the impacts on the industrial base will be, any negative impacts, and to prepare actions necessary to mitigate the effect of those negative impacts over time.

Senator REED. Another aspect of this whole tariff situation is that part of, I think the way to accelerate the growth of our industrial base is to partner closely with our allies. But we're involved with a heated discussion with Canada and other natural allies about tariffs. I think that will inhibit our ability to cooperate and to integrate with them and to expand quickly our industrial base. What view do you have on that?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, our allies and partners at the industrial base level are critical. There's an incredible, robust exchanges between companies and between countries that enable us to work and operate and actually enable substantial weapons sales overseas. Last year's, 2024's defense exports total exceeded \$300 billion. Those relationships remain strong. I'm convinced that there's still robust interest across companies to work with their partners wherever possible.

I see substantial opportunities for us to increase that collaboration, particularly in the sharing of the sale of parts, assemblies, sub components, those kinds of things where we can go ahead and close gaps and mitigate efforts, issues that we have in the domestic U.S. defense industrial base, by working more closely in a more targeted way with our allies and partners. So, if confirmed, I'm excited to work on that.

Senator REED. If you see a severe impact of tariffs on our production in the United States, our industrial base, will you let this Committee know very rapidly?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, of course.

Senator REED. Thank you. Admiral Pappano, again, thank you for your extraordinary service in the submarines. They are our key tier in the deterrence and the nuclear triad. Thank you.

You're going into NNSA right now, and you've got the highest demand since 1980's in terms of nuclear weapons and nuclear systems. At the same time, you're trying to rebuild an aged infrastructure. I'm being polite.

But recent actions by DOGE [Department of Government Efficiency] in coming in and dismissing people, and then many times, 5 days later, hiring them back, which is even more disturbing. The 2000 Federal workforce that NNSA had, is now down to about 1,650. They're at perhaps a breaking point in terms of not only the demands on them to do the job, but also this sense of, "Will I be going next week or will I still be here?" How are you going to respond to this morale problem and this personnel problem?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Senator. I'm not fully apprised of all the hirings and firings or goings on personnel-wise inside NNSA right now, only what's available, open source. However, if confirmed, that will be a top priority of mine. Understanding what that workforce needs, making sure it is properly resourced in people and funding as required to accomplish this no-fail mission of recapitalizing our strategic nuclear infrastructure, and getting back to weapons production.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, sir. Again, thank you for your service, both of you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator Budd.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you both for being here. Thanks to your families as well, for your long service and your willing to continue in service in these unique and important roles.

Mr. Cadenazzi, and we'll just go with sir for you, since we've had all the challenges of pronunciation. On April 4th of this year, China's Ministry of Commerce, they imposed export restrictions on seven rare earth elements in magnets. So, giving our ongoing heavy reliance on China, for many of these rare earths, there's an increasingly unacceptable level of risk to our ability to produce everything from planes to munitions. The United States should have created a rare earth supply chain independent of China a decade ago.

Companies like Vulcan Elements, which is a rare earth magnet manufacturer that's fully decoupled from China, and is based in North Carolina, they're attempting to do just that. But efforts need to accelerate and accelerate at scale. So, in your advanced policy questions, you discussed your intent to leverage the DPA or the Defense Production Act, as well as the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment, or the IBAS, to support private sector investment in our defense industrial base.

So, if confirmed, how will you leverage these authorities to end our reliance on China for rare earths?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, this is a critical opportunity for the country to go ahead and increase its ability to develop domestic resources and decrease our reliance on China within the industrial base. If confirmed, I'm eager to work with this Committee, with you, on the issues associated with the application of DPA and IBAS as direct opportunities to increase our investment into the domestic mineral production chain. I believe DPA and IBAS collectively invested over \$540 million into these resource developments efforts over the past few years.

We can continue that. We should. There are other additional capabilities we should explore: partnership with allies to go ahead and secure additional resources and increase production capabili-

ties, recycling. There's numerous strategies which are available to us to go ahead and take advantage of this time in this window where there's some sense of urgency about it. Before we lose that sense of urgency, I believe we need to make real initiatives and real effort to go ahead and close the gap.

So, if confirmed, Senator, it's an exciting opportunity and time for us to help on that.

Senator BUDD. Thank you for that answer.

So, if confirmed, will you commit to working with not only this Committee, but also the Banking Committee to make improvements to the DPA?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator BUDD. Thank you. The Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. or CFIUS, is also primarily within the banking jurisdiction, but the Department of Defense and the Industrial Base Policy Office in particular, play an important role in reviews conducted by the committee. I frequently hear folks from North Carolina, including those that are military installations in North Carolina with concerns about foreign investments, specifically from China, near military installations.

So, do you see a need for the DOD to improve engagement on the topic of foreign investment risks to national security?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, thank you for the question. This is a critical topic and one that's at the top of the list for the industrial based policy office, currently. The CFIUS office, the associated authorities around identification of adversarial capital and adversarial companies, Chinese companies working in the defense industrial base, is a top priority for the office.

All those issues around purchasing of land and those sort of things around military installations. This is something that I think requires additional resourcing to look at. I believe that those issues are understaffed relative to the demand to look at all the transactions that are potentially high risk. If confirmed, I'm eager to work with you and the Committee to understand—the other committees to understand what can be done to bring additional scrutiny to bear on this topic and what we can do to resource the analysis that's required.

Senator BUDD. Thank you.

You mentioned additional resources. I think that's important. Do you see bottlenecks of the DODs engagement on this issue?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I'm not aware of any particular bottlenecks that currently exist. I'm aware that there's a significant number of transactions that have been looked at and there's a belief generally that there's a need for more. However, I can't comment specifically on what the scale of that gap is. If confirmed, I'm eager to understand and work with you to understand what is additional resources would be required to close any gap relative to the risk exposure we're willing to tolerate.

Senator BUDD. Thank you for that. Admiral, a question. This is different than SMRs, which are often talked about, but what are your views on using modular micro reacts as an expeditionary power source and how do you balance their adoption with security and the concern about proliferation?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Senator. If confirmed, obviously there's some significant potential with micro reactors and what we could do with those either in civilian or military application. Certainly, if confirmed, I'll work with the NNSA administrator and the Secretary of Energy to make sure that we are properly monitoring and overseeing what we would do with those micro reactors to make sure we don't have a nonproliferation condition.

Senator BUDD. Thank you both for your time. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Senator Budd. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to both of you and your families. Going to the fitness to serve question, I ask the following two initial questions of all nominees before any of the committees on which I sit, so I will ask you.

We'll start with Mr. Cadenazzi. 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. CADENAZZI. No.

Senator HIRONO. Mr. Pappano? Admiral?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

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

[Both witnesses answered in the negative.]

Senator HIRONO. For Mr. Cadenazzi, I championed a provision in last year's NDAA that created a program focused on advanced manufacturing capabilities in the Indo-Pacific to more quickly construct unmanned systems and parts for ships and submarine repairs, and this program is essential to bolstering deterrence in the region. DOD and the services have always struggled to coordinate industrial based modernization efforts.

How do you plan to foster greater integration across the services for this important program?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question. This is a critical issue. Hawaii represents a significant portion of the organic industrial base and our broader defense industrial base. There are many tools we have to bring alignment across the industrial base initiatives that are there and the groups that are responsible for it.

The first thing is leadership. That is the wherewithal to go ahead and get into the weeds. The macro issues, I think, thankfully, there's a substantial number of authorities and resources available that are made available by the Congress over time to the DOD to take action on these issues.

At the micro level, we need to get into the details to understand where individual organizations may not be getting it with regards to the opportunities here, in particular, the new, I think, acquisition and industrial based executive order does a good job to highlight the acquisition personnel to workforce training initiatives, and things that we can do to go ahead and drive more understanding into the leaders at the tactical level, we need to make decisions to invest in the integration of the industrial base.

Senator HIRONO. I hope that you will focus on this aspect of what we need to do, because I know you are aware that Indo-Pacific is

the largest AOR [area of responsibility], and we need to provide flexibilities when the ships are out to sea and they need to have flexibility and repair and doing all the things that will keep them going.

So, I hope that you'll visit Hawaii and see for yourself the capabilities that we need to strengthen. Again for you, I have met with small businesses in the past as they struggle to comply with the requirements to meet the cybersecurity maturity model certification requirements, and it's pretty complicated, and they have a hard time complying, as I said.

So, I am prioritizing a provision in this year's NDAA that would require the DOD to provide additional support and innovative tools for small businesses to ensure that they are aligned with DODs CMMC requirements, allowing them to save money and contribute to diversifying the defense industrial base that you are very focused on strengthening.

What are your thoughts on the provision that would require DOD to provide more assistance to small businesses to enable them to work with you all?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, this is a critical topic, and it has been a bit of a roadblock for small businesses over time. It's great that you're bringing this issue up. Within the small business office, within the Industrial Base Policy Office, there's a program called Project Spectrum, which is intended to go out to small businesses that are operating in the defense sector to help them go ahead and get the resources and understanding and analysis they need to accelerate and reduce the cost of their compliance with CMMC.

If confirmed, I'm eager to work with you on this provision, your proposals going forward. I think anything we can do to streamline the requirements while also ensuring a more robust and resilient security and base for our cyber infrastructure, is critical opportunity for the Department and we should look at that.

Senator HIRONO. Should you be confirmed, as I believe you will be, that I would like to work with you on how we can better strengthen this part of our supply chain. Because without our small businesses, many of whom are dropping out of working with the DOD for a number of reasons, including complying with the security requirements. So, this is something that I would want to be very specific in following up with you.

One more question for you. The COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical competition with China has exposed the deep fragilities in the United States defense supply chain, as we mentioned. So, for example, we remain heavily reliant on foreign sources for critical earth elements. So, what steps do you plan to take to address this significant issue?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question. The issue of access to raw materials, rare earths in particular, is one that is particularly challenging. The Industrial Base Policy Office has invested over \$540 million in the past on these topics. I think we need to accelerate and invigorate those investments, but also align them to the most critical and impactful opportunities that'll have the most impact on our most critical near-term needs.

Whether that's munitions lethality or readiness, we should make those decisions in those investments promptly and get them mov-

ing so we can see the impact as soon as possible. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on that issue.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator Sheehy.

Senator SHEEHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'll start with you, Admiral. You talked about the Manhattan Project in your comments, and I think you know, that was an era when the Government was oftentimes the hot bed of innovation, and I think we can all agree that's not the case anymore. So, as we're looking at—you know, I was reading about China having a salt-based fission reactor online just recently, which of course is a huge leap in technology.

How are you going to incentivize private industry innovation to make sure that we either regain or stay in the lead for nuclear innovation around the world?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes. Thank you for that question, Senator. Obviously, you know, our national labs, our strategic labs, they are really leading edge on some of this innovation and technology and really a national treasure for all of us. So, I want to make sure we continue that science-based approach that we have at our national labs, but also making sure that we take the opportunity to coordinate with other business and other academic institutions to go leverage what other innovations are going on across the country.

Senator SHEEHY. For example, there's a number of smaller companies innovating in micro reactors, and they're having a very hard time getting access to processed fissionable material so they can proceed with, not just their development, but actually the production of these items. How can you streamline the access of this material? Of course, it has to be controlled, and we have to vet these companies, but many of them are vetted and are capable of receiving this material, yet they'll wait years on a very simple approval. How can you expedite that?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. I'm not fully apprised, Senator, on all of the details within NNSA on the processes for that, but I commit that I will work with the NNSA administrator and the Secretary of Energy and as necessary, the Department of Defense to make sure I look at those processes and find ways to streamline those as appropriate.

Senator SHEEHY. You know, our triad is from a bygone era. Our B-52s are coming up on 70 years old as far as the airframes. Our silos in Montana for the minuteman, you know, those are half a century old technology, if not older, and you know, luckily our undersea leg of the triad is pretty healthy, but we can't build those subs fast enough, as you know. So, how are you going to contribute to a revitalization of that triad to make sure we are competing with and leading China and other near peers?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes. Thank you for the question, Senator. Obviously, I'm completely aligned with you on the need to recapitalize all legs of our nuclear triad right now. If confirmed, NNSA's key role in that is making sure we maintain the nuclear stockpile stewardship as we move into production of new weapons. Also look for, obviously, innovative technologies or innovative ways to design

weapons or weapons materials through advanced technologies to get after weapons production more quickly going forward here.

Senator SHEEHY. Mr. Cadenazzi, regarding acquisition reform, I think in the past 25 years since the global war on terror started, we've all seen every lab accelerator, you know, innovation unit, lots of little tents are stood up saying, "We're going to change innovation for acquisition. We're going to accelerate acquisition, we're going to get geared to the war fighter."

All we hear is a lot of offices stood up, a lot of money spent, but very little progress is made. It's time for real progress, as we've seen across the world in Israel and the war in Ukraine. Defense acquisition has to turn a page and be fundamentally restructured, so we can buy things faster. We can welcome more suppliers to our industrial base. Welcome them, not scare them away with unneeded regulation and burdensome compliance requirements like Senator Hirono just mentioned.

So, what are the top three things you're going to do as fast as you can do, besides ask for more money, to actually change the defense acquisition paradigm, to broaden our industrial base and strengthen it?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question. It was a pleasure to talk to you last week. Thank you for the time. So, when it comes to the acquisition reform process, I think former Secretary Kendall said it best that, "There's no such thing as acquisition reform, there's just acquisition improvement." I think that holds true, that there's a lot to be done.

My particular focus in this area is centered on a couple of particular things. One, is to more fully leverage the available authorities like middle tier of acquisition, other transaction authority, through education of the acquisition workforce. I think the new executive order captures that we need to move that into law and make sure that that becomes something that's driven in a more actionable way by the Department.

Two, is predictable, stable budgets will allow us to go ahead and mitigate some of the risks associated with how the industrial base and the programs respond. They make plans, budgets change, and then necessarily their activities in the industrial base alignment around them have to change as well.

Then, third, is anything we can do to sort of decrease the level of regulation, the level of difficulty in getting access to work. So, you mentioned new vendors, new companies. We want that. We now have a time when there's a lot of new interest in the Defense Department in serving it. We should take advantage of that as every way we can.

If confirmed, I'm excited to work with you and the committee on that issue.

Senator SHEEHY. Well, our acquisition structure usually fights the last war, and in my era, it was the MRAPV, the Mine Resistant Armor Protected Vehicles. Bob Gates pushed those through. We got it done and saved a lot of lives, including a lot of folks I know.

Chairman WICKER. Here. Here.

Senator SHEEHY. But it came too late. Instead of innovating after our 17, 18, 19-year-old kids are dying on the battlefield, let's innovate beforehand. Because they're the ones that are going to pay the

price for our failures. So, for both of you, I ask you, you focus heavily on the reforms we need because we need to be ready next time. Thanks.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Sheehy. Senator King, before I recognize you, let me just followup Mr. Cadenazzi. On middle tier acquisition needing to be put into law, I trust you've read my FoRGED Act?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. That the enactment of that would be one of the very ways we could statutorily authorize these sorts of things.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Absolutely, Senator. I think it's a critical improvement on the process along with rescissions and the various changes to other laws that are mentioned in it.

Chairman WICKER. Good. Well, Senator Reed and I and the Committee are hard at work on that. We hope we could do it quickly. Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Pappano, I want to talk about two or three things with you: capacity, proliferation, and speed. Capacity, are you aware of whether or not there's still a hiring freeze at NNSA?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Senator, I'm not aware of the personnel policies at NNSA right now.

Senator KING. Well, I think capacity is a concern because the staff level is down 8 or 9 percent since January. I believe the hiring freeze is still in place, and yet, as you've testified today, you have some pretty serious responsibilities, particularly with the upgrading of the triad.

So, I hope that that's something you can look into, followup on, advocate for, having the adequate capacity in order to meet the responsibilities that are being thrust upon you. Is that something you can work toward?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes, sir. If confirmed, I commit to you that I will advocate for the men and women of NNSA, make sure that we have the right amount of people, the right skill sets, the right training, and the right resources to accomplish the mission that we have to do.

Senator KING. I appreciate that. A piece of the responsibility of NNSA that isn't talked about all that much is proliferation and anti-proliferation around the world. The reason I consider that so important is our whole defense strategy is based upon the idea of deterrence. If terrorists get a hold of nuclear material, deterrence doesn't work. They don't have a capital city to bomb. They don't care about dying.

So, that is a true nightmare scenario. That makes non-proliferation, anti-proliferation an incredibly important responsibility right now, because of the fact that terrorist groups are still out there. Al Qaeda, ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] are on the rebound in many parts of the world. So, I hope that you'll put some emphasis and real focus on the proliferation responsibilities of NNSA.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes, thank you for that, Senator. Of course, if confirmed, I will focus as well on non-proliferation and counterproliferation. We sometimes get bogged on and focusing on weapons production and strategic deterrence. But another critical mission of NNSA is the non-proliferation counterproliferation, mak-

ing sure we provide the tools necessary to prevent the spread of nuclear materials.

Senator KING. The technology, the development of the technology, for example, to detect nuclear material. That would be a huge breakthrough. I hope that's part of the mission you'll pursue.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes, Senator. Thank you. I'm not fully apprised of all the programs in progress with NNSA and counterproliferation, but clearly the ability to detect nuclear materials and do nuclear materials forensics, is a key mission of NNSA that I will certainly prioritize to go after the things that you suggest there, if confirmed.

Senator KING. Final question for you. As the Chairman mentioned, Senator Fischer and I have been working on these issues together for some years. I'm concerned about the speed of NNSA's development of the next generation warhead capacity pits. For example, because we're moving forward pretty fast on the B-1 bomber, on the *Columbia*-class submarine. We're beginning work on *Sentinel*, but we want to have—but all that's for naught if we don't have the modern warheads available.

So, speed, I think, is an issue that you're going to have to look at. I have not been overly impressed, I guess I would say with the with the execution of, for example, as I mentioned, pit production.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes, thank you, Senator. I share your concern for urgency on this and make sure we move out quickly here and properly. Part of that in my view is, if confirmed, taking a look at what the barriers are to that speed, making sure we attack those barriers, whether it's policies or processes that we need to overcome, whether it's bringing technology to bear and how we design or build or manufacture equipment.

But anything that we can do to speed the process and make all the very effective people more effective in what they do through technology.

Senator KING. I think the key word you used is urgency. Mr. Cadenazzi, I don't have as much time. I do have a suggestion on the issue of smaller businesses, which several senators have talked about. Call your own 800 number in effect. What I mean by that is, have a red team pretend to be a small business applying to the Pentagon and see what the barriers are, see what the requirements are, how many pages are the requirements. I have found that very effective over the years to actually experience what a potential contractor would experience.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, appreciate the point there. As I've formally founded and ran and sold multiple small businesses, I know the pain of difficulty of working with the Department of Defense. I concur with you entirely, that's a great reminder on the practical experience of that. So, thank you for the suggestion.

Senator KING. There've been a lot of discussion about workforce in this Committee and workforce is one of the key bottlenecks, and we can't ignore the fact that we could put billions of dollars into some area of defense procurement, and there just aren't the people to build a weapon system.

So, I think strong attention to workforce and to building the workforce, and to providing the amenities necessary to attract the workforce into our defense industrial base, is going to be a big part

of this job. It's not just a question of money, it's a question of being sure the people are there to do the welding.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I wish we could have some Top Gun Maverick style movie that was going to talk about just how incredible the opportunity is to work at the shipyards in Virginia and elsewhere across the industrial base.

Senator KING. Maine. There are two in Maine.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Oh, in Maine, sorry, and Mississippi as well. Sorry.

Senator KING. This is Virginia.

Mr. CADENAZZI. I got you there, Senator. But I think we're going to have to do the hard work of actually developing apprenticeship programs, looking at the application of scholarships, Pell grants for welding, the kind of things that we've had these discussions in the past. Now's the time to move ahead on making sure that people understand the significance of these jobs, the economic opportunities to grow and live, families, the importance of this. We need to make people feel valued in these jobs as well.

If confirmed, I'm eager to work with this Committee with you and with the rest of the Congress on programs that'll actually accelerate, increase the movement of workforce into the defense industrial base.

Senator KING. Thank you very much. I'll just leave you with one phrase, consistent demand signal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Agree totally.

Chairman WICKER. Well, that's a good phrase. But also, Senator King, you said to Vice Admiral Pappano, and it applies to both witnesses, the word urgency needs to have meaning right now. So, thank you very much for that line of questioning. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Good morning. Welcome to both of you. Thank you for being here and for your willingness to continue to serve the country.

I couldn't agree more with you, Mr. Cadenazzi, on your response to Senator King's question about workforce, and I think the Maine and New Hampshire delegations are both very proud of our Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and the mission of the workforce there and the good work that they do. So, I think you explained very well what the benefits are of working on the civilian side in the defense industry.

Chairman WICKER. Of course, you got your education in the State of Mississippi, Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. I did, and so, I know how important Mississippi is to the ship building too, Senator Wicker. You said in your remarks that you weren't aware of the impact of the tariffs on the aerospace industry, and I just wanted to give you an example.

Last week, I visited a company called New Hampshire Ball Bearings that makes bearings for the aerospace industry, solely does a lot of its business with the defense industry. What they told me is that as the result of the steel tariffs, the uncertainty around that, and the President's intent to raise the tariffs on steel, that their lead time for steel has gone from 20 weeks to 2-½ years.

So, think about that. What the impact of that is going to be on our defense industrial base and our ability to supply the military

with what they need. Which has already been under stress, as we've seen, as the result of the war in Ukraine.

So, I just want to followup on Senator Reed's question about how you expect to keep track of the impact of these kinds of tariffs on the defense industrial base, and how do you think about addressing the shortage of steel? Which is not just a shortage in terms of capacity, but they said as the result of the tariffs. Their one domestic suppliers has increased prices significantly because they're able to do that because of the tariffs and they can't get supply from our allies, which they had been doing, which helped with both the cost and the availability. So, how do you think about addressing that problem, because that's significant.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question and your concerns on this issue. As I mentioned before, the tariffs issue is significant and obviously is going to have impact in differential ways. First, I'm not aware of any analysis that the Industrial Base Policy Office has produced in this. I presume that they have, but I have not been provided with that. So, I'd be loath to go ahead and provide an assessment of what the Department believes the impact is in the industrial base right now.

It is likely wide and varied. There's probably pockets where they're benefiting from it and other pockets where you're highlighting one of the challenges.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, not to interrupt, but—

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes, ma'am.

Senator SHAHEEN.—I think the concern is, is there an analysis that's been done? Where does that start and what are we seeing as a result of these tariffs over time? It's not at all clear to me that that analysis has been done. Certainly, I'm not aware that this Committee has seen any of that work. So, I think that's number one, we need to see that.

Second, we need to track what happens and to feel like we are responding to the shortcomings that we're seeing as the result of policies. So that we're not further handicapping our defense industry.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, if confirmed, I commit to come back and make sure to provide whatever analysis has been done, and if there's particular requests for the type of analysis on the mix of companies you're talking about, or particular technology area. I'm happy to work with you on those issues as well. That's critically important.

Regarding the steel issue specifically, again, I'm not aware of any particular analysis on the impact of tariffs on steel or the steel in the context of the industrial base. The industrial base consumes a lot of domestic steel. So, there's some unique characteristics of that relative to other industries. Again, if confirmed, I'm eager to discuss this issue with you and what can be done to mitigate the issues on the industrial base.

Senator SHAHEEN. Good. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Chairman WICKER. That's a pretty good answer, isn't it, Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. The proof is in the pudding.

Chairman WICKER. Right.

Senator SHAHEEN. Admiral Pappano, since the invasion of Ukraine, this Committee has supported the National Nuclear Security Administration's cooperation with Ukraine by monitoring Russian occupied power plants in Ukraine and training the Ukrainians to detect radiation releases. This cooperation has been really important. Particularly as we look at Russian attacks on the largest power plant in Europe, the Zaporizhzhia Power Plant.

Can you speak to the importance of NNSA's cooperation with Ukraine, especially during ongoing negotiations?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Senator. I am not fully apprised at all the details of that cooperation right now. But, if confirmed, I would make sure that NNSA provided the tools and capabilities to go do those verifications so that we could monitor, verify whatever we need to do as far as the Administration desires.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Senator Warren.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for being with us today.

So, artificial intelligence presents big opportunities and big risks for national security. Federal agencies should benefit from AI innovation, but instead, a few big tech companies could lock the Government into expensive anti-competitive products. I'm working with Senator Schmitt on this and last month, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published guidance to ensure that the Government can, "Benefit from a competitive American AI marketplace."

The guidance does not apply to DOD, but is all the more important at DOD, given the billions of dollars that DOD is set to give out in AI and cloud contracts. So, today, I want to just run through some of the lessons from OMB's guidance.

Number one, interoperability. A big tech contractor could build its cloud tool so that works only with its own AI, which would trap DOD into paying sky high prices potentially for subpar products. That is why OMB encouraged agencies to require AI tools to work with other companies' products.

Mr. Cadenazzi, do you agree that DOD would benefit from interoperability?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question. I'm not familiar with the term interoperability as defined in that particular report. But more broadly, in general, yes, it's a great thing for the Department to secure.

Senator WARREN. Okay, good. I'm going to take that as a yes. That you think the product should be able to work with other products, work in connection.

Mr. CADENAZZI. In general, more connectivity and flexibility to enable a networked approach is a good thing for software.

Senator WARREN. Good. We're at the same place then. Let's do another one. Data use. The biggest AI contractors can also stomp out competition by training their models on troves of government data so that smaller companies don't stand a chance. This is a disaster for competition and a disaster for data security.

Data on the location of our servicemembers or on DODs contracts should not be anywhere near a commercial AI model, for example.

The White House is clear here. It says contractors should not use government data to train publicly or commercially available AI algorithms without an agency's permission.

So, Mr. Cadenazzi, do you agree it's important for both competition and data security to limit contractors from training their government tools—from training their commercial tools on government data?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question. In general, yes, I'd say we want to make sure we're following the law with regards to the application of these tools.

Senator WARREN. No, that's not my question. This is not a question of law yet. This is just a question of what we should be doing in our acquisitions at DOD.

Mr. CADENAZZI. So, Senator, I'm not familiar with the White House particular guidance on this issue, but as you laid it out, it seems to make sense and I would be supportive of discussing that with you, if confirmed.

Senator WARREN. Look, government contracts for AI and for cloud tools should one, prevent lock-in, and two, protect government data. That's all we're talking about here.

Senator Schmitt and I have a bipartisan bill to make sure that DOD contracts do exactly that. Next week, we will reintroduce the Protecting Cloud and AI Competition in Defense Act to make sure that billions of dollars in DOD contracts go toward fueling innovation in AI and cloud technology, and not just helping the biggest companies get even bigger.

So, let me ask you, Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit to working with me and with Senator Schmitt to stop any competitive practices by big tech that could threaten our national security?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, artificial intelligence represents the most promising capabilities for transformational productivity and impact to the Department. I would be thrilled if confirmed, to work with you and Senator Schmitt on this issue.

Senator WARREN. That looks good. I look forward to working with Senator Schmitt and with you and all of the Members of this Committee. I think we could make some real progress here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Thanks, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. This Senator yields back her time. Now, Senator Kaine, I haven't asked my questions yet. Do you think I should?

Senator KAINE. I'm not in a rush, Mr. Chair.

Chairman WICKER. No, go ahead and ask your questions, Senator.

Senator KAINE. Well, thank you, and congratulations to the nominees. You're both very qualified. I look forward to supporting you.

I want to begin, actually just by putting some breaking news on the record. This morning, the Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, tweeted as follows, "This morning, I proudly ended the Women Peace and Security Program inside the Department of Defense. WPS is yet another woke divisive social justice Biden initiative that overburdens our commanders and troops distracting from our core task, war fighting. WPS is a United Nations program pushed

by feminists and left-wing activists, politicians fawn over it, troops hate it. DOD will hereby execute the minimum of WPS required by statute and fight to end the program for our next budget. Good riddance, WPS.”

I wanted to read this because that tweet contains some glaring inaccuracies that are far beneath the standard we should expect from a Department of Defense. First, “WPS is yet another woke divisive social justice Biden initiative.” WPS was passed by a unanimous vote in the Senate in October 2017, when the Senate was majority Republican and Donald Trump was president, and he signed it.

Does our Secretary of Defense not know the difference between a bill that was passed by the Biden administration, or one that was passed and signed in the Trump administration?

Second, “Politicians fawn over it. Troops hate it.” I returned to the hearing this Committee had to consider the confirmation of General Caine, and I read the following testimony.

“Senator Shaheen: General Caine, congratulations on your nomination. One of the things that we discussed was the Women Peace and Security legislation that was signed by President Trump during his first term. It mandates that women should be at the table in conflict resolution and peace negotiations. At DOD, that’s men having women involved in security cooperation programs that really give us, I think, an advantage over our adversaries like China and Russia. Just for the record, are you familiar with the WPS program, General Caine?”

General CAINE. I am Senator, yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do you believe that it’s a DEI [diversity, equity, and inclusion] program?

General CAINE. I do not.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Can you provide some examples of the operational advantage that from your perspective, this gives us?

General CAINE. Well, Senator, I can just give you my own personal recollections from being deployed. Before this was precursors of the program, but when we would go out into the field and after concluding an assault, we would have female members who would speak with those women and children who were on the objective, and they would help us to understand the human terrain in new and novel ways.

So, WPS is, I think, a program that really helps us to understand the full spectrum of challenges that are in front of us.”

From the testimony of our confirmed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If the Secretary of Defense cannot understand the difference between a Biden initiative and a Trump administration, and when the Secretary of Defense claims that troops hate something that the newly confirmed head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff appreciates, I have to add this to the 1,000 questions about the judgment of this secretary that I’ve already raised.

I’m stunned at the lack of professionalism that this tweet demonstrates. Look, we aired out pretty carefully at this hearing, the Secretary’s own antipathy to women in service, and his own track record of poor treatment of women in leadership positions. The fact that he doesn’t like WPS, that’s one thing. But the fact that he

claims that it's a Biden initiative when it isn't, an initiative that was supported unanimously by a Republican majority Senate, and that troops hate it when the newly confirmed head of the joint chiefs of staff testifies to its value, I find shocking.

Now, I'll go to my questions if I could. Admiral Pappano, you were asked a question earlier about recruiting and hiring within NNSA, and you pointed out that you weren't fully up to speed on the current. But I want to go back. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) did a report in May, 2024 that I imagine you probably are aware of. It discussed challenges that the NNSA faced in recruiting and retaining staff because of intense competition with other industries and other agencies. This is a skill set that's in pretty high demand.

So, should you be confirmed, how would you approach that challenge, making sure that we keep the good talent we have and continue to attract new talent in an important place where there's a lot of competition in the private sector and the public sector too?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you for the question, Senator. Yes, if confirmed, I will certainly advocate for the men and women of NNSA and laboratories understanding that there's a unique skill set critical to national security. Everywhere from skilled trades up to weapons designers and nuclear physicists.

It is sometimes hard to find those people, and we need to make sure that we are doing everything we can to go attract, recruit, train, retain those people as part of national security. That could start everywhere from looking at programs in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics K-12 up to colleges, what opportunities we have out there to go get people interested in that line of work and develop them going forward.

Senator KAINE. I'm sure you probably have the tools you need to do that, but should you find that you don't, please let the Committee know if there are additional tools we can provide to help you meet that mission.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Senator. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee if I need additional tools.

Senator KAINE. I yield back, having taken the 38 seconds that Senator Warren undershot.

Chairman WICKER. The gentleman has nothing to yield back. Senator Rosen.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed holding this hearing, and gentlemen, thank you for your willingness to serve.

I want to move on to small business defense production because, Mr. Cadenazzi, Nevada's home to a growing number of small businesses, manufacturers, technology startups that have capabilities that could directly support our national security. These companies are highly innovative, but they face significant challenges when it comes to breaking into the defense marketplace, which remains dominated by large incumbent contractors.

The current acquisition system is too slow, too complex, and too risk adverse to effectively engage with non-traditional players. So, Mr. Cadenazzi, if confirmed, how do you plan to address the systemic barriers in order to create a more open and competitive environment for small businesses and emerging technology firms in-

cluding those like in my State of Nevada, that have not traditionally played a large role in defense.

More specifically, what are your priorities for streamlining the acquisition pathways for these companies? How can the Department of Defense better leverage innovation across all 50 states as part of a broader industrial base strategy?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, thank you for bringing this topic up. The small business office within the Industrial Base Policy Office is a critical element of what the Department counts on us to bring policies, priorities, and a focus on small businesses. They represent some of the most dynamic and innovative parts of the economy, particularly in the places that are offering the technology. That's the most exciting going forward. Artificial intelligence, quantum mechanics, machine learning, and advanced manufacturing.

So, this is a major priority for the Department and for me. Going forward, I want to understand more about what the Industrial Base Policy Office's programs are doing, what effect they're having, things like small business innovative research, where we work with the R and E component of the Department project, the apex accelerators which exist across the country, to go ahead and provide access to small businesses to understand the Department. If confirmed, I'm eager to learn more about those capabilities, what the resourcing is, and what we can do to accelerate the impact over time.

Senator ROSEN. I'm glad to set up a meeting with you and talk about a lot of things happening in Nevada. So, thank you.

But I'm going to move on to nuclear testing, building a lot on the Nuclear Security Administration. Of course, Admiral Pappano, I asked a similar line of questioning to Congressman Williams at his confirmation hearing. Given your potential role as his deputy, I'm going to ask you the same questions.

So, as I'm sure you do know, the Nevada National Security Site, NNSS, formerly known as the Nevada Test Site—Nevada still call it the test site—was the primary location for U.S. nuclear testing from 1951 to 1992 with 100 atmospheric tests and 828 underground tests. I lived there during those times of the underground tests. Trust me, that ground would shake like nobody's business once a month.

This era, unfortunately, left lasting radioactive contamination across millions of acres, exposed countless people to dangerous radiation. It's an outcome that we must not repeat. Since the 1992 testing moratorium was signed by President George H.W. Bush, the NNSA has used subcritical experiments to ensure the safety, reliability, and effectiveness of our nuclear stockpile without the need for explosive testing.

For decades, its approach has received annual validation from the heads of National Labs, United States Strategic Command (STRATCOM), the secretaries of defense and energy, including throughout the first Trump administration. Despite this consensus, some have advocated for a return to explosive nuclear testing. Can you imagine?

Experts warn such a move can encourage countries like Russia and China to follow suit risking a new dangerous and unnecessary

nuclear arms race. So, Admiral Pappano, I'm just going to ask you to answer yes or no, same as I did the Congressman.

If President Trump sought your counsel on restarting explosive nuclear testing, would you advise the resumption of explosive nuclear testing?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Based on what you suggested there—Senator, thank you for the question. But if confirmed, I would not advocate for nuclear testing based on the amount of data we have, from explosive testing, our extensive modeling simulation capability, subcritical testing capabilities, and the annual verification.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. The second question I'm going to ask you is, given that the stockpile has been annually certified as safe and effective without explosive testing, do you see any technical or strategic justification for resuming explosive testing?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Senator. Again, based on the amount of explosive test data that we have, the model simulation capability, subcritical testing capabilities at the Nevada test site among other places, and the annual verification, I do not see a need to return to explosive testing. I would not advocate for that, if confirmed.

Senator ROSEN. Normally, I would ask a longer answer, but I just want to ask you if you will commit to prioritizing ongoing scientific advancements in stockpile stewardship?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I look forward to enhancing anything we can do technology-wise in advancing stockpile stewardship, science-based.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Senator Rosen, I understand that the massive casino hotels back in the day would alert their customers and patrons as to when a nuclear explosion was going to be had so that they could watch. Isn't that correct?

Senator ROSEN. Yes, it is that. In fact, there's still some bars and lounges called the Atomic Lounge and other things that are still there. You're absolutely right. I would love to lead a congressional delegation to Las Vegas and come see not only the test cycle, one mile underground, where they do the subcritical testing, it's amazing, but also to the Atomic Testing Museum, which gives you all the history of what they did.

It's quite informative and the test site going down underground in that tunnel where they do those tests, it's pretty amazing.

Chairman WICKER. Might be educational, Senator Reed. But the publicity surrounding a congressional delegation trip to Las Vegas would be a negative.

Senator ROSEN. We'll go straight. We can land at Nellis Air Force base, the crown jewel of the Air Force, thank you very much, and we can head right over there, see the remote sensing lab and the Nevada test site. We'll put the curtains down, you don't even have to see the Las Vegas strip.

Chairman WICKER. Well, don't go overboard.

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Senator Kelly, you are recognized.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have to point out though, that the museum you mentioned, which I have been to—

Senator ROSEN. It's amazing.

Senator KELLY.—it's in Las Vegas.

Senator ROSEN. It is. It is. It's at the university, though.

Senator KELLY. Yes.

Senator ROSEN. It's at the university.

Senator KELLY. It's a great museum. I highly recommend it.

Senator ROSEN. Research institute.

Senator KELLY. Vice Admiral Pappano and Mr. Cadenazzi—am I pronouncing that correctly?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Cadenazzi, close.

Senator KELLY. Cadenazzi, thank you. Thank you both for being here. Mr. Cadenazzi, I'd like to understand your plan to enhance our critical mineral stockpiles. So, the United States, we import nearly 100 percent of our cobalt sulfate and cobalt metal requirements despite cobalt playing a critical role in a lot of defense technologies. Meanwhile, China produces more than 70 percent of the world's refined cobalt.

It's imperative that we decouple and substantially bolster our domestic critical mineral supply chain. So, given the national security importance of these rare minerals, such as cobalt, how do you plan on supporting American cobalt and other critical mineral processing companies?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, I appreciate the question and the significance of this issue. I've spent more time looking at the periodic table of elements now since I have, like in my chemistry class in high school.

China's clearly weaponized the periodic table of elements. They've made efforts to go ahead and secure access to materials that we require within the defense industrial base. The Industrial Base Policy Office has made investments totaling \$540 million into various mineral capabilities, processing source materials over the past several years.

If confirmed, I'm eager to understand more about the particular issues associated with cobalt, but also the broader needs for access to strategic and critical minerals, and ensure that we're taking the necessary action to ensure American requirements are met domestically or through allies and partners over time.

If confirmed, I'm eager to work with you on that subject, Senator.

Senator KELLY. Now, do you think we should have our own—build our own stockpile of critical minerals?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, yes, absolutely. We do have a strategic and critical materials stockpile in place now. I'm not aware of the scale of that relative to the demand of the industrial base. However again, if confirmed, I'm here to work further on this and understand the scale of required investment of both government and private capital necessary to secure access to those materials.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, and, Admiral, in your advanced policy questionnaire, when asked what your main priority will be as the principal deputy administrator, you responded that you would work to maximize the efficiency, effectiveness, capability, and capacity of NNSA. I want to followup on this because while I agree on the priority, I'm concerned that recent freezes on civilian hirings and the firing of probationary employees across the Federal Gov-

ernment will hamper your ability to accomplish your priorities, and ultimately, the agency's mission.

Part of that mission is to stockpile nuclear weapons and reduce the overall global nuclear threat. To accomplish this mission, the agency employs nuclear physicists, and other highly technical professionals. These professionals cannot be mass produced and are incredibly difficult to coax into Federal service.

So, how do you assess the recent firings and termination letters for NNSA employees and how that will affect your ability to accomplish the agency's mission?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you for the question, Senator. I agree that that is a critical workforce. Right now, I am not fully apprised about the details of what is happening at NNSA. I only read about what I see in the news. But if confirmed, it will be a priority of mine to make sure that I assess the workforce needs, the resourcing of the number of people, and whatever facilities, training, capability they have, whatever we need to do to attract, recruit, train, and retain that critical workforce will be a priority of mine.

Senator KELLY. Do you see that one of your first responsibilities, if confirmed, is to make sure you have the workforce you need?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Senator. Yes, certainly. Having the critical workforce, if confirmed, is something I will assess and make sure I advocate for the men and women of NNSA and the National Laboratories to make sure they are resourced properly to accomplish this no fail mission.

Senator KELLY. Admiral, DOD is at an unfortunate intersection here, where all legs of our nuclear triad are needing modernization at the same time, and this modernization requirement has a direct impact on the NNSA. Additionally, civil service integration is critical for the agency's mission. The NNSA's partnership with the scientific and academic community is paramount for maintaining our comparative advantage.

How are you planning on managing the modernization projects with infrastructure recapitalization efforts that span civil and Federal infrastructure? You have 3 seconds.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Senator. I will certainly—another priority of mine will be to assess the enterprise blueprint going forward and making sure we look for where the barriers are, the driving, getting the enterprise recapitalized, all the infrastructure recapitalized, look for opportunities for where we can insert modern manufacturing technology to drive a sense of urgency in our stockpile stewardship programs.

Senator KELLY. All right. Thank you, Admiral.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Kelly. Let me ask a question basically a yes or no question to each of you. Congress is in the process of attempting to pass a reconciliation bill much of which will deal with the Defense Department. Because of the rules that we are required to operate under, the Defense Reconciliation Bill must be unspecific as to how the money is spent and will technically be at the discretion of the Department of Defense, and we are required in the rules to write recommendations for how the money is spent.

Do you commit to follow unequivocally, the Congress's spending recommendations in the Defense Reconciliation Bill? Mr. Cadenazzi?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Admiral Pappano?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes, sir. I look forward to working with this committee on prioritizing.

Chairman WICKER. Very good. Now I think we've talked about, Mr. Cadenazzi, we've talked about middle tier acquisition. This is something that my legislation, the FoRGED Act would very much address. I believe you told me that you had read the Act and liked much of it. If you want to expand on that answer?

Mr. CADENAZZI. More praise for the Act? Absolutely, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Yes, right. Yes, heap that on.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Keep going. Yes, sir. Please go on.

Chairman WICKER. Okay. I do believe, I think, once you're confirmed, you're going to have some middle tier authorization already. But I can say that Senator Reed and I are very much likely to put much of the FoRGED Act in the NDAA—in the upcoming NDAA. I hope you won't wait for that. If you have tools such as other transaction agreements and middle tier acquisition, will you commit to going ahead with that?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Senator, thank you for the point. Absolutely. I'm excited to use all the available authorities more aggressively to make sure we're meeting the needs of the industrial bases, and the delivering what the Department needs at this critical time. If confirmed, I'm eager to work with you and Ranking Member Reed on this issue going forward.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Now I think you are going to have a staffing shortage. If you are able to do the things that we've talked about today, you're going to need people that look at production rates and limiting factors in the supplier base. Isn't that right?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. You're going to need to have people that actually visit the production lines to assess whether companies are doing things the right way, spending money the right way, and that sort of thing. Is that correct?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. You're going to need people who develop options when we ask questions like, how do we build more munitions? Which I think we've had testimony today that often we spin down on munitions more quickly than we intend to. You're going to need people to do that, are you not?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Absolutely, Chairman Wicker.

Chairman WICKER. But unfortunately, the size of the office remains only a handful of people. As my understanding, only five government people work on the Defense Production Act. Do you know that number to be correct? Am I'm well informed there?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Chairman Wicker, I'm not aware of exactly how many people are working in any element of the components of the Industrial Base Policy Office at this time.

Chairman WICKER. If that is true, and I think it is. That represents a crisis, which is why we have already required a staffing

plan for these functions in last year's fiscal year, NDAA, the statute under which we're operating today.

So, will you bring us this plan as soon as possible, Mr. Cadenazzi?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes, Chairman Wicker.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Now Vice Admiral Pappano, what you are going to be tasked with, you and others, is going to require a huge infrastructure investment. Am I correct there?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. Would you advise the committee as to how you're going to do that and exactly what you're going to need? Am I correct, you're going to need more workforce by a great deal to get this done?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If confirmed, certainly it'll be a priority of mine to look across the enterprise blueprint plan. Make sure we don't have to reinvent the wheel there. But assess how that plan goes forward and our infrastructure investments over the next 25 to 50 years, and then figure out where the barriers are to getting that done with urgency. Whether it's policy, procedure, whatever we need to go look at to make sure we can break down those barriers and drive more urgency into our infrastructure recapitalization. Then obviously, the workforce that goes along with that, that we need to demand that infrastructure for our stockpile stewardship and the production.

Chairman WICKER. Senator Reed and I have been told that this is going to be one of the largest infrastructure requirements that the Federal Government has ever had. Are we well advised on that?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not know that as a fact, but it seems a reasonable assumption to make that is a significantly large infrastructure. We talk about recapitalizing, you know, the Manhattan Project Era facilities and driving those into the future.

Chairman WICKER. I think the public needs to be aware of this. This is most important, and again, Senator King and Senator Fischer have taken the lead on this.

Let's talk about cooperation with our allies on industrial base policy. There's been talk in recent years about this. AUKUS [Australia, United Kingdom, United States] Pillar 2 production diplomacy in Europe, the partnership for the Indo-Pacific Industrial resilience. But most people think there's been very little success in that regard. Do you have an opinion as to whether we're way behind in that area, Admiral?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, I'm aligned with President Trump's Peace Through Strength, which a part of that I think is our willingness to work with willing partners and allies to increase our overall strength. I think that in my experience, we've done pretty well with that so far. Some of the strategic nuclear deterrents cooperation we've had with the United Kingdom. There's a lot of history there in that. Then obviously starting to move forward with the AUKUS Accords. The work is going on with the Pillar One and Pillar 2 of AUKUS.

Chairman WICKER. Well, there may have been some infighting within the Department about this particular task. So last year we made it clear in the NDAA that the acquisition undersecretary owns these issues like the ones I have mentioned. If confirmed, you'll oversee the low-level Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense designated to be the lead on this issue. Right now, that position has maybe a dozen members, inadequate number, many of whom are not from industry.

Will you commit to us and to this Committee, that you will work on the issue of stagnation and industrial base integration with our allies, such as the areas that I've mentioned?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, if confirmed, I'll commit to you that I will work with this Committee and partners and allies as necessary to drive this forward.

Chairman WICKER. Mr. Reed, I believe we've covered a lot of things. I think the questions have been very good, and it appears to me that we've got the right folks in place for these positions. Does anyone else have anything? If not, let's see if I need to make any announcements. Are we good to go?

Questions for the record will be due to the Committee within two business days of the conclusion of the hearing, which is right now. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:03 a.m., the Committee adjourned.]

[Prepared questions submitted to Mr. Michael P. Cadenazzi, Jr. by Chairman Wicker 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 Industrial Base Policy?

*Answer.* My understanding is the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy (ASD(IBP)) is the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment's principal advisor on maintaining a healthy and resilient defense industrial base (DIB). This includes supply chain vulnerability analysis, oversight of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) and the mergers & acquisitions (M&A) process, assessing risks associated with adversarial capital, developing policies for modern economic competition, promoting small business participation, and strengthening partnerships with industry and international allies and performing assessments, developing strategies and policies to ensure the DIB can meet DOD requirements.

*Question.* What background and experience do you possess that qualify you to perform these duties? What background or experience, if any, do you have in industrial base issues, including supply chain management?

*Answer.* I have spent the past 20 years working in and on the DIB. The majority of my time was spent either as the owner of a defense industry small business or as a management consultant working directly with the defense industry on their many strategic, manufacturing and supply chain challenges. I have worked for domestic and international firms across nearly every conceivable product and service category. Through this I have developed a deep understanding of the defense industry, its challenges and, critically, the many opportunities for improvement.

In addition, I served 10 years on active duty in the United States Navy. My service provided me with an understanding of the warfighter's mission and needs. My Active Duty experience informs and reinforces the urgency which I apply to my work for the defense customer.

This industry, its companies and their work have been and remain my professional passion.

*Question.* If you are confirmed, what duties and functions do you expect that the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment will assign to you?

Answer. I anticipate duties prescribed by statute (10 U.S.C. § 138(b)(6)) and DOD policy, including oversight of industrial base resilience, industry engagement, international armaments cooperation, foreign investment reviews, domestic supplier competition reviews, small business programs, incentives and loan guarantees, and priorities and allocations, including the Defense Production Act (DPA) program. I will work closely with the Under Secretary and across the Department to ensure a robust and secure DIB.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy (ASD(IBP)) is the principal advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) for all industrial base policies and related matters. If confirmed, in supporting the USD(A&S), you will be responsible for establishing policy and conducting oversight of the defense industrial base which supports the acquisition and sustainment of our military forces.

*Question.* What background or experience, if any, do you have in ensuring and implementing supply chain management and security?

Answer. I have deep, global experience in the analysis, management and improvement of defense industry supply chains. My experience includes mapping supply chains, analysis of product/program supply chain challenges, and developing solutions to supply chain gaps & bottlenecks.

As a small business owner and entrepreneur, I developed a software solution that included automated supply chain mapping and analysis, bringing my knowledge of this subject to others. I was also recruited for my deep expertise to serve as the key product developer for a defense industry supply chain risk analysis software tool.

*Question.* What background or experience, if any, do you have in conducting global investment reviews and forecasts that help inform acquisitions and investments?

Answer. As a small business owner and entrepreneur, the software solution I developed provided analytic tools and generated forecasts of US defense spending. I am a legitimate global expert in the analysis of defense budgets, investments, acquisitions and the drivers which underpin defense industry change at every level.

In my professional consulting life, I have delivered literally hundreds of analyses on defense budgets, markets and forecasts of future spend. This has included work for both domestic and international clients across a broad array of defense product & service categories.

*Question.* What background or experience, if any, do you have in overseeing commercial mergers and acquisitions or conducting antitrust reviews?

Answer. In my 20 years as a defense industry consultant, I have participated in over 50 different M&A related initiatives. My experience has spanned every aspect of M&A from strategy development to due diligence all the way to post-merger integration. These initiatives have also included the impact of anti-trust considerations. In addition, I have twice negotiated and completed the sale of my own company. These small, but meaningful (to me!), transactions provided invaluable experience in the realities of these efforts for buyers, sellers and customers.

*Question.* What background or experience, if any, do you have in developing policy and processes for programs to acquire products and/or services, as well as policies and processes for oversight of such programs?

Answer. In my 20 years as a defense industry small business owner and consultant, I have experience at every level of defense acquisition across a diverse mix of products and services. I have worked on everything from requirements to contract execution. I have worked at each stage of the program lifecycle from concept ideation to program launch through to sustainment.

*Question.* What qualifications do you have using modern data approaches, tools, and methods that prepare you to maintain visibility of, analyze, and manage data on the volume, variety, and complexity of the inventory of acquisition and industrial base initiatives and programs in the Department?

Answer. As a small business owner, I created a (at the time) cutting edge Software-as-a-Service product focused on the analysis and visualization of the U.S. defense budget and associated contract and acquisition information. This product embedded my defense industry expertise in a fast, multi-purpose, time-saving solution that was in use by many defense industry firms. I successfully sold this business to a major global consulting company.

I have also worked on the direct application of data approaches, tools, and methods in use by my employers. I have consulted numerous firms on their use of data tools to cut costs, increase productivity and improve quality. I also have deep experience with the most common data tools in use by analysts and experts across the defense industry.

*Question.* What background or experience, if any, do you have in managing programs which encourage small business and/or nontraditional business participation in government contracting?

Answer. Upon leaving Active Duty Naval service in 2005, I participated in the launch of a veteran owned small business focused on defense technology development. I subsequently joined a small defense industry focused consulting business. After gaining experience in these businesses, I personally founded & launched two defense industry small businesses. I successfully sold both businesses. In addition to my direct work as a small business owner and employee, I have consulted numerous prime and mid-tier defense firms on their use of small business as a capacity, technology and capability enabler.

*Question.* What background or experience, if any, do you have in overseeing, pursuing or managing programs that support international armaments or security cooperation?

Answer. In my 20 years as a defense industry business operator, employee and consultant, I have led countless international defense initiatives. My industry outreach initiatives have spanned:

- More than one dozen countries
- Service to large, middle-tier and startup firms
- Multiple defense sectors and product/service areas

These outreach initiatives have touched on every aspect of the defense market, including:

- Export of U.S. defense systems & technology to international allies & partners,
- Import of international defense systems & technology to the United States
- Business case analysis and launch planning for U.S. businesses seeking to operate in foreign countries
- Business case analysis and launch planning for non-U.S. businesses seeking to operate in the United States

In parallel with these efforts, I have delivered public and private presentations to international defense businesses and organizations/industry associations.

*Question.* What background or experience, if any, do you have in overseeing, or managing programs that support industry engagement?

Answer. In my 20 years as a defense industry business operator, employee and consultant, I have led outreach and discussions with countless defense businesses. This includes the hard work of cold calling new contacts and the sustained effort to build and maintain enduring relationships over time.

My industry outreach initiatives have spanned the full range of defense firms:

- Every U.S. prime
- Most U.S.-based subsidiaries of non-U.S. defense firms
- Large numbers of Tier 1 & middle tier firms
- Small businesses

These outreach initiatives have touched on every aspect of the defense market, including:

- Aircraft platforms & related systems/weapons
- Naval platforms & related systems/weapons
- Ground platforms (armor & tactical wheeled vehicles) & related systems/weapons
- Space & intelligence
- Sustainment & logistics
- Services

These conversations have spanned the full mix of defense industry leadership priorities:

- Defense industry trends
- Strategy and growth
- Mergers & acquisitions
- Operations & manufacturing
- Supply chain
- Technology
- Workforce & organizational change

I am fully conversant across a broad range of diverse topics immediately relevant to leaders, managers and employees of most defense firms. These initiatives have led to myriad projects for defense firms, directly impacting their strategy, operations, organization and success. In addition, in support of these efforts, I have delivered a large number of public and private presentations to defense industry firms and organizations/industry associations.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Do you commit, without qualification, if confirmed, to decide matters on the merits, and exclusively in the public interest, without regard to private gain or personal benefit?

Answer. Yes.

## PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

*Question.* If confirmed, what are the top priorities you would plan to focus on during your tenure as the ASD(IBP)? What would be your plans for achieving these priorities?

Answer. If confirmed, my top priority will be strengthening the DIB and its supply chains. This includes assessing and mitigating vulnerabilities (especially for critical materials), protecting against adversarial capital, supporting small businesses, and fostering innovation. I will work to prioritize investments to meet warfighter needs and future challenges addressing supply chain bottlenecks. Leveraging congressional authorities, I will work with Congress, industry, and interagency partners to scale production and surge capacity. I also plan to use the DPA to ensure the DIB is working to support the warfighter.

*Question.* In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing the defense industrial base?

Answer. Decades of de-industrialization, fragile supply chains, and inconsistent investment have created vulnerabilities in the DIB, including reliance on foreign sources for critical components. Unpredictable budgets hinder long-term planning, stifle innovation, and discourage private sector engagement.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Congress, the Department, and industry to strengthen the DIB by focusing on resilient supply chains, expanding small business participation, incentivizing private capital investments, and providing stable demand signals. I will also prioritize protecting the DIB from adversarial capital and cyber threats, and deepening partnerships with allies to reduce supply chain vulnerabilities, ensuring our warfighters have the capabilities they need.

*Question.* By what metrics will you measure your progress toward achieving these priorities and addressing these challenges?

Answer. If confirmed, I will measure progress as a stronger, more resilient DIB and enhanced warfighter readiness. Metrics will include: shorter lead times and diversified sourcing; domestic manufacturing growth and cost-effectiveness; increased small business participation; expanded private capital investments in the DIB that are aligned with Department priorities; successful technology transition; and joint investments with allies. I also plan to rely on proven DOD standardized metrics, such as Milestone Completion Rates, Joint Initiative Success Rates, Demand Forecast Accuracy data, and Supplier Performance Rating data could prove to be assets in shoring up improvements in supply chain resilience, DIB cyber security posture, and foreign alliance performance. Ultimately, success means reducing readiness shortfalls and meeting national security needs.

## OFFICE OF THE ASD(IBP)

*Question.* If confirmed, you will serve as the second Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy. Throughout the last several years, the Industrial Base Policy office has continually amassed important responsibilities while not seeing commensurate staff or resource increases to reflect the significant increase in requirements.

How would you ensure the office of the ASD(IBP) is adequately resourced (in terms of personnel, budget, and authority) and provided with the high-level support necessary to perform its duties and responsibilities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Congress and Department leadership to ensure ASD(IBP) has the authorities, expertise, and resources—including stable funding—needed to strengthen the DIB. This includes advocating for effective use of tools like the DPA to address supply chain vulnerabilities. Adequate personnel, budget, and high-level support for ASD(IBP) are critical to industrial resilience and national security.

*Question.* Are there any organizational or legislative changes to the office of the ASD(IBP) you believe would be beneficial to carrying out the duties of the ASD(IBP)?

Answer. If confirmed, I will evaluate the ASD(IBP) office's structure and authorities. While aware of DPA reauthorization discussions, I will withhold specific recommendations until I have a deeper understanding of the Department's challenges and opportunities. This will inform my recommendations to Congress and the Secretary on any necessary legislative or organizational changes.

*Question.* How would you work with other offices outside of the office of the ASD(IBP) that have key roles in the defense industrial base, such as the office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering, the service ManTech programs, the manufacturing innovation institutes, service small business offices, and counterintelligence field offices?

Answer. Effective collaboration across the Department and other agencies is essential. I understand that activities like the ManTech programs, manufacturing innovation institutes, small business offices, and counterintelligence field offices all play crucial roles. If confirmed, I will prioritize establishing regular communication and coordination mechanisms with these stakeholders to ensure aligned efforts and maximize our collective impact on strengthening the DIB.

*Question.* The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, section 904, increased the number of Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense by two, and the conferees recommended that these two positions be used to further strengthen the capabilities of the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy (ASD(IBP)). If confirmed, would you advocate for IBP to receive these positions? If so, how would you utilize them?

Answer. If confirmed, I would advocate for IBP to receive the additional Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense positions and work with the Secretary to prioritize their allocation. I envision focusing these roles on critical areas like supply chain resilience and emerging technologies but would make final decisions after a thorough internal assessment.

#### HEALTH OF THE DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE (DIB)

*Question.* Over the past several years, there have been increasing concerns in Congress, industry, and the Department over the health of the DIB and its ability to reliably meet current and future defense needs.

What steps will you take to ensure the DIB has the appropriate scientific, technical, and manufacturing workforces to support current and future needs of DOD?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to establish a predictable and stable demand signal to assist in enabling a DIB workforce capable of meeting current and emerging DOD needs. This requires a balanced approach, fostering both traditional trade skills and cutting-edge expertise in science, technology, engineering, and manufacturing.

I will commit to leveraging all appropriate authorities to prioritize workforce training and ensure access to the technical expertise necessary to produce, sustain, and modernize our weapon systems, thereby maintaining DOD's competitive advantage.

*Question.* What steps will you take to ensure that the DIB has the appropriate manufacturing and production infrastructure to support current and future needs of the DOD? If confirmed, how will you measure "appropriate manufacturing and production infrastructure"? What metrics will you utilize?

Answer. If confirmed, ensuring a robust manufacturing and production infrastructure for current and future DOD needs will be a priority. This will require a comprehensive assessment with OSD partners, the Military Departments, and industry to identify capability gaps and prioritize investments, as well as prioritize and allocate resources to ensure on time delivery, as needed. The robustness of infrastructure will be measured by assessing capacity against projected demand (including surge), tracking lead times, evaluating cost-effectiveness and supply chain resilience, and considering factors like advanced manufacturing integration, skilled labor availability, and cybersecurity posture.

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

*Answer.* Reducing reliance on China and other adversaries for critical defense components requires a decisive, interagency approach to strengthen domestic industrial capacity and secure supply chains. If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to onshore and nearshore key manufacturing capabilities, leveraging the Department’s existing authorities—such as the DPA and Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) program—to incentivize private sector investment in critical industries.

If confirmed, I will advocate for policies that drive long-term investment in domestic and allied production, protect critical industries from adversarial capital and cyber threats, and ensure that DOD procurement prioritizes secure, U.S.-based supply chains. Strengthening America’s industrial resilience will be key to sustaining our technological advantage and ensuring national security in an era of strategic competition.

*Question.* Supply chain tracking and risk mitigation is imperative for determining the overall health of the defense industrial base. The office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment currently has two ongoing internal efforts related to supply chain mapping and transparency. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment has worked on a supply chain mapping tool called Supply Chain Risk Evaluation Environment (SCREEn). The Office of Industrial Base Policy has also worked to produce a Defense Industrial Base Map (DIBMAP) tool that tracks weapons systems, suppliers, and availability in one single place to address supply chain risk.

If confirmed, will you commit to reviewing both tools and determining whether continuing with development of both tools provides value or whether consolidation and broad use of a single tool would provide the Department more value?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I commit to reviewing both SCREEn and DIBMAP to assess the value of each program and evaluate whether consolidation is necessary.

*Question.* If confirmed, how do you envision using these tools to improve visibility into the defense industrial base?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I envision these supply chain tools, whether consolidated into a single platform or maintained separately, as critical for enhancing visibility into the DIB. They will provide real-time insights into potential vulnerabilities, such as single points of failure, dependencies on adversarial nations, and emerging bottlenecks. This enhanced visibility will inform data-driven decisionmaking regarding resource allocation, acquisition strategies, and industrial base policy development.

These tools exist to facilitate improved communication and collaboration between government, industry, and international partners, enabling proactive risk mitigation and a more coordinated response to potential disruptions. By leveraging tools like SCREEn and DIBMAP, we can create a more resilient, secure, and transparent DIB capable of meeting current and future national security needs.

*Question.* If confirmed, one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries that will report to you is focused on industrial base resiliency. What is your understanding of how resilience within the defense industrial base is currently measured and assessed?

*Answer.* I understand that assessing DIB resilience involves a multi-faceted approach, encompassing domestic capabilities, reducing reliance on adversarial nations, and securing critical material supply chains. If confirmed, I look forward to gaining a deeper understanding of current assessment methodologies and exploring opportunities for improvement.

*Question.* Are there other metrics or data frameworks that you think should be developed to improve measurement and assessment capabilities?

*Answer.* If confirmed as ASD(IBP), I will prioritize developing metrics that capture not just current capabilities, but also surge capacity, innovation, cybersecurity resilience, and allied interoperability. This includes assessing the ability to rapidly increase production, the speed of technology adoption, vulnerability to cyberattacks, and the capacity for seamless collaboration with allies.

I will aim to review existing frameworks and incorporate lessons learned from new and robust Presidential Directives, such as President Trump’s 2025 Executive Order on critical minerals and derivative products, which highlighted the national security risks of foreign dependence and emphasized the importance of bolstering domestic production. By developing these additional metrics and incorporating the focus on domestic strength and security exemplified by previous Administrations, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of DIB resilience and inform more effective policies to ensure its long-term strength and adaptability.

*Question.* Section 4819 of title 10, United States Code, established a framework for modernizing and digitizing the approach for mitigating risks to the defense industrial base.

What is your understanding of the status of implementing that framework?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I look forward to obtaining a deeper understanding the implementation of Sec. 4819. This will involve conducting a thorough assessment of current progress, identifying any roadblocks or challenges, and developing a clear roadmap for completing the implementation process. I will also ensure effective coordination and collaboration across the Department and with interagency partners to leverage existing resources and expertise. Furthermore, I will work closely with Congress to provide regular updates on implementation progress and address any legislative adjustments that may be necessary to ensure the successful execution of this critical initiative. My goal is to fully leverage the framework established by Section 4819 to create a more secure, resilient, and adaptable DIB.

*Question.* What other steps would you take to assess the health of the current and future defense industrial base?

*Answer.* Beyond existing assessments, if confirmed, I would focus on direct industry engagement across all tiers, develop robust data analytics for key indicators, conduct wargaming exercises, and collaborate with allies to assess collective capabilities.

#### DOMESTIC AND ALLIED SOURCING

*Question.* The first Trump Administration and the Biden Administration made domestic sourcing a key part of the policy agenda. If confirmed, you would oversee the continued push to increase DOD's procurement of American-made goods, products, and materials.

Do you see any associated challenges or opportunities? Please elaborate.

*Answer.* While prioritizing domestic sourcing offers significant opportunities to strengthen the U.S. industrial base and enhance supply chain security, it also presents challenges. Rebuilding domestic manufacturing capacity in key sectors requires strategic investment, workforce development, and a stable demand signal from the DOD. Overreliance on domestic sources without considering allied capabilities could also limit access to innovation and potentially increase costs.

If confirmed, I will focus on maximizing the opportunities of domestic sourcing while mitigating potential challenges. This includes targeted investments in critical sectors, leveraging DPA Title III and IBAS authorities to incentivize domestic production, and ensuring predictable budgeting and acquisition strategies to provide industry with the confidence to invest. Simultaneously, I will prioritize strengthening partnerships with allies and "friend-shoring" to diversify supply chains, access cutting-edge technologies, and foster a more robust and globally competitive industrial base. This balanced approach will ensure we can effectively support our warfighters while bolstering American manufacturing and strengthening national security.

*Question.* In your opinion, what role should domestic sourcing requirements play in efforts to manage the DIB, support domestic companies, increase capacity, and ensure trusted and reliable supplies of goods and services?

*Answer.* Reviving the American DIB must be a top priority. If confirmed, I will ensure that every industrial base investment decision—whether through the DPA, IBAS, or other tools—is informed by an assessment of where it strengthens U.S. production capacity, workforce readiness, and supply chain security.

*Question.* In your opinion, what role should the Department play in reviewing and recommending domestic sourcing requirements prior to such requirements going into effect?

*Answer.* If confirmed, we should actively coordinate with other stakeholders within DOD, such as the Military Departments, innovation organizations, and acquisition executives, to ensure alignment with broader defense priorities and operational needs. This collaborative approach will ensure that domestic sourcing requirements are strategically implemented to strengthen the DIB and support warfighter readiness, while also considering potential second- and third-order effects on the broader industrial ecosystem.

*Question.* In your view, what would be the benefits of greater Departmental input and involvement prior to domestic sourcing decisions being made?

*Answer.* Greater DOD input prior to domestic sourcing decisions is essential for ensuring these decisions align with national security priorities and the specific needs of the DIB. Early involvement allows DOD to provide critical insights into the potential impacts of sourcing decisions on industrial capacity, supply chain resilience, cost, and technological innovation. This proactive engagement can help avoid

unintended consequences, such as creating bottlenecks or over-reliance on single sources.

If confirmed, I would prioritize ensuring DOD's voice is heard early and often in these deliberations, advocating for a more strategic and holistic approach to sourcing that strengthens, rather than weakens, our defense capabilities. Furthermore, early input allows for better coordination with allied nations and fosters a more robust and resilient DIB.

*Question.* In your view, what steps should the Department take to ensure and/or incentivize that companies are able to find needed financing and resources from trusted sources?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize facilitating access to trusted financing and resources for DIB modernization, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises and non-traditional suppliers. This includes developing and disseminating clear guidance on available funding sources, streamlining application processes, and potentially exploring innovative financing mechanisms like public-private partnerships. Leveraging my interagency experience, I will work to identify and address any gaps in existing authorities to ensure companies have efficient access to secure and reliable funding.

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

Answer. Combating adversarial capital requires a proactive, multi-pronged approach. If confirmed, I will prioritize robust implementation of the CFIUS, Team Telecom, Information and Communications Technology and Services, and the 1260H List of Chinese Military Companies, advocate for increased transparency in foreign investment, and explore expanded authorities as needed. Simultaneously, I will seek to foster domestic alternatives through trusted sources of private investment to protect the DIB from undue foreign influence and safeguard U.S. technological advantage.

*Question.* If confirmed, how can the Department better leverage suppliers in the national technology and industrial base (NTIB) and among allies and partners?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to enhance the NTIB by reducing barriers to integrating companies from close allies into the DIB, streamlining regulations, and improving reciprocal defense trade. Expanding collaboration with private capital, academia, and defense-adjacent industries will broaden access to innovation. A whole-of-government approach, coordinating across agencies and with international partners, is essential for strengthening collective defense production, accelerating technology adoption, and ensuring supply chain resilience. This will modernize our technological base and enhance deterrence.

#### MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

*Question.* The February 2022 State of Competition within the Defense Industrial Base report highlights the consolidation of the defense industrial base into fewer large prime contractors as a significant risk to competition within the DIB.

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

Answer. It is my understanding that DOD plays a critical role in assessing the impact of M&A activities on the DIB and ensuring that consolidation does not undermine competition or innovation. While private sector investment and market efficiencies are important, excessive consolidation can reduce competition, drive up costs, and stifle technological advancements—ultimately weakening the defense ecosystem.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the DOD rigorously evaluates the implications of M&A activities on the industrial and technological base, leveraging its unique perspective to assess potential risks to supply chain resilience, innovation, and operational readiness. The Department must also maintain active awareness of how ongoing M&A activities influence cost, schedule, and performance across defense acquisition programs. When appropriate, the DOD should voice concerns and work with regulatory agencies to address acquisitions that give rise to concerns.

I will advocate for a proactive approach that strengthens oversight mechanisms, enhances interagency coordination, and ensures that America's DIB remains competitive, secure, and aligned with national security priorities.

*Question.* Do you believe DOD's acquisition processes contribute to industry incentives to consolidate? If so, what changes would you suggest?

Answer. My understanding is that several factors contribute to industry consolidation, including DOD acquisition processes. For example, the complexity and cost of

complying with DOD regulations can create barriers to entry for smaller companies, potentially incentivizing them to merge with or be acquired by larger firms. Additionally, large, consolidated companies may be perceived as having a competitive advantage in securing large defense contracts. However, I also recognize the importance of maintaining a competitive and robust industrial base that includes both large and small businesses.

If confirmed, I will carefully review DOD's acquisition processes to identify and mitigate aspects that inadvertently discourage competition and innovation. This includes examining regulatory burdens, contract structures, and promoting greater participation of small and non-traditional businesses. Fostering a more diverse industrial base is essential for resilience and technological advancement.

*Question.* In your opinion, does DOD focus enough on the potential consolidation of sub-contractors and suppliers in addition to prime contractors?

*Answer.* It is my understanding that while the DOD has made strides in recognizing the importance of supply chain resiliency, more attention needs to be focused on the potential consolidation of sub-tier suppliers and subcontractors. A lack of visibility into these lower tiers poses a significant challenge to fully assessing and mitigating supply chain vulnerabilities. While I understand the Department is exploring ways to enhance visibility, I believe we must accelerate these efforts.

If confirmed, I will conduct a review of current departmental initiatives aimed at increasing visibility into sub-tier suppliers to leverage their expertise in this area. This review will focus on identifying any gaps in data collection and analysis, as well as exploring opportunities to leverage existing authorities and emerging technologies to improve supply chain mapping and monitoring. Based on this review, I will make recommendations to enhance our understanding of the sub-tier landscape, including the impact of mergers and acquisitions. This improved visibility is crucial not only for assessing the potential risks of consolidation, but also for proactively identifying and supporting critical sub-tier suppliers, fostering a more robust and resilient DIB.

#### ORGANIC INDUSTRIAL BASE

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

*Answer.* The Organic Industrial Base (OIB) is absolutely essential for both modernizing and sustaining warfighting capabilities. It provides a unique and irreplaceable foundation for ensuring readiness throughout the lifecycle of DOD weapon systems. The OIB's core capabilities—including maintenance, repair, overhaul, and upgrade of critical systems—are often not commercially viable or readily available in the private sector. This is especially true for specialized equipment, legacy systems, and surge capacity requirements. The OIB also produces critical supply chain materials that do not have commercial or civilian application. The OIB serves as a vital repository of technical expertise and skilled personnel, preserving institutional knowledge and providing a crucial training ground for future generations of maintainers and engineers.

If confirmed, I will focus on modernizing the OIB through investments in advanced manufacturing, workforce development, and improved facilities, recognizing its strategic importance for long-term readiness and reduced reliance on external sources. I will emphasize its value as a strategic asset.

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

*Answer.* Our depots, logistics centers, and arsenals serve an important role as part of the overall DIB in maintaining military readiness. While I understand investments have been made to improve the facilities and workforce of the OIB, if confirmed, I will work with the ASD for Sustainment, who is responsible for the OIB, and the Services to formally assess the State of our OIB with a focus on ensuring the Department maintains the proper mix of capabilities to meet future warfighting needs while staying adaptable for future missions.

*Question.* What role, if any, should the organic industrial base play in the sustainment of software in defense systems?

*Answer.* The sustainment of software in defense systems is a combination of organic and commercial support. The OIB plays a role with software maintenance no different than weapon system maintenance in totality. Software maintenance is a function of DOD core depot capabilities and workload. Its involvement ensures long-term operational readiness and security through software maintenance and updates, cybersecurity, maintaining technical expertise, cost control and mission continuity. If confirmed, in partnership with the ASD for Sustainment who is responsible for

the OIB, I would ensure that we have the spectrum of support necessary from the OIB for software sustainment.

*Question.* What role should the organic industrial base play in the sustainment of dual use and commercial technologies used by DOD?

Answer. I understand that the sustainment of fielded commercial technologies poses significant challenges for warfighter readiness and can be expensive because the commercial providers operate outside of our acquisition lifecycle on a proprietary basis which may increase the risk of vendor lock. Additionally, I understand that the cost for the sustainment of commercial technologies is not always programmed. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the ASD for Sustainment, Director of the Defense Innovation Unit, the military Departments, and other stakeholders to tackle the challenges associated with the sustainment of commercial technologies to ensure the warfighter has interoperable tools they need to complete the mission.

*Question.* What role, if any, does ASD(IBP) have in ensuring that the facilities and equipment at the military depots are modern, operable, and effective?

Answer. As I understand it, the primary responsibility for ensuring that military depots are modern, operable, and effective falls to the ASD for Sustainment. If confirmed, it is a priority to maintain a close partnership with Sustainment to understand the optimal balance of organic and commercial capabilities necessary to maintain readiness.

*Question.* What changes can be made to upgrade the indigenous production capability within the OIB to bring it forward from 1940's technology?

Answer. I understand that our depots continue to evolve in their organic production capabilities, including the adoption of advanced manufacturing techniques and digital engineering, cyber-resilient systems, and innovations. I also understand that these measures modernize OIB capabilities and emphasize its cutting-edge nature to ensure its ability to meet the demands of modern defense operations.

If confirmed, I will work closely with ASDthe for Sustainment to identify and address the depots' most pressing modernization needs. This includes advocating for necessary investments in advanced manufacturing technologies, infrastructure improvements, and workforce development initiatives to enhance their efficiency, responsiveness, and ability to support evolving warfighter requirements. This collaborative approach will ensure the OIB remains a strategic asset for long-term readiness.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the ASD for Sustainment and other stakeholders to help assess the areas of greatest need and, where necessary, request resources to support the modernization and optimization of our OIB facilities and workforce, together with other key elements of our domestic defense industry. If confirmed, I will work with Sustainment to ensure that we have the right investment strategy to strengthen both our organic and commercial capabilities and that we have the best balance of those capabilities for the Department.

#### DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE CYBERSECURITY

*Question.* What is your understanding of the challenges of enhancing cybersecurity of the DIB?

Answer. My understanding is that enhancing the cybersecurity of the DIB presents a complex challenge, requiring a multi-pronged approach that addresses both immediate threats and long-term vulnerabilities. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and protecting systems across the defense supply chain from increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks is paramount. A key challenge lies in balancing the need for robust cybersecurity standards with the practical realities faced by small and medium-sized businesses, many of which lack the resources to implement comprehensive security measures. We must avoid a one-size-fits-all approach and instead tailor solutions to the specific needs and capabilities of different tiers of suppliers.

If confirmed, I will collaborate with DOD Chief Information Officer (CIO), Congress, and other key stakeholders to conceive, develop, and implement scalable cybersecurity solutions for the DIB. This will include exploring options such as shared cybersecurity services, robust training and technical assistance tools, targeted funding assistance, and streamlined compliance frameworks that are achievable for businesses of all sizes. Leveraging existing programs and ensuring effective implementation while avoiding undue burdens on smaller companies, will be critical. Furthermore, if confirmed, I will focus on fostering stronger public-private partnerships to share threat intelligence, develop best practices, and promote a culture of cybersecurity awareness across the DIB.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you balance the needs of improving cybersecurity with the burden of compliance on small and medium sized businesses?

*Answer.* I believe that balancing the critical need for improved DIB cybersecurity with the compliance burden on small and medium-sized businesses will be paramount to the success of the industrial base. However, we must achieve this without inadvertently creating barriers to entry or participation in the defense supply chain. If confirmed, my focus will be on developing and implementing solutions that are effective and scalable, yet still recognize the resource constraints faced by smaller companies.

Implementation will involve leveraging existing DOD authorities and programs, such as the Defense Industrial Base Cybersecurity Program and Project Spectrum, to provide tailored guidance, tools, and financial and technical assistance specifically designed for smaller businesses. If confirmed, I will also explore innovative approaches such as incentivizing cybersecurity investments through preferential contracting mechanisms and promoting the adoption of industry-standard security practices that can be readily implemented by businesses of all sizes.

If confirmed, my goal is to create a cybersecurity ecosystem where smaller companies are empowered and equipped to contribute to a secure and resilient DIB without being unduly burdened by compliance requirements. I believe this approach will foster a more diverse, innovative, and secure DIB.

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

What is your understanding of the current State of CMMC and its impact on large, medium, and small businesses?

*Answer.* My understanding is CMMC is vital for strengthening cybersecurity across the DIB, protecting sensitive information, and ensuring fair competition. While large businesses may have more resources, CMMC's complexities affect all sizes of businesses, with medium and small businesses facing significant cost and compliance challenges. The program aims to provide clarity and predictability, especially for the numerous small businesses in the DIB, using self-assessments and independent assessments. Effective CMMC implementation, including tailored support for small businesses, is crucial for strengthening the DIB and national security. I look forward to learning more if confirmed.

*Question.* If confirmed, are there any changes you would make or recommend to the CMMC efforts beyond those already mandated by the previous program rule?

*Answer.* If confirmed as ASD(IBP), I will prioritize strengthening DIB cybersecurity while minimizing burdens on smaller businesses. Although changes made in CMMC from initial framing to the final rule are positive steps, further improvements may still be needed. Beyond existing mandates, I will work with the CIO to explore streamlining compliance processes through a risk-based approach, expanding access to cost-effective cybersecurity solutions, increasing funding assistance for smaller businesses, and fostering greater collaboration across government, industry, and academia to develop and deploy innovative cybersecurity technologies. My goal is a robust cybersecurity ecosystem that strengthens the DIB without stifling small-suppliers.

#### MICROELECTRONICS

*Question.* Over the last few decades, Taiwan, South Korea, and the People's Republic of China have implemented large-scale national industrial policies to build microelectronics manufacturing facilities. In contrast, the availability of large-scale state-of-the-art microelectronics manufacturing foundries in the United States has been steadily declining. DOD has a diverse set of requirements and needs for the domestic production of measurably secure state-of-the-art, State of the practice, and legacy integrated circuits in low volumes to meet its needs.

What is your assessment of the Department's microelectronics needs, to include both legacy, state-of-the-practice, and state-of-the-art?

*Answer.* Assured access to both legacy and cutting-edge microelectronics is critical for maintaining existing and developing future defense systems. The Department's microelectronics needs are complex and multifaceted, requiring a strategic approach that addresses the full spectrum of legacy systems, state-of-the-practice technologies, and state-of-the-art advancements, all while prioritizing security and trustworthiness. If confirmed, I will aim for secure and reliable domestic and allied sources for these components. I am committed to working across the government to develop a comprehensive microelectronics strategy. This will include close collaboration with Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering (USD(R&E)) to anticipate and meet evolving technological requirements for national security.

*Question.* In your view, what role should the Department play in working with the interagency and industry to increase domestic production of dual use microelectronics?

*Answer.* Increasing domestic production of dual-use microelectronics demands a robust, whole-of-government approach, working in close partnership with industry. If confirmed, I will prioritize interagency coordination to ensure a cohesive and comprehensive strategy, leveraging existing authorities and exploring new avenues to incentivize domestic microelectronics production.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you plan to take to support increased domestic production of dual use microelectronics?

*Answer.* If confirmed, increasing domestic production of dual-use microelectronics will be a priority. I will seek to leverage existing authorities, such as DPA Title III or IBAS, to incentivize private sector investment in dual-use manufacturing, ensuring national security needs are integrated into broader industrial policy. I will work across the Department through existing microelectronics governance structures to ensure our warfighters have the access they need to critical microelectronics. Congress, and the USD(R&E) have an important role to play to ensure we have an effective strategy for sourcing microelectronics.

*Question.* What actions would you take to partner with the USD(R&E) on this issue?

*Answer.* Collaboration within the DOD and across the executive branch is essential for supporting the DIB. If confirmed, I will work closely with USD(R&E) to ensure we have the workforce and capacity to address current and future microelectronics requirements, including innovative production initiatives.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you take to increase the participation of small businesses in the defense industrial base?

*Answer.* Small businesses are vital to the DIB and drive innovation. If confirmed, I commit to increasing their participation through enhanced outreach, especially to new entrants, and successful leveraging of the Department's small business programs. This includes ensuring effective market research by the acquisition workforce to maximize small business participation and improving communication of upcoming procurement opportunities. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and the Services to integrate these efforts with other small business initiatives.

*Question.* In your view, what are the biggest barriers that prevent small businesses from becoming prime contractors to the Department?

*Answer.* One of the biggest barriers, in my view, is the complexity of the acquisition process itself—particularly for companies that have not previously done business with the government. Navigating defense procurement can be overwhelming, especially for small firms that lack dedicated compliance or contracting teams.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the DOD Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) to reduce administrative burdens and help make the Department a more reliable and attractive customer—fully aligned with President Trump and Secretary Hegseth's direction to streamline defense acquisition and unleash the power of the American industrial base.

*Question.* In your view, are their adequate authorities and incentives in place that offer small businesses an opportunity to transition from small to medium-sized businesses?

*Answer.* I would assess whether existing authorities and incentives adequately facilitate their growth into medium-sized businesses. This includes examining potential gaps and areas for improvement to ensure a robust and dynamic DIB.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would assess the Department's effectiveness in using existing authorities to create subcontracting opportunities for small businesses. I understand programs like the Mentor-Protégé Program, APEX Accelerators, and others aim to connect small firms with major defense programs. If confirmed, I would work with the OSBP to ensure these and other tools under its jurisdiction are fully leveraged to maximize the Department's access to advanced technologies and support small business participation in programs of record.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that small businesses that provide goods and services to the Department of Defense are monitored and supported when facing financial pressures that challenge their viability?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would work with relevant stakeholders across the Department, including the OSBP, to enhance monitoring and support for small businesses facing financial pressures. This could include improved financial health assessments, early warning indicators, and streamlined access to resources and assistance programs. The goal is to proactively identify and mitigate risks to small business viability within the DIB.

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

*Answer.* Diversifying the DIB through greater engagement with small and disadvantaged businesses enhances innovation, agility, and regional reach, enabling the Department to better meet demands and surge requirements. It also strengthens our economic deterrent by demonstrating the ability to mobilize the full breadth of American industry in support of national security.

*Question.* What recommendations would you have to improve the Department's use of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program to develop and field new, advanced capabilities?

*Answer.* The SBIR program is crucial for developing advanced capabilities, but transitioning technologies into fielded systems remains a challenge. If confirmed, I would work closely with Office of the USD(R&E) to improve this process by strengthening collaboration between SBIR program managers, acquisition professionals, and warfighters; developing streamlined transition pathways, potentially through dedicated funding, tailored acquisition strategies, and leveraging of relevant A&S programs; and implementing metrics to track success and integrating SBIR/STTR with other small business initiatives. This will maximize SBIR's impact and deliver cutting-edge capabilities to the warfighter.

*Question.* The Office of Small Business Programs has worked over several years to increase participation in the Department of Defense Mentor Protégé Program to expand the number of small businesses in the defense industrial base. If confirmed, how will you continue to expand the participation of small businesses in the DOD Mentor-Protégé Program?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would work with the OSBP to explore opportunities for expanding small business participation and participation within agencies across the Department in the DOD Mentor-Protégé Program. This includes examining potential program adjustments, incentives, and outreach efforts to encourage greater participation and ensure its continued effectiveness in strengthening the DIB.

*Question.* The DOD Office of Small Business Programs rebranded the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs), as APEX Accelerators, and expanded them to provide broader assistance to small businesses looking to work with the Department. Some of the expanded offerings include cybersecurity assistance and foreign ownership, control, and influence guidance. This guidance is imperative for businesses who may not be familiar with working with the Department. If confirmed, how will you continue to support the offerings of the APEX Accelerators?

*Answer.* The APEX Accelerators provide crucial support to businesses of all sizes seeking to work with DOD. If confirmed, I would seek opportunities to enhance their offerings, ensuring they remain a valuable resource for small businesses navigating the DIB.

*Question.* Small businesses that receive awards from programs such as SBIR/STTR remain at risk from foreign adversarial capital. Often the intellectual property and government-sensitive information are targeted and stolen from these innovative small businesses. If confirmed, how would you support efforts for small businesses to understand and mitigate foreign ownership and control risks?

*Answer.* Protecting small businesses, especially SBIR/STTR recipients, from adversarial capital is crucial. If confirmed, I would work with the USD(R&E) and other stakeholders to enhance support for small businesses in understanding and mitigating foreign ownership and control risks. This could include improved training, resources, and proactive threat assessments.

#### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY/TECHNICAL DATA RIGHTS

*Question.* Do you believe that DOD has sufficiently implemented intellectual property (IP) best practices to ensure that the government has appropriate access to IP and technical data to give proper return on investments in Federal research and development (R&D), retain the ability to re-compete programs to control costs, and exercise better control over program sustainment costs?

*Answer.* Rapid technological advancements necessitate a renewed focus on intellectual property. If confirmed, I would work with stakeholders to review and enhance DOD's IP best practices, ensuring they adequately address return on R&D

investment, re-competition opportunities, and sustainment cost control. This will include examining early integration of IP considerations into planning and addressing long-term needs. The DOD should implement best practices to identify IP needs early in the acquisition process to ensure it is an evaluation factor in competitive awards.

*Question.* Does the Department need a different approach to access to technical data when dealing with primarily commercial companies?

*Answer.* The DOD needs to ensure procurement approaches attract new entrants, acquire the best available technology, and ensure effective implementation and sustainment enabled by access to technical data. If confirmed, I will partner with my colleagues in the Office of the ASD for Acquisition to review the current approaches to procuring and accessing technical data for commercial products.

*Question.* In what circumstances should DOD pursue reverse engineering or re-engineering of parts when access to technical data is not available?

*Answer.* Reverse engineering or reengineering should be considered when access to technical data and accompanying license rights are unavailable and essential system sustainment is at risk. If confirmed, I would work closely with USD(A&S) and USD(R&E) to leverage existing authorities to streamline qualification of alternate suppliers and remove barriers to reverse engineering. This collaborative approach will improve readiness and reduce costs while strengthening the industrial base, aligning with Administration priorities of revitalizing the DIB and reforming acquisition processes.

#### DEFENSE PRODUCTION ACT

*Question.* The Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine saw the expanded use of Defense Production Act (DPA) authorities for the defense industrial base, and to support national emergencies and other contingencies.

How would you use DPA authorities to support prioritization of Federal contracts and expand domestic production of key supply chain bottlenecks (ex. Microelectronics, batteries), if confirmed?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would seek to use DPA authorities strategically to address supply chain bottlenecks like microelectronics and batteries, as well as other parts, components and rare materials causing constraints in the DIB. This includes implementing DPA Title I Defense Priorities and Allocations System authorities delegated from the Department of Commerce to prioritize and allocate critical industrial resources necessary or appropriate for the national defense, expediting production schedules, manufacturing capacity, and delivery performance, ensuring that programs of the highest national urgency are receiving appropriate priority performance of contracts and orders by the DIB. This also includes using the full scope of the DPA, including leveraging Title III authorities (loans, loan guarantees, purchase commitments, and purchases) to incentivize domestic production of key materials and reduce reliance on foreign sources and expand domestic production. I would also integrate DPA authorities with other tools like public-private partnerships and R&D investments for a more holistic approach to strengthening critical supply chains, coordinating closely with interagency partners.

*Question.* In your opinion, to what extent and how should DOD best utilize DPA Title III authorities for loan guarantees, purchase commitments, and grants and subsidies to expand domestic production in areas of strategic interest?

*Answer.* In my opinion, DPA Title III authorities, including loan guarantees, purchase commitments, and grants/subsidies, represent valuable tools for expanding domestic production in areas of strategic interest to the DOD. However, their use should be strategic and targeted, based on a rigorous assessment of need and potential effectiveness. A one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate.

If confirmed, I will conduct a comprehensive review of DPA Title III authorities to ensure their alignment with the needs of the DIB and the efficient use of taxpayer dollars, as well as coordinate with legislators to ensure DPA Title III is positioned to make use of loans, loan guarantees, and purchase commitments to the maximum extent possible. This review will inform a framework for determining the most appropriate type of incentive for a given situation. For example, grants or contracts may be more effective for quickly addressing urgent needs or stimulating initial investment in emerging technologies, while loan guarantees may be better suited for sustaining long-term investments in critical infrastructure. My goal is to utilize these authorities judiciously, maximizing their impact while minimizing risk and ensuring a robust and resilient domestic DIB. This will involve close coordination with other Federal agencies and industry partners to leverage expertise and avoid duplication of effort.

*Question.* Are there sectors or items you believe should see expanded use of DPA Title III authorities to support domestic production?

*Answer.* Several sectors, such as critical minerals and shipbuilding, warrant immediate attention for potential expanded DPA Title III use due to their criticality and supply chain vulnerabilities, including microelectronics, critical minerals, and high-performance materials. If confirmed, I would assess these sectors to identify areas where DPA Title III authorities could bolster domestic production and resilience. This assessment will consider current and future needs, informing recommendations for resource prioritization and potential additional authorities.

*Question.* The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 expanded the definition of domestic source to include the United Kingdom and Australia, if there were no domestic sources available. In addition to recognizing that the AUKUS partnership is critical to joint capability development and interoperability, both the United Kingdom and Australia have been forward leaning on improving supply chain transparency for critical and strategic materials.

If confirmed, will you commit to leveraging the Defense Production Act authority not only for necessary domestic sources, but also to utilize existing alliances and supply chains for the benefit of the defense industrial base and the warfighter?

*Answer.* If confirmed, and to the extent the efforts are in line with Presidential action, I am committed to using the DPA strategically, both domestically and with allies like the U.K., Canada, and Australia. I will focus on operationalizing the expanded definition of “domestic source” to address critical supply chain needs. This includes exploring creative uses of Title III authorities, such as incentives and innovative financing, to bolster domestic production and strengthen partnerships for a resilient industrial base.

*Question.* The National Technology and Industrial Base (NTIB) is codified in statute and is composed of the defense industrial bases of the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. According to statute, the Department of Defense is required to have a national security strategy for the national technology and industrial base and is supposed to chair the National Defense Technology and Industrial Base Council. However, there are very few outcomes from these requirements.

If confirmed, how will you utilize the National Technology and Industrial Base as an asset to continue expansion and investment in the defense industrial base? Are there any statutory adjustments that you would recommend that would allow NTIB to be more effective?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will leverage the NTIB to expand and strengthen the DIB by deepening information sharing, pursuing joint action with NTIB partners to address supply chain vulnerabilities, and prioritizing “ally shoring” and “friend-shoring.” I will also work to reduce barriers to integrating allied companies into the DIB, streamline regulations, and improve reciprocal defense trade. This whole-of-government approach will strengthen collective defense production and ensure supply chain resilience, crucial for modernizing our technological base and enhancing deterrence.

#### INTERNATIONAL ARMAMENTS COOPERATION (IAC)

*Question.* The Department conducts a number of activities that support International Armaments Cooperation (IAC) to promote US strategic goals. IAC is defined as (1) cooperative research, development, test, and evaluation of defense technologies, systems, or equipment; (2) joint production and follow-on support of defense articles or equipment and; (3) procurement of foreign technology, equipment, systems or logistics support. In addition to activities like information exchange agreements, defense trade, and cooperative logistics, the Department also funds activities that can be used to promote interoperability and joint development, such as the Defense Exportability Features (DEF) program, Coalition Warfare Support Program, and Foreign Comparative Test Program.

In your view, how are international armaments cooperation activities used to shape and support broader DOD warfighting needs and priorities? Are there new approaches or activities we should consider to be more effective and strategic?

*Answer.* IAC strengthens alliances, improves interoperability, and fosters innovation, all crucial for supporting DOD warfighting needs. If confirmed, I would examine streamlining acquisition with key partners, focusing on co-development, co-production, and co-sustainment of critical capabilities to maintain technological advantage, while ensuring these partnerships enhance U.S. industrial competitiveness and security. This includes exploring new approaches like joint investments in emerging technologies, flexible production, and enhanced information sharing.

*Question.* Based on the work of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, what recommendations would you draw from its success to help streamline and improve security cooperation, foreign military sales, and cooperative logistics processes in order to be more responsive to rapidly changing security situations?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would draw upon valuable lessons out of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (UDCG) to advocate for streamlined processes for expediting security assistance requests, enhanced interoperability of equipment and systems among partner nations, pre-positioning of critical supplies and equipment in strategic locations, maintaining an industrial base that can expand to meet emergent requirements during a conflict, and improved coordination mechanisms for joint planning and logistics. These improvements would enable more agile and effective responses to rapidly changing security situations while strengthening partnerships, interoperability, and interchangeability—ultimately ensuring our collective security.

*Question.* The Ukraine Defense Contact Group offers valuable lessons in security cooperation. If confirmed, I would closely examine its successes and challenges to inform future decisionmaking regarding streamlining foreign military sales, cooperative logistics, and responsiveness to evolving security situations. This includes exploring opportunities to expedite assistance requests, enhance interoperability, pre-position critical supplies, and improve joint planning and logistics coordination.

If confirmed, would you review how the U.S. could rapidly model the Ukraine Defense Contact Group in the event of a different conflict?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would review the lessons learned from the Ukraine conflict, including the effectiveness of the UDCG, to inform future contingency planning, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Examining best practices and areas for improvement in coordinating multinational support for growing our collective DIBs is crucial for ensuring we can respond rapidly and effectively to any future conflict.

*Question.* In your view, how are newer initiatives like the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) with India, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or Quad), or the AUKUS initiative being used to support our defense posture, and are there recommendations for improvements of those activities that should be considered to make them more effective?

*Answer.* It is my understanding that the DTTI, the Quad, and AUKUS are vital for strengthening our defense posture through interoperability, technology cooperation, and collective security. However, maximizing their effectiveness requires prioritizing expedited technology sharing, co-development, co-production, and co-sustainment that is focused on interoperability, strengthened industrial base collaboration, and regular strategic dialog.

If confirmed, I will review these initiatives to ensure they are impactful partnerships that enhance our collective defense capabilities and shared security.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

*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 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 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 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 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 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 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 yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

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[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

8(A) CONTRACTS

1. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Cadenazzi, the Small Business Act (SBA) 8(a) program, created by Congress, provides a contract vehicle through which sole source and set aside contracts can be awarded to small businesses owned by Alaska Native corporations, Community Development Corporations, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations. These corporations are tied to political relationships, not racial classifications. They also are some of our most efficient contractors, earning stellar Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) marks. Last many of these small businesses employ veterans at rates far exceeding the national average, allowing our Nation's finest to continue to serve after they take off the uniform. Will you commit to me to work to preserve and strengthen 8(a) contracting for the Department of the Defense?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is my understanding that 8(a) companies are an invaluable asset to the Department's workforce. If confirmed, I will commit to preserve and strengthen 8(a) contracting in the Department.

2. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Cadenazzi and Vice Admiral Pappano, I recently toured an SBA 8(a) contracting operation and saw firsthand the value 8(a) brings to the Federal customer in terms of cost and efficiency while delivering mission-critical solutions that increase our national security and warfighter readiness. 8(a) contracts represent the best "bang for the buck" for taxpayers, giving contracting officers additional flexibility while also maximizing efficiency by reducing red-tape. Do you see the value in increased efficiency in flexibility brought from initiatives such as the 8(a) program?

Mr. CADENAZZI. In my view, the 8(a) program delivers substantial value to the Department of Defense by connecting innovative small businesses with prime contractors. This infusion of speed and innovation strengthens the defense industrial base, resulting in effective outcomes for the Department.

ALASKA

3. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Cadenazzi, on President Trump's first day in office he signed the Executive Order "Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential." This sent a strong message to Alaska, America, and the world, that unleashing Alaska's extraordinary resources and jobs in a growing economy is one of his Administration's top priorities. For years, I've worked toward the success of the Alaska LNG project. Not only could Alaska LNG shipments provide our allies with energy security, reaching them in 6 days without any strategic choke points, but this pipeline crosses directly through some of our most prominent military bases in my State, several of which have had issues with supply. Now, purchase agreements and other ways to commit to the project, beyond just the Department of Defense's (DOD) immediate need, will help secure financing for the project quickly and at the lowest cost in line with President Trump's America First Energy and National Security agenda. Can I get your commitment to work with me on the Alaska LNG (AKLNG) Project?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I appreciate your longstanding commitment to the Alaska LNG project and its potential benefits for both Alaska and our national security. I understand the importance of this project for energy security, job creation, and supporting our military installations in Alaska. If confirmed, I will commit to working with you to explore this project's opportunities for the DOD and nation.

#### DEFENSE PRODUCTION ACT AND CRITICAL MINERALS

4. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Cadenazzi, Alaska represents a wealth of critical minerals. In the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the Secretary of Defense was tasked with providing a way forward to address all critical mineral shortfalls. This came after a 2024 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that of the 99 materials for which there is a current shortfall, over 90 percent had either zero or one domestic supplier. In 2024, the previous Administration went to Australia and the United Kingdom and offered to purchase minerals from there rather than source them domestically. So, in 2024, I got an amendment into the NDAA that said that domestic sources, namely the United States and Canada, would be the primary source of development, and then, only if unable to source domestically, then we could go to those other countries. What are the risks to continued reliance on foreign, and often un-friendly, sources for these critical minerals?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is my understanding that addressing our reliance on foreign sources of critical minerals is not just an industrial base issue, it is one of national security. Reliance on foreign sources for critical minerals exposes the U.S. defense industrial base to supply chain disruptions and adversarial manipulation, jeopardizing our ability to produce essential defense systems and maintain technological superiority.

5. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Cadenazzi, how can Congress help “onshore” or, at the very least, “friendly shore” some of these material sources?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is in my view that Congress can bolster domestic critical mineral production by providing predictable and stable resources for infrastructure, R&D, and workforce development that supports the onshoring of these materials.

6. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Cadenazzi, I also got a provision in the 2025 NDAA that required the Secretary of Defense to consult with the head of any agency responsible for development of an “environmental document” for a project that would result in an increase in availability of strategic and critical minerals. These environmental impact studies have been weaponized against my State to block development and limit economic opportunity at a cost to our national security. Will you commit to me to ensuring the Defense Production Act stays focused on defense and on improving our domestic industrial base?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will commit to leveraging the Defense Production Act to secure reliable domestic sources of critical minerals and defense-critical capabilities that will strengthen our defense industrial base and reduce reliance on vulnerable foreign supply chains.

#### PROTECTING THE U.S. INDUSTRIAL BASE

7. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Cadenazzi, the United States defense industrial base has always been a major target for foreign espionage—especially by major adversaries like China and Russia. One concerning trend the last few years is the very real threat of sabotage of industrial base assets by foreign agents. We saw attempts attributed to Russia to sabotage critical defense industrial base infrastructure in NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] countries since 2022. Germany and the United Kingdom for instance both saw fires and explosions break out at ammunition and missile facilities linked to the War in Ukraine. We saw an assassination plot against the CEO of Rheinmettal, a major German arms supplier, and fires set by explosive devices that went off at DHL logistics hubs in Germany, England, and Poland bound for aircraft. If confirmed, will you commit to doing an assessment of the security of the U.S. defense industrial base against the types of plots I just described and report back to Congress as soon as possible about ways we could better protect these critical nodes?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the relevant inter-agency partners and Congress to assess the security of the U.S. defense industrial base and explore ways to enhance its protection. I understand the importance of this issue and commit to giving it full and careful consideration.

## COLLABORATION WITH ISRAEL

8. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Cadenazzi, the Department of Defense's 2023 National Defense Industrial Strategy, as well as the DOD's implementation plan for fiscal year 2025, emphasize the importance of collaboration with allies and partners to enhance defense production, innovation, and overall capability. Israel, with its robust and innovative defense industry, is a natural fit for inclusion in the National Technology and Industrial Base (NTIB). Israel's defense sector, which emerged out of necessity, has become a leader in cutting-edge technologies such as cybersecurity, unmanned systems, and missile defense. The United States and Israel already have a strong foundation of cooperation through the Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA) and the U.S.-Israel Defense Industrial Base Working Group. With rising threats from adversaries like China, Russia, and Iran, do you believe it is in the United States' national interest to deepen our industrial collaboration with Israel?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I look forward to examining the potential benefits and challenges of deepening defense industrial cooperation collaboration with Israel, particularly in light of evolving geopolitical dynamics. I recognize the importance of strong international partnerships to our national security and economic interests.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

## ELECTRONICS INDUSTRIAL BASE

9. Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what specific actions will your office take to identify and close manufacturing shortfalls in essential electronic components such as printed circuit boards (PCBs) and flat panel displays to ensure a resilient and secure industrial base for advanced defense electronics?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, my office will work to assess supply chain risks and explore opportunities to strengthen domestic production through targeted investments and strategic partnerships. We will work to evaluate ways to address manufacturing gaps in PCBs and flat panel displays while supporting efforts to diversify supply sources.

10. Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Cadenazzi, how can your office rapidly ramp up domestic capacity for crucial electronic needs, like PCBs, so that the United States can match the output of our adversaries?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I look forward to thoroughly assessing our domestic capacity for crucial electronics like PCBs and developing a comprehensive plan to leverage all available tools, including the Defense Production Act, Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) Program and other authorities.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

## INDUSTRIAL RESILIENCE

11. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, the United States faces a pacing threat from China, and we must ensure that our industrial policy accounts for forward-deployed capabilities, long supply lines, and the need for distributed manufacturing. Hawaii, in particular, offers a strategic location for investment in resilient infrastructure and sustainment. What specific role do you see forward-positioned industrial capabilities—such as those in Hawaii or Guam—playing in future contingency planning and sustainment operations in the Indo-Pacific?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Forward-positioned industrial capabilities in locations like Hawaii and Guam are absolutely crucial for future contingency planning and sustainment operations in the Indo-Pacific. They provide essential logistical support, reduce reliance on long and vulnerable supply lines, and enhance our ability to respond quickly and effectively to crises. If confirmed, I would prioritize investing in and strengthening these forward-positioned capabilities as a key element of our Indo-Pacific strategy.

12. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, how will you work to ensure that industrial base initiatives don't just concentrate on major defense primes, but also include small businesses and community-based partners, particularly in underserved regions like Hawaii?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I recognize the vital role that small businesses play in our national security innovation and industrial base resilience. They possess agility and specialized expertise and often represent the leading edge of technological advance-

ment. It is essential that we leverage these strengths and ensure they are not lost or forgotten in relation to the larger defense primes.

If confirmed, I will direct IBP's industrial base initiatives to prioritize engagement with these businesses and communities to understand their capabilities and tailor DOD support to their needs. This will involve streamlining acquisition processes, investing in workforce development, and increasing transparency in contracting.

#### NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND THE DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE

13. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, I've long believed that sustaining and strengthening the defense industrial base is not just about procurement, it's about people, places, and partnerships. Hawaii is uniquely positioned to contribute to the resilience and modernization of the defense industrial base, led by local and Native Hawaiian Organizations. How will you ensure that small and underrepresented communities, including Native Hawaiian Organizations, are more fully integrated into the DOD's industrial base planning and investment strategy?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I agree that a robust defense industrial base relies on people, places, and partnerships, and I share your view that Hawaii offers unique capabilities and contributions. It's not simply about procuring equipment—but more so about cultivating a diverse and resilient ecosystem of suppliers, innovators, manufacturers, and vocationally skilled workers.

If confirmed, I will leverage existing authorities and small business programs, such as the DOD Mentor-Protege and APEX Accelerator Programs, and as well as existing close partnerships with the Hawaiian small business and defense industrial organizations through INDOPACOM and the Defense Innovation Unit. I will also explore new mechanisms to lower barriers to entry, encourage prime-contractor partnerships, and invest in workforce development specific to these communities.

14. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, how do you plan to both strengthen our supply chain resilience and ensure that communities like those in Hawaii—which have historically been underutilized—are included in the defense innovation ecosystem?

Mr. CADENAZZI. In my view, strengthening supply chain resilience and ensuring inclusivity of underutilized suppliers are mutually reinforcing goals. If confirmed, I will prioritize proactive outreach to Hawaiian businesses, especially Native Hawaiian Organizations, leverage existing IBP programs to attract suppliers from underutilized communities, and tailor DOD support through streamlined acquisition (e.g., expanded OTAs), incentives for prime-contractor partnerships, and targeted workforce development. This inclusive approach will leverage local potential, driving innovation and strengthening defense supply chains. If confirmed, I am committed to visiting Hawaii to gather stakeholder input and inform future efforts.

#### ACQUISITION REFORM

15. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, there is bipartisan support for acquisition reform, especially reforms that are meaningful for our warfighters in the Indo-Pacific—the Department's priority theater. But for too long, we've seen a mismatch between our strategic objectives and how we fund and prioritize capabilities for the region. How will you ensure that industrial base planning is aligned with real-world requirements?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Aligning industrial base planning with Indo-Pacific needs would be crucial. If confirmed, I will prioritize collaboration with U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) to define requirements, leverage data analysis to address vulnerabilities, promote agile acquisition from our defense industry partners for faster delivery, and ensure transparency and accountability throughout the process. This data-driven approach will deliver warfighters the capabilities they need.

16. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you support the creation of a dedicated U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) Acquisition Executive to represent the region's need; and how do you see your office coordinating with that role, if established?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is important to ensure the USINDOPACOM has the necessary acquisition leadership to support the region's strategic needs. I would welcome the opportunity to better understand the role of a dedicated USINDOPACOM Acquisition Executive.

17. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, would you support reforms to give combatant commanders more direct input into acquisition and industrial base decisions?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I understand OSD has been increasing delegation of authority to requirements owners, wherever possible, to reduce administrative burden associated

with multiple layers of bureaucratic oversight. If confirmed, I will work closely with my colleagues throughout A&S and partners such as the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering and Defense Innovation Unit to identify opportunities where combatant commanders may provide more direct input into acquisition and industrial base decisions.

18. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, reforming acquisition practices to better support our forward-deployed forces is essential to ensuring deterrence and readiness in the Indo-Pacific. Yet in the fiscal year 2025 budget, INDOPACOM submitted over \$11 billion in unfunded priorities—a clear signal that our current acquisition systems aren't keeping pace with operational demands in the region. How do you plan to tailor acquisition and sustainment strategies to meet the unique needs of Indo-Pacific forces—particularly those based in Hawaii and operating throughout the Pacific Island chains?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will work closely with my colleagues throughout A&S to best understand the requirements unique to each combatant command and will support acquisition reform efforts to meet the operational needs of the warfighter.

19. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, in light of the urgency to field capabilities quickly while maintaining transparency and accountability, what specific acquisition reforms would you advocate for to ensure the timely delivery of systems without compromising oversight or wasting taxpayer dollars?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will work closely with my colleagues throughout A&S to support acquisition reform efforts to enable faster procurement, production, and to ensure innovative capabilities are delivered into the hands of the warfighter. As such, if confirmed I welcome the opportunity to partner my A&S colleagues on reform efforts to fulfill the President's objective of restoring common sense to Federal procurement.

#### UNMANNED SYSTEMS SUSTAINABILITY

20. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Cadenazzi, DOD is rapidly expanding its use of autonomous and unmanned systems across all domains, especially in the Indo-Pacific. But many of these systems are not designed for sustainability, lifecycle logistics, or rapid reconstitution in theater. How do you see your office helping shape procurement and production strategies for autonomous systems to ensure they are scalable, sustainable, and field-ready for operational needs in contested environments like the Indo-Pacific?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Secretary Hegseth acknowledged the importance of autonomous and unmanned systems across all domains. Additionally, I understand there are many stakeholders within the Department focused on delivering these capabilities at speed and scale to the warfighters. It is critical the Department assess the needs within all domains, including the Indo-Pacific when procuring autonomous and unmanned systems. If confirmed, I will assist the appropriate stakeholders across the Department identify the best strategies to deliver warfighters scalable, sustainable, and field-ready autonomous and unmanned systems.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

##### ETHICS

21. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you are confirmed, will you commit not to seek any employment with or compensation from a defense contractor, including through serving on a board, as a consultant, or as a lobbyist, for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors, as well as communicating back to the Federal Government on behalf of any future employers and clients. I believe that these existing rules are appropriate and sufficient to protect the public interest. If confirmed, I will carry out the responsibilities of my office honorably, and I will seek any post-government employment in full compliance with the applicable ethics rules.

22. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you are confirmed, will you commit not to engage in any lobbying activities, including unregistered "shadow" or "behind-the-

scenes” lobbying under the guise of consulting or advising, focused on DOD or any of its components for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors, as well as communicating back to the Federal Government on behalf of any future employers and clients. I believe that these existing rules are appropriate and sufficient to protect the public interest. If confirmed, I will carry out the responsibilities of my office honorably, and I will seek any post-government employment in full compliance with the applicable ethics rules.

23. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit not to seek employment, board membership with, or any other form of compensation from a company that you regulated or otherwise interacted with while in government, for at least 4 years after leaving office?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors, as well as communicating back to the Federal Government on behalf of any future employers and clients. I believe that these existing rules are appropriate and sufficient to protect the public interest. If confirmed, I will carry out the responsibilities of my office honorably, and I will seek any post-government employment in full compliance with the applicable ethics rules.

24. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, during your nomination process, did anyone on the Trump campaign, transition team, or other closely related entity approach you about your loyalty to President Trump?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No. I was not approached regarding this subject.

25. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you sign a loyalty pledge or other similar oath? If so, please provide a copy of the text of that pledge or oath.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No. I was not approached regarding this subject.

26. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you make any verbal representations of loyalty? If so, please describe this representation.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No. I was not approached regarding this subject.

27. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, in November 2024, the New York Times and other news outlets reported that Boris Epshteyn, a top adviser to President Trump, allegedly requested payment from prospective political appointees to promote their candidacies for top positions within the Administration. Did you discuss the possibility of joining the Administration with Mr. Epshteyn at any time?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

28. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you did discuss the possibility of joining the Administration with Mr. Epshteyn, did Mr. Epshteyn seek payment from you for promoting your candidacy for a position within the Administration?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Not applicable.

29. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, at any time, did lawyers for President Trump or members of President Trump’s team approach you regarding Mr. Epshteyn and the allegations cited above? If so, please describe the information that they provided you (including copies of documents), what was discussed during any calls, and any other information pertaining to this interaction.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No, I was not approached on this subject.

30. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, were you in contact with Mr. Elon Musk at any time during your nomination process? If so, please describe the nature of those contacts.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No, I was not in contact with Mr. Musk at any time during the nomination process.

31. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, was Mr. Musk present or involved in any interviews you did related to your nomination? If so, please describe the nature of his involvement.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No, he was not present or involved in any interviews related to my nomination.

32. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, was Mr. Musk involved in any way with your nomination, including but not limited to, directly or indirectly contacting Senators regarding their position on your nomination?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No, he was not involved in any way with my nomination process.

33. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, who was in the room or participated in any of your interviews regarding your nomination?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I had three discussions with Administration personnel and staff from PPO and DOD prior to my nomination. None of these were defined to me as "interviews."

34. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you own any stock or hold any other interest in any defense industry or Department of Energy contractors, will you divest it to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest?

Mr. CADENAZZI. My ethics agreement, which was previously provided to the Committee, sets forth my ethics commitments, if confirmed.

35. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what do you consider the role of the press in a democracy?

Mr. CADENAZZI. An objective, apolitical press is intended to provide factual reporting on events in the Nation and the world while delivering a level of accountability on corporations, governments and their officials of any and all political parties operating at any level (from the Federal to State and local).

36. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you think it would be an appropriate use of taxpayer resources to "dig up dirt" on journalists who investigate or criticize you, your office, or the Trump administration?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

37. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit not to retaliate, including by denying access to government officials or facilities, against news outlets or individual journalists who publish articles that are critical of you, your office, your agency, or the Trump administration?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes, with the bounds of the law and guidance from legal counsel.

38. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, have you requested, or has anyone requested on your behalf, that any other person or third party sign a nondisclosure, confidentiality, non-disparagement, or similar agreement regarding your conduct in a personal or professional capacity?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

39. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you voluntarily release any individual from any such agreements before this committee votes on your nomination?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Not applicable.

40. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, have you ever paid or promised to pay, or has anyone paid or promised to pay on your behalf, an individual as part of any non-disclosure, confidentiality, non-disparagement, or similar agreement?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

41. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi if the answer to the previous question was yes, how much was promised, how much was paid, and what were the circumstances?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Not applicable.

42. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit to recuse yourself from all particular matters involving your former clients and employers for the duration of your service at DOD?

Mr. CADENAZZI. My ethics agreement, which was previously provided to the Committee, sets forth my ethics commitments, if confirmed.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

43. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what is your understanding of the role of the Department of Defense Inspector General and service Inspectors General?

Mr. CADENAZZI. The Inspector General operates with the DOD and Services as independent entities which conduct independent unbiased investigation and analysis of a broad array of topic to maintain accountability within the Department.

44. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you ensure your staff complies with any Inspector General deadlines established for requested communications, documents, and witnesses, and that staff will be protected from reprisal for their testimony?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes.

45. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you are not able to comply with any Inspector General requests and deadlines, will you notify the Republican and Democratic members of this committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes

46. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you are confirmed, will you commit to refusing to follow illegal orders from any individual, including the President?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes.

47. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what actions would you take if you were given an illegal order from any individual, including the President?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If I had concerns about the legality of an order, I would first contact the Office of Legal Counsel to address my concerns. Based upon their response, I would take appropriate actions.

48. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit to voluntarily provide a deposition if you are requested by Congress to provide one?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes

49. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit to voluntarily testify in front of Congress if you are requested by Congress to do so?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes

50. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit to testify or provide a deposition in front of Congress if you are issued a subpoena to do so?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes

51. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit to providing information or documents to Congress voluntarily if you are requested to do so?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes

52. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you provide information or documents to Congress if you are issued a subpoena to do so?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes

53. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit to following current precedent for responding to information requests, briefings, and other inquiries from Congress, including the Senate and House Armed Services Committees and their minority members?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes

54. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if confirmed, will you commit to posting your official calendar monthly?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I commit to complying with the Freedom of Information Act, which covers all agency records to include my official calendar.

55. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you think the Federal Government has an overclassification problem? If so, please provide examples of overclassification you have encountered.

Mr. CADENAZZI. I do not have current personal experience with this issue. However, I have read in public reports and heard from both experts and government officials that the Federal Government has an overclassification problem. As result, I do not have a strong perspective on this topic and would be open to arguments on either side.

56. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if confirmed, do you think your department should pursue strategic technology to support automated declassification?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Technology can be a powerful enabler of productivity and efficiency for myriad administrative tasks. Where declassification is appropriate, the application of strategic technology could be a complement to existing declassification processes, serve as a check on manual declassification process, or serve as starting point for more advanced solutions in the future.

## PROJECT 2025

57. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Trump campaign, the Trump transition team, or other members of the Trump administration? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No, I have never discussed Project 2025 with any members of the Trump campaign, Trump transition team or other members of the Trump administration.

58. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Heritage Foundation? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No, I have never discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Heritage Foundation.

## FOREIGN INFLUENCE

59. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, have you received any payment from a foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

60. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, have you communicated with any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

61. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, please disclose any communications or payments you have had with representatives of any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years and describe the nature of the communication.

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

## RETALIATION AND PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

62. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you believe that servicemembers, civilians, grantees, and contractors should be protected from any form of retaliation for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes.

63. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, have you ever retaliated against any individual for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

64. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you are confirmed, will you commit to protecting whistleblowers? If so, please specify how you will do so.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes. I am not currently aware of DOD rules and regulations for whistleblower protection. I would need to familiarize myself with this topic to provide specific steps. In addition, I would seek advice from counsel and coordinate any actions or response with them.

## IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT

65. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you believe the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Energy has the legal authority to block the disbursement of funds appropriated by Congress?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I fully acknowledge and respect Congress' constitutional role in appropriating funds to be carried out by the executive branch for designated purposes.

66. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what is your understanding of the Impoundment Control Act?

Mr. CADENAZZI. My understanding is that the Impoundment Control Act provides a framework for handling circumstances in which the President seeks to defer or cancel execution of appropriated funds.

I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law on this matter, as on all others. I would ensure that my actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense on this matter are informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel's office.

67. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you commit to complying with the Impoundment Control Act?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law on this matter as on all others. I would ensure that my actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense on this matter are informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel's office.

68. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you commit to notifying the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, including the majority and minority, if you are asked not to comply with the Impoundment Control Act or not to expend the money that Congress appropriates or authorizes?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law on this matter as on all others. I would ensure that my actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense on this matter are informed by advice the Administration's legal positions and from the Department's General Counsel's office.

69. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, the Constitution's Spending Clause (Art. I, § 8, cl. 1) and Appropriations Clause (Art. I, § 9, cl. 7) give Congress, not the Executive, power of the purse. The Supreme Court has unanimously upheld this power. Do you believe that impoundments are constitutional?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law on this matter as on all others. I would ensure that my actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense on this matter are informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel's office.

70. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, the funding levels in appropriations bills passed into law are not targets or ceilings; instead, they are amounts the executive branch must spend, unless stated otherwise. Congress could—if it wanted the President to have discretion—write those amounts as ceilings. Do you agree?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law on this matter as on all others. I would ensure that my actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense on this matter are informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel's office.

71. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what is your understanding of the requirements for DOD/NNSA to obligate funding that Congress authorizes and appropriates, in accordance with the time period that Congress deems it to do so?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law on this matter as on all others. I would ensure that my actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense on this matter are informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel's office.

72. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you commit to expending the money that Congress appropriates and authorizes?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law on this matter as on all others. I would ensure that my actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense on this matter are informed by advice the Administration's legal positions and from the Department's General Counsel's office.

73. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you commit to following and implementing every provision of the annual National Defense Authorization Act passed into law?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law, including the National Defense Authorization Acts.

74. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you became aware of a potential violation of the Antideficiency Act, Impoundment Control Act, or other appropriations laws, what steps would you take?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law. If I receive information of a potential legal violation, I would direct the gathering of relevant facts, ensure all relevant stakeholders are engaged, and consult with the Department's General Counsel's office.

#### RIGHT-TO-REPAIR

75. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you believe ensuring the services have access to the technical data rights needed to repair their own equipment could advance military readiness?

Mr. CADENAZZI. The ability to quickly and cost-effectively repair, maintain, and overhaul equipment is essential to military readiness and deterrence. As such, I believe the Department should procure the necessary data and associated rights to enable repair of its own equipment where appropriate. If confirmed, I will work to support the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment and my counterparts across the Department to ensure there is a review of the Department's policies regarding the acquisition of technical data rights and the impact on readiness.

76. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you are confirmed, will you commit to helping DOD lower sustainment costs by promoting competition for repair contracts and ensuring DOD has access to technical data rights needed for repairs?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts across Acquisition and Sustainment to explore how best to leverage right-to-repair and technical data rights in acquisition and sustainment contracts to lower costs, enhance competition, and foster innovation within the defense industrial base.

77. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, if you are confirmed, will you commit to ensuring services and components have guidance and necessary support to include right-to-repair/technical data rights clauses in acquisition contracts that DOD enters into as part of a broader strategy to lower sustainment costs and expand the defense industrial base?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I note that Secretary Hegseth directed the Secretary of the Army to identify and propose contract modifications to incorporate right-to-repair provisions and seek to include these provisions in all new contracts to accelerate modernization and efficacy. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting Department policy on right-to-repair provisions as a tool to foster competition and innovation in the defense industrial base.

78. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what is your understanding of how DOD can use suspension and debarment to advance DOD acquisition and policy priorities?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It's my understanding that suspension and debarment are tools for ensuring the defense industrial base is comprised of responsible and reliable contractors. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition to better understand available DOD options, such as suspension and debarment, to ensure a robust DIB.

79. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, will you commit to conducting an assessment of how acquisition strategies and contract mechanisms can be used to protect DOD's interest in acquisition and sustainment, the results of which you would make public for review by Congress, the public, and the Department of Government Efficiency?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will commit to working with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, who has primary responsibility for this area, to support an assessment of acquisition strategies and contract mechanisms. I believe a thorough understanding of these tools is critical for protecting the DOD's interests in acquisition and sustainment.

#### ACQUISITION REFORM

80. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi and Vice Admiral Pappano, what is your understanding of the Procurement Integrity Act and your obligations under that law?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I understand I am obligated to protect source selection information from unauthorized disclosure and that safeguarding this sensitive information is essential to maintain the integrity of the process. As a Government official, I understand I must ensure all prospective contractors have the fair opportunity to compete for Federal contracts, and the Procurement Integrity Act prohibits former Government officials from accepting compensation from contractors to varying degrees, depending on the procurement decisionmaking role performed by the former official and the dollar value of those decisions. The Act also imposes meaningful restrictions on post-Government employment of covered officials, and these restrictions are important to ensure an unbiased operation of the procurement system.

81. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi and Vice Admiral Pappano, do you believe that it is important to be able to assess accurate cost and pricing data from contractors, especially for sole-or single-source contracts?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will work with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition (ASD(A)) to understand the implications of accurate cost and pricing data—particularly in sole-source situations—on acquiring goods and services at fair and reasonable prices. I understand competition is the preferred method for obtaining fair and reasonable pricing, however that is not always possible. I understand that access to accurate cost and pricing data from contractors, provides the Government with a reliable way to verify contractor assertions or statements during negotiations.

82. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi and Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that contractors are not price-gouging or overcharging the Federal Government?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I believe competition affords the U.S. Government means to acquire goods and services at the best value, thus preventing or reducing risk of price gouging. If confirmed, I will work with the ASD(A), where appropriate, to understand what measures are in place, and what additional efforts may be needed to safeguard against price gouging.

83. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, should DOD's industrial base strategy be influenced by partisan political activities?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I believe DOD's industrial base strategy should be driven by objective national security requirements. My focus will be on strengthening the industrial base through objective assessments and ensuring predictable, stable resourcing to effectively support our warfighters.

84. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, should DOD's acquisition decisions be influenced by individuals with conflicts of interest involving contracts or other business before DOD?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will ensure OASD(IBP) priorities, in partnership with my colleagues throughout A&S, align with those of the President, and Secretary Hegseth, while ensuring robust, secure, resilient, and innovative industrial capabilities are delivered to the warfighter.

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

85. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, does the Federal Government benefit from partnering with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded research and development centers?

Mr. CADENAZZI. In my view, yes. Partnering with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and FFRDCs is essential for the Federal Government, especially when it comes to the defense industrial base. These organizations bring a wealth of expertise, cutting-edge research, and a talent pipeline that we simply can't replicate on our own. However, the Department must work with these entities to ensure that national defense information is safe and secure from exploitation and expropriation. By working together, we can leverage their strengths to address critical national security challenges and maintain our technological advantage.

86. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, under your leadership, will your agencies continue to work with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded research and development centers to research and address our toughest national security challenges?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed—yes. Collaborating with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and FFRDCs is certainly something I see as valuable. If confirmed, I will

continue to consider these relationships as a key avenue for addressing national security challenges.

PROTECTING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND FEDERAL RECORDS

87. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what is your understanding of the need to protect operational security, or OPSEC?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Operational Security is practiced to deny adversaries the opportunity for an advantage over U.S. forces. Proper OPSEC protects critical information and the mission and the men and women executing it.

88. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what are the national security risks of improperly disclosing classified information?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is generally accepted that the improper or unauthorized disclosure of classified information could be expected to cause identifiable or describable damage to national security. The describable damage and certainty of that damage would depend on the details of the information released, including the level of classification, as well as the extent and nature of the disclosure. Determining the extent of damage to national security is part of the unauthorized disclosure process as outlined in DOD policy, and I would defer to the Department for additional specifics.

89. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what would you do if you learned an official had improperly disclosed classified information?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed and in such a situation, I would immediately take steps to secure the information, assess the situation, and report the incident to the appropriate security officials for mitigation and appropriate action in accordance with law and policy.

90. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what is your understanding of government officials' duties under the Federal Records Act?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will adhere to the Federal Records Act and the applicable DOD policies that implement it, which ensure that the Federal records I create or receive are appropriately maintained.

91. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, should classified information be shared on unclassified commercial systems?

Mr. CADENAZZI. No.

COMPETITION

92. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, how can DOD's acquisition policies increase competition in the defense industrial base?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Several acquisition policy adjustments can increase competition in the defense industrial base. These include streamlining the process, especially for smaller and non-traditional vendors; promoting modular open systems architectures; increasing the use of Other Transaction Authorities via the Commercial Solutions Opening process and other flexible contracting mechanisms; and actively engaging a diverse range of potential suppliers, including small businesses and startups. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition on these and other initiatives as well as partnering with the Defense Innovation Unit to strengthen the defense industrial base.

93. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, under what circumstances should DOD pursue those policies?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Policies to increase competition should be pursued strategically, considering the specific circumstances of each acquisition program. Factors like criticality, technology maturity, urgency, and potential risks of using non-traditional vendors should be weighed. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the ASD(A) on these and other initiatives to strengthen the defense industrial base.

94. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, in what ways might DOD be negatively impacted by "vendor lock-in," that is by becoming dependent on a single vendor?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Vendor lock-in can hinder competition, drive up costs, and limit innovation both in acquisition and in sustainment. Relying on a single vendor risks disruptions from financial instability, cybersecurity breaches, or production delays. If confirmed, I would leverage all of the authorities and programs under the ASD(IBP)'s purview to prioritize fostering competition in the DIB, attract new and non-traditional entrants, and carefully evaluate vendor dependencies to mitigate these risks.

95. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, according to the GAO, DOD's mergers and acquisitions team consists of only two to three full-time equivalent employees. Do you think that indicates DOD is adequately prioritizing and resourcing its processes to determine if prospective mergers and acquisitions harm national security?

Mr. CADENAZZI. While I am not familiar with the precise figures cited by the GAO, I do agree that adequate staffing and resourcing are critical for effectively evaluating the national security implications of mergers and acquisitions. A workforce of two to three full-time equivalents certainly seems like a small team to handle such a large, complex, and important task. If confirmed, I will assess the current workload, the complexity of the transactions being reviewed, and the resources available to determine if adjustments are needed to ensure we're properly safeguarding national security.

96. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, in your advance policy questions you wrote, "If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the DOD rigorously evaluates the implications of M&A activities on the industrial and technological base, leveraging its unique perspective to assess potential risks to supply chain resilience, innovation, and operational readiness. The Department must also maintain active awareness of how ongoing M&A activities influence cost, schedule, and performance across defense acquisition programs. When appropriate, the DOD should voice concerns and work with regulatory agencies to address acquisitions that give rise to concerns. I will advocate for a proactive approach that strengthens oversight mechanisms, enhances interagency coordination, and ensures that America's DIB remains competitive, secure, and aligned with national security priorities." Do you think DOD's industrial base strategy should be informed by an understanding of the impacts of past mergers and acquisitions on the current health of the defense industrial base, including the most vulnerable sectors like missiles and munitions?

Mr. CADENAZZI. In my view, understanding the impacts of past Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) is essential for informing a robust and effective industrial base strategy. Analyzing historical trends, particularly in vulnerable sectors like missiles and munitions, can help us identify potential risks and vulnerabilities associated with future M&A activity. This includes assessing the impact on competition, innovation, supply chain resilience, consolidation, and overall cost and performance of defense programs. If confirmed, I will focus on incorporating these historical lessons learned into our strategic planning to ensure a more proactive and informed approach to safeguarding the health and competitiveness of the defense industrial base.

97. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you think using modular open systems approaches in acquisition can help encourage competition and result in reducing costs and program delays and increasing technical performance?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Modular open systems approaches can enhance competition, reduce costs and delays, and improve technical performance. By enabling interoperability and integrating components from multiple vendors, they help avoid vendor lock-in and encourage innovation. Effective implementation requires careful planning, and if confirmed, I would promote their use where appropriate.

#### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

98. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, in what ways might DOD benefit from increased competition in the artificial intelligence and cloud computing markets?

Mr. CADENAZZI. The American artificial intelligence (AI) industry is currently a source of competitive advantage over our adversaries. Our commercial sector is the leading edge of innovation, driving powerful capabilities into both private industry and the DOD. Increased competition in the AI market—with respect to both AI model development and cloud infrastructure—would benefit DOD by driving down costs, fostering innovation, and accelerating the development of cutting-edge AI capabilities. A more competitive landscape also ensures a wider range of vendors—especially small and medium sized businesses—reducing reliance on single-source providers. The diversified market created by increased competition would likely allow DOD to promote greater interoperability and prevent vendor lock-in, enabling DOD to adopt best-in-class solutions. Finally, a robustly competitive environment promotes higher quality and more tailored AI solutions to address DOD's unique and complex operational requirements.

Increased competition in the market offers significant benefits to DOD including greater competition to drive down costs, fueling innovation, enhance resilience and avoid vendor lock, and creating more tailored solutions.

99. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, in what ways might DOD be impacted by consolidation in the artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud computing markets?

Mr. CADENAZZI. Consolidation in the AI and cloud computing markets would likely negatively impact DOD. A consolidation of the AI or cloud computing market, similar to the post-cold war consolidation of the defense and aerospace industry, would likely stifle competition and increase costs; suppress innovation; and reduce access to frontier AI and cloud capabilities. Furthermore, a consolidated market could lead to increased vendor lock-in, making it more difficult for DOD to adopt best-in-class solutions from alternative non-traditional vendors. Furthermore, a less diverse market could hinder the development of specialized AI solutions tailored to DOD's unique operational requirements, ultimately frustrating DOD's ability to integrate advanced applications of AI in support of lethality and management efficiencies.

100. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, in what ways might DOD benefit from the adoption of interoperable AI and cloud computing tools?

Mr. CADENAZZI. The adoption of interoperable AI and cloud computing tools have the ability to greatly enhance DOD's lethality and efficiency, as well as increase coordination across the Department. It would also increase operational agility and result in cost efficiencies. Interoperability allows AI and cloud systems to share data, models, and outputs, enabling operational agility. Interoperability also increases opportunities for scalability, reducing duplicability and costs of fielding AI and cloud systems across the enterprise. Interoperability encourages a more modular and open approach to technology development. This allows smaller, innovative companies to contribute to the DOD's technology ecosystem, fostering a more dynamic and competitive market. It also makes it easier to integrate cutting-edge commercial technologies into military applications.

101. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, in what ways might DOD benefit from multicloud solutions when contracting for cloud computing tools?

Mr. CADENAZZI. The Department of Defense (DoD) can benefit significantly from multicloud solutions when contracting for cloud computing tools in several ways: avoiding vendor lock, enhanced security and resilience, optimization for specific workloads, increased flexibility and innovation, fostering competition and innovation, meeting data sovereignty and regulatory requirements, leveraging specialized services, improving recovery capabilities from disaster and outages, and cost optimization.

102. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, earlier this month the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a memorandum titled "Driving Efficient Acquisition of Artificial Intelligence in Government" (hereinafter the "OMB memo"). That memo states that "As agencies seek to accelerate the adoption of AI-enabled services, they must pay careful attention to vendor sourcing, data portability, and long-term interoperability to avoid significant and costly dependencies on a single vendor." Do you believe this statement might provide useful guidance for DOD? Please explain why or why not.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Yes, this statement provides useful guidance for DOD. The rapidly developing nature of AI capabilities requires DOD to be able to access the latest commercial solutions from not only traditional defense companies, but also newer and non-traditional entities. Vendor lock-in stifles agility and innovation, which undermines DOD's ability to act quickly and efficiently. Vendor sourcing is also important in terms of supply chain risk management, since digital technologies often rely on people or parts from outside the United States.

103. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, the OMB memo also states that terms regarding "Vendor Lock-In Protections . . . are necessary to reduce the risk that switching vendors could become cost-prohibitive. Protections against vendor lock-in can vary, but include requirements for vendor knowledge transfers, data and model portability, providing agencies with rights to code and models produced in performance of a contract, and transparency in licensing and pricing." Do you believe this statement might provide useful guidance for DOD? Please explain why or why not.

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I will review the methods the DOD currently employs to protect against vendor-lock, as I do agree that the Department should take measures to ensure robust competition is maintained to continue encouraging innovation from industry.

104. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, the OMB memo states that "agency processes should address . . . Data Handling" by "[p]roviding clear guidance on han-

dling, access, and use of agency data or information to ensure, among other purposes, that such information must only be collected and retained by a vendor when reasonably necessary to serve the intended purposes of the contract.” Do you believe this statement might provide useful guidance for DOD? Please explain why or why not.

Mr. CADENAZZI. Data is critical to mission success, and the OMB memo’s emphasis on careful data handling provides useful guidance. If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with DOD colleagues to ensure OASD(IBP) alignment with departmental guidance on this vital issue.

105. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, the OMB memo states that “agency processes should address . . . Use of Government Data” by “[e]nsuring contracts permanently prohibit the use of non-public inputted agency data and outputted results to further train publicly or commercially available AI algorithms, consistent with applicable law, absent explicit agency consent.” Do you believe this statement might provide useful guidance for DOD? Please explain why or why not.

Mr. CADENAZZI. The DOD takes data protection seriously and, if confirmed, I will ensure that all policy and regulations are enforced so Government data is secure and used appropriately.

#### DEFENSE PRODUCTION ACT

106. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, what role does the Defense Production Act (DPA) play in addressing economic coercion from the People’s Republic of China?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is my understanding that an authority like the Defense Production Act (DPA) plays a crucial role in countering economic coercion from China by allowing for efforts to reduce our reliance on foreign sources for critical materials and technologies. It also gives us a meaningful role in reviewing foreign investment in U.S. businesses for potential coercive influence. If confirmed, I would work to ensure the DPA is utilized strategically and effectively to mitigate the risks of economic coercion from China.

107. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, some critics argue that the DPA is too broad and affords too much discretion to the President. Do you agree?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I understand the perspectives regarding the scope of the DPA and the Presidential authorities it provides. The DPA’s breadth allows for flexibility in responding to national security needs, but it also necessitates careful consideration of its application. Transparency, congressional oversight, and engagement with stakeholders are important elements in ensuring its responsible and effective use. If confirmed, I would be committed to working with this committee to address these considerations.

108. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, would a lapse of the DPA damage U.S. national security and industrial preparedness?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is my understanding that a lapse of the DPA would certainly present challenges to U.S. national security and industrial preparedness, since it provides valuable authorities for prioritizing critical industries, strengthening supply chains, and ensuring timely access to essential materials and technologies. Losing these tools would undoubtedly impact our ability to respond effectively to national security emergencies and could potentially leave us vulnerable to adversarial pressures. Maintaining a robust and adaptable DPA is important for ensuring our national security and industrial resilience. If confirmed, I would advocate for ensuring the DPA remains a viable tool for the Department.

109. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, did the first Trump administration and Biden administration effectively use the DPA to address the threat to Americans posed by the coronavirus pandemic?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is my understanding that both the Trump and Biden administrations utilized the DPA and similar CARES Act authorities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, taking actions to address critical supply shortages and bolster domestic production of essential medical equipment and supplies. The effectiveness of these actions is a complex issue with varying perspectives, and there are certainly lessons to be learned from both Administrations’ experiences. If confirmed, I would be committed to reviewing those lessons learned and working with this committee to ensure the DPA is utilized effectively in future crises.

110. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you believe there are ways that the first Trump administration and Biden administration fell short or were misguided in their use of the DPA?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I'm not aware of all past decisions on DPA utilization from both Administrations to make that assessment. I trust that those decisions were made based on the best available information and analysis at the time, given the evolving circumstances. If confirmed, I'm committed to continually refining our approach to DPA implementation and leveraging lessons learned to ensure its effective and strategic application in the future.

111. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, is DOD currently using the DPA in an appropriate manner to map critical national security supply chains and illuminate dependencies and chokepoints?

Mr. CADENAZZI. I am not aware of all the DPA efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the process to ensure we are optimally utilizing the DPA to map critical national security supply chains, identify dependencies, and address potential chokepoints effectively.

112. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, how do you plan to use lesser-used authorities in title VII of the DPA, including voluntary agreements and mandatory survey authorities?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I look forward to gaining a deeper understanding on how authorities have been utilized. I commit to assess the effectiveness and determine how we can better leverage these tools to strengthen the DIB.

113. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, DPA allows the President of the United States and subsequently DOD to influence domestic industry in the interest of national defense. DOD can utilize funding under this authority to "establish, expand, maintain, or restore" domestic capacity for critical components and technologies. How should DOD plan to improve competition in the defense industry under this authority?

Mr. CADENAZZI. The DPA is a critical tool that enables the DOD to strengthen domestic industrial capacity in support of national defense. If confirmed, I look forward to assessing the ongoing efforts under this authority, identifying opportunities to enhance competition within the defense industry, and ensuring that we are effectively utilizing the DPA to strengthen the DIB.

114. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, should DPA reauthorization include any new or expanded authorities?

Mr. CADENAZZI. DPA reauthorization presents an opportunity to strengthen and expand authorities that support national security and industrial resilience. If confirmed, I look forward to understanding where gaps may exist in the current framework and recommending specific areas for consideration to ensure we are maximizing the DPA's effectiveness in addressing critical supply chain challenges and emerging defense needs.

115. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, would it be preferable to have a flexible DPA authority that allows the President to ameliorate shortfalls by supply chain sector or a more narrow one that requires it only be used for specific program requirements?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It's my understanding that a flexible DPA authority would allow us address supply chain shortfalls more effectively across sectors. If confirmed, I look forward to evaluating and identifying ways to optimize its use to strengthen the defense industrial base.

116. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, do you believe that the President should have the full authority granted to him by the Defense Production Act?

Mr. CADENAZZI. It is my understanding that DPA provides significant authority to the President, and the appropriate use of that authority requires careful consideration and balance. If confirmed, I will work with this committee to ensure the DPA is utilized effectively.

117. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi, would you support congressional efforts to limit or strip the full authority granted to the President by the Defense Production Act?

Mr. CADENAZZI. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to better understand the perspectives on the DPA's authorities and flexibilities.

[The nomination reference of Mr. Michael P. Cadenazzi, Jr. follows:]

**NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT**

**PN26-8**

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,  
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
March 10, 2025.

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

Michael Cadenazzi, of Rhode Island, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Laura Taylor-Kale, resigned.

\_\_\_\_\_, 2025.  
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Wicker \_\_\_\_\_  
(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. Michael P. Cadenazzi, Jr., which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

**Bio**  
**Michael Paul Cadenazzi Jr**

**Education:**

- Tulane University
  - New Orleans, LA
  - August 1991 – May 1995
  - Bachelor of Science (Civil Engineering)
  - May 1995
- Naval Postgraduate School
  - Monterey, CA
  - January 1998 – March 2000
  - Master of Science (Electrical Engineering)
  - March 2000

**Employment Record:**

- EY [Formerly Ernst & Young]
  - Managing Director, Aerospace & Defense Strategy & Operations
  - Tysons, VA
  - February 2022 – Present
- Govini
  - Senior Vice President of Product Development / Director of Solutions
  - Arlington, VA
  - September 2020 – December 2021
- McKinsey & Company
  - Associate Partner
  - Washington, DC.
  - October 2015 – October 2020
- VisualDoD, LLC
  - CEO/Founder
  - Reston, VA
  - July 2012 – October 2015
- Diligent Innovations
  - CEO/Partner
  - Reston, VA
  - January 2010 – June 2012
- Toffler Associates
  - Consultant
  - Reston, VA
  - January 2008 – December 2009
- Deutsche Bank
  - Global Head of Protective Intelligence

- New York, NY
- January 2007 – December 2007
- Space & Defense Systems, Inc
  - Engineer
  - Reston, VA
  - March 2005 – January 2007
- Commander U.S. Naval Forces Europe
  - Cryptologic Operations Officer (US Navy active duty)
  - London, United Kingdom
  - July 2002 – February 2005
  - *Note: I formally left active duty in April 2005*
- U.S. Navy SIXTH Fleet
  - Cryptologic Operations Officer (US Navy active duty)
  - Gaeta, Italy
  - July 2000 – June 2002
- Naval Postgraduate School
  - Student (US Navy active duty)
  - Monterey, CA
  - January 1998 – June 2000
- Naval Communications Telecommunications Area Master Station WESTPAC
  - Cryptologic Communications Division Officer (US Navy active duty)
  - Barrigada, Guam
  - December 1995 – December 1997
- Naval Communications Training Center Corrie Station
  - Cryptologic Division Officers Course Student (US Navy active duty)
  - Pensacola, FL
  - August 1995 – December 1995
- Naval Station Newport
  - Ensign (US Navy active duty)
  - Newport, RI
  - May 1995 – July 1995

**Honors and Awards:**

- Military Awards
  - Navy Commendation Award
  - Navy Achievement Metal
  - Navy Sea Service Ribbon
  - Navy & Marine Corps Overseas Services Ribbon (x6)
  - National Defense Ribbon

[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. Michael P. Cadenazzi, Jr. in connection with his nomination follows:]

119<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, 2025 -- 2026  
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 (Include any former names you have used):**
  - o Michael Paul Cadenazzi Jr
2. **Position to which nominated:**
  - o Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy
3. **Date of nomination:**
  - o 10 March 2025
4. **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 on-**

line], dates attended, degree received, and date degree granted):

- Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. August 1991 – May 1995, Bachelor of Science (Civil Engineering), May 1995
  - Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. January 1998 – March 2000, Master of Science (Electrical Engineering), March 2000
5. **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):**
- EY [Formerly Ernst & Young], Managing Director, Aerospace & Defense Strategy & Operations. Tysons, VA. February 2022 – Present
  - Govini, Senior Vice President of Product Development / Director of Solutions. Arlington, VA. September 2020 – December 2021
  - McKinsey & Company, Associate Partner. Washington, DC. October 2015 – September 2020.
  - VisualDoD, LLC, CEO/Founder. Herndon, VA. July 2012 – October 2015.
6. **Have you ever received approval, pursuant to section 908 of title 37, United States Code, to accept civil employment (and compensation for that employment), payment for speeches, travel, meals, lodging, registration fees, or a non-cash award from a foreign government?**
- No.
7. **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):**
- U.S. Navy. Naval cryptologic officer. Active duty. May 1995 – April 2005.
8. **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):**
- None.
9. **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):**

- Aerospace Industries Association (AIA). Board of Governors. July 2023 to Present

**10. 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):**

- None.

**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:**

- EY. 2022 political action committee. \$500.
- EY. 2023 political action committee. \$500.
- EY. 2024 political action committee. \$500.
- Recall Charles Allen. February 6, 2024. \$100.
- Karina for Congress. August 9, 2022. \$100.
- NRSC. September 26, 2020. \$100.

**11. Honors and awards (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognition received for outstanding service or achievements):**

- None.

**12. 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):**

- ["It's time for BRACquisition."](#) Linked-In. Self-published. February 21, 2023.
- ["Aviation net zero in 2025"](#). EY article. August 26, 2024.
- ["What A&D companies can do to protect against evolving cyber threats."](#) EY podcast. January 22, 2025.
- ["Why private equity is driving A&D deal activity in 2024"](#). EY article. April 23, 2024.
- ["How can digital supply chains manage aerospace risk?"](#) EY article. June 28, 2024.
- ["Why it's time for investors to get into low earth orbit satellites."](#) EY article. June 4, 2024.
- ["What industry leaders should know about defense: outlook and priorities."](#) EY article. December 6, 2022.
- ["Why European defense is at a crossroads."](#) EY article. June 20, 2023.
- ["Why the future of A&D is bright, even if some turbulence is ahead."](#) EY podcast. June 13, 2023.
- ["Why supply chain disruption is still a concern for A&D companies."](#) EY podcast. October 11, 2023.
- ["What industry leaders are thinking as new administration takes shape."](#) EY podcast. November 25, 2024.
- ["Accelerating the adoption of sustainable aviation fuel: trends and insights."](#) EY article. April 26, 2023.
- ["The commercial aerospace business case for 2050."](#) Aerospace global news. July 2024.
- ["Furlough Folly."](#) Defense News. July 13, 2013.

13. **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.

14. **Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before**

**this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress?**

- Yes.
- 15. 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.
- 16. 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.
- 17. 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.
- 18. 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.
- 19. 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.
- 20. 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.

**FUTURE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS**

21. If you are confirmed by the Senate, will you sever all business connections with your present employers, business firms, business associations, and business organizations?

- Yes.

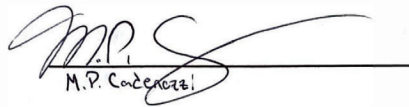
22. Do you have any plans, commitments or agreements to pursue outside employment, with or without compensation, during your service with the government? If so, explain.

- No.

[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.**



M.P. Cadenazzi

This 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2025

[The nomination of Mr. Michael P. Cadenazzi, Jr. was reported to the Senate by Chairman Wicker on May 13, 2025, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on September 18, 2025.]

[Prepared questions submitted to Vice Admiral Scott W. Pappano, USN by Chairman Wicker prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

*Question.* Section 3213 of the National Nuclear Security Administration Act states that the Principal Deputy Administrator shall be appointed "from among persons who have extensive background in organizational management and are well qualified to manage the nuclear weapons, nonproliferation, and materials disposition programs of the Administration in a manner that advances and protects the national security of the United States."

What background, experience, and expertise do you possess that qualify you for appointment to this position?

*Answer.* My qualifications are founded upon the bedrock of a strong technical education with an undergraduate degree in marine engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy and a graduate degree in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Both my education and leadership were honed across a 36-year career as a nuclear submarine officer and military acquisition professional where I humbly led exceptional teams at all levels. As a submarine line officer, I completed sea rotations on five submarines across all classes, culminating in command of a nuclear attack submarine. I also served as a Military Assistant for an Assistant Secretary of Defense charged with both strategic nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation policy. As a military acquisition professional, I served as major program manager for lifecycle sustainment of operational strategic and attack submarines, oversaw research and development activities of the Naval Undersea Warfare Center labs, established a program executive office to focus on cradle-to-grave lifecycle activities for all nuclear strategic ballistic missile submarines, and eventually served as Principal Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy charged with overseeing the procurement and sustainment of all Navy and Marine Corps weapon systems. I understand the complexity of the threats and the critical importance of the NNSA mission. I have a deep understanding of Naval nuclear propulsion. I oversaw the recapitalization of our sea-based strategic nuclear deterrent and worked

closely with other stakeholders engaged in nuclear modernization efforts to include STRATCOM, Strategic Systems Programs, the United Kingdom *Dreadnought* Alliance, and other legs of the U.S. Nuclear Triad. I supervised contract performance at our nuclear shipbuilders and led the stand-up of a Navy industrial base team to collaborate with Department of Defense stakeholders and Congress to target industrial base investment in critical infrastructure, supply chain capacity and resilience, manufacturing technology, and workforce development. I believe that, if confirmed, my background, experience, and expertise would be well-suited to execute the duties of NNSA Principal Deputy Administrator.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the duties and functions of this position?

*Answer.* If confirmed as NNSA Principal Deputy, I will be responsible for executing duties and responsibilities as prescribed by the Administrator in support of maintaining and enhancing the safety, security, and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile; reducing the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; providing the U.S. Navy with safe and militarily effective nuclear propulsion; and responding to nuclear and radiological emergencies. I would be required to act for, and exercise the powers of, the Administrator when the Administrator is disabled or the position is vacant.

*Question.* Section 3213 goes on to State that the Principal Deputy Administrator “shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Administrator may prescribe, including the coordination of activities among the elements of the Administration.”

If confirmed, what additional duties and responsibilities, if any, do you expect that the Administrator for Nuclear Security would prescribe for you?

*Answer.* If confirmed, and subject to the authorities of the Administrator, I would expect to oversee the implementation and accountability of contracts, procurement, administrative, budget, and planning activities. In addition to coordinating activities among the elements of the Administration, I would be required to engage with other key leaders across the Department of Energy, as well as external stakeholders, to ensure collaborative efforts to drive for resiliency, efficiency, and innovation across the nuclear weapons enterprise.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would be your main priorities be in this position?

*Answer.* If confirmed, my main priority would be to maximize the efficiency, effectiveness, capability, and capacity of NNSA, national security labs, plants, and production facilities to achieve priorities established by Administrator for nuclear stockpile stewardship, nuclear weapons production, critical infrastructure recapitalization, non-proliferation and counter-proliferation activities, and advancing technology and innovation.

*Question.* What are the major challenges you would expect to confront if confirmed as the Principal Deputy Administrator?

*Answer.* NNSA is currently executing seven simultaneous stockpile modernization programs while also recapitalizing its aging and deteriorating production infrastructure and design, certification, and assessment capabilities to support the current and future deterrent. Additionally, nuclear proliferation challenges are rising because of the evolving geopolitical environment.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you address these challenges?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator, the NNSA leadership team, the Secretary of Energy, the Deputy Secretary of Energy, DOD, and Congress to recognize challenges early and implement strategies to address them.

#### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

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

*Answer.* Yes.

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

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you commit, without qualification, if confirmed, to decisionmaking on the merits and exclusively in the public interest, without regard to private gain or personal benefit?

*Answer.* Yes.

## NNSA ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

*Question.* The NNSA Act of 2000, as amended, establishes that the Administrator for Nuclear Security “. . . shall be subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary [of Energy]. Such authority, direction, and control may be delegated only to the Deputy Secretary of Energy, without re-delegation.”

What is your view on the relationship between the Secretary of Energy and the Administrator of NNSA in statute and in recent practice?

*Answer.* Statutorily, NNSA is subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Energy. I believe that the NNSA Administrator must have a strong and healthy relationship with the Secretary of Energy and Deputy Secretary of Energy in order for NNSA to succeed. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the Administrator to ensure successful execution and delivery of NNSA's missions.

*Question.* How is the “semi-autonomous” nature of the NNSA, as set forth in the NNSA Act, reflected in NNSA's organizational structure? What makes NNSA different from the domains of the other Under Secretaries of the Department of Energy (DOE)—in both law and practice?

*Answer.* The NNSA Act provides the guidance and authority necessary for the NNSA Administrator to carry out NNSA's various missions under the direction of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary. The NNSA Act provides that the NNSA has full authority over and is responsible for the core functions of the NNSA which include: maintaining the safety, security and effectiveness of the nuclear deterrent; preventing, countering and responding to proliferation and terrorism threats; and providing operational support for naval nuclear propulsion. To carry out those core missions, the NNSA Act further provides that the NNSA Administrator has full responsibility for the following areas that support performance of the core functions: budget formulation and execution, personnel, health and environmental safety, emergency management, procurement, legal, legislative matters, and public affairs. For all other DOE organizations over which the Under Secretaries have cognizance, all of these core functions are performed centrally by DOE support organizations. Finally, all NNSA Federal personnel and NNSA contractors are subject only to the direction and control of the Administrator, who is accountable to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary.

*Question.* With a view to improving organizational management and operational effectiveness, would you recommend the Administrator pursue any changes to the structure of NNSA?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will focus on strengthening the coordination and integration of activities across NNSA's nuclear security enterprise to bolster the organization's ability to deliver in line with its commitments. I will work with the Administrator and NNSA leadership to enable productive relationships across NNSA's laboratories, plants, and sites, and with interagency partners while also fostering a strong culture of accountability, responsibility, and efficiency.

## RELATIONSHIPS

*Question.* Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Principal Deputy Administrator with the following officials:

The Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Energy

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will report through the Administrator to the Deputy Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of Energy. In the Administrator's absence, I will represent NNSA.

*Question.* The Administrator for Nuclear Security

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will report directly to the Administrator.

*Question.* The Deputy Administrators of the NNSA

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Deputy Administrators to support the execution of their respective missions.

*Question.* The Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will interact with the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management on environmental management issues that overlap with NNSA.

*Question.* The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical and Biological Defense Policy and Programs

*Answer.* NNSA's Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs serves as the primary point of contact with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical and Biological Defense Policy and Programs. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator and NNSA's priorities with the Assistant Secretary, as appropriate.

*Question.* The Chairman of the Nuclear Weapons Council

Answer. The Administrator is a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator and NNSA's priorities to the Chairman of the Nuclear Weapons Council.

*Question.* The Commander of United States Strategic Command

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator and NNSA's priorities to the Commander of United States Strategic Command.

*Question.* The nuclear directorates of the Air Force and Navy

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator and NNSA's priorities to the nuclear directorates of the Air Force and Navy.

*Question.* The Associate Administrator of NNSA for Acquisition and Project Management

Answer. I understand NNSA reorganized its Office of Acquisition and Project Management to the Office of Infrastructure and the Office of Partnership Acquisition Services. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator by providing management oversight for the Associate Administrator for Infrastructure and the Associate Administrator for Partnership Acquisition Services.

*Question.* The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator and NNSA's priorities to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)

*Question.* If confirmed, you will support the Administrator in his role as a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council (NWC), together with the Under Secretaries of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, Policy, and Research and Engineering, as well as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command. Since the 1946 Atomic Energy Act, when it was designated as the "Military Liaison Committee," the primary purpose of the NWC is to serve as the civilian-military interface and set the military requirements for the nuclear weapons stockpile, which form the basis of the core mission of NNSA. The Department of Defense (DOD) is, in a sense, NNSA's primary customer.

How would you assess the relationship between NNSA and the DOD, at both senior management levels, as well as at working levels?

Answer. Coming from the Navy and having worked on a major future leg of the deterrent, I have been able to witness these relationships first-hand. From my current perspective, NNSA and DOD integrate their work well and maintain a positive working relationship. This collaboration will be essential to manage the increased demands being placed on the nuclear security enterprise. It is imperative that NNSA and DOD continue to integrate their unique capabilities, responsibilities, and schedules to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you recommend to improve this relationship?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to maintain regular engagements with my DOD counterparts. I hope to use my previous experience within DOD to foster a positive and proactive relationship in support of NNSA's role as a dynamic partner.

*Question.* Do you believe that NNSA is adequately responsive to the requirements set by the DOD?

Answer. Yes, but I recognize the shifting strategic environment has increased demands on the nuclear security enterprise. If confirmed, my goal is to maintain continual communication and collaboration with DOD, ensure that DOD requirements are appropriately informed by the nuclear security enterprise's design and production capacity, and, if necessary, improve NNSA's ability to rapidly respond to DOD requirements.

*Question.* Do you believe it important for the NWC to ensure the NNSA is adequately funded through the interagency budget process to meet DOD's requirements?

Answer. Having been the Program Executive Officer for Strategic Submarines, I recognize the breadth of the NNSA portfolio and the requirement for NNSA to maintain a budget capable of supporting activities necessary to meet DOD requirements. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary of Energy, the Office of Management and Budget, and the NWC to ensure NNSA alignment with the DOD.

#### NNSA BUDGET

*Question.* The workload of the NNSA has seen an unprecedented increase over the past several years, a increase that is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. However, growth in the NNSA budget has consistently failed to keep pace with in-

flation and failed to fully resource a variety of projects understood to be critical capability needs, such as tritium and conventional high explosives production.

Multiple independent commissions, including congressional Commissions on the National Defense Strategy, Reforms to the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution, and Strategic Posture of the United States have highlighted that U.S. defense investments are inadequate for addressing the international security threats facing the United States. These conclusions have been echoed by many Members of Congress.

Do you agree that sustained real growth in the defense budget, including the national security functions of the Department of Energy, of at least 3 to 5 percent is necessary to meet global security challenges without incurring significant additional risk?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not privy to the details on budget development for the national security functions of DOE. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator, the Secretary of Energy, the Deputy Secretary of Energy, and the Office of Management and Budget to request the funding necessary for NNSA to achieve its national security missions.

*Question.* 10 U.S.C. 179 requires the Nuclear Weapons Council to examine the NNSA budget before its submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to ensure it can meet DOD requirements, and provide confirmation of such review to Congress.

If confirmed, do you commit, without qualification, to complying with the requirements of 10 U.S.C. 179 with regard to the annual NWC examination of the NNSA budget prior to its submission to OMB?

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* How would you support the Administrator in ensuring compliance with this provision, including providing the NWC with adequate time to review the budget before its submission to OMB?

Answer. In my current capacity, I have not been briefed on this process. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator, the NWC, and the Secretary of Energy to ensure compliance with this provision.

*Question.* If confirmed, what standards would you recommend the Administrator employ in measuring the adequacy of the NNSA budget?

Answer. Measuring the adequacy of the NNSA budget requires considering how well the implementation of NNSA strategy documents meets statutory requirements and achieves the goals of the Administration. If confirmed, I look forward to evaluating NNSA's budget in cooperation with my departmental and interagency counterparts and establishing the budget levels required to fulfill NNSA's statutory and administrative objectives.

#### NUCLEAR POLICY AND MODERNIZATION

*Question.* United States nuclear forces are the bedrock of our Nation's defense, underpin our most critical alliances, and have deterred nuclear aggression and great power conflict for more than 70 years. Unfortunately, long deferred investments have left us with systems and production capabilities beyond or nearing the end of their useful lives. These capabilities must be updated to maintain a viable nuclear deterrent.

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

Answer. Yes. Our nuclear deterrent has been the backbone of U.S. national defense for decades, and its modernization is essential. NNSA must continue to deliver a safe, secure, and effective stockpile to the DOD. If confirmed, I commit to supporting this critical mission.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to support and advocate for full funding for efforts to comprehensively modernize the Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile, including supplemental capabilities like the warhead for the sea-launched cruise missile, the supporting sustainment and production infrastructure, and experimental capabilities, and accelerate such programs wherever possible?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will help advance the modernization of the U.S. nuclear stockpile, including SLCM-N, and the facilities and capabilities across the enterprise that underpin the deterrent.

*Question.* In its unanimous bipartisan conclusions, the 2023 Strategic Posture Commission (SPC) highlighted the rapidly growing threats facing the United States, now and in the coming decades from China's unprecedented nuclear and military force expansion, Russia's aggression and investment in destabilizing strategic capabilities, and growing regional nuclear and missile threats from North Korea and

Iran. To address these threats, the SPC recommended, among other steps, that the U.S. should expedite its ongoing nuclear force modernization activities, modify its strategic nuclear force structure to account for the rapid growth of China's nuclear forces and the unprecedented need to deter two nuclear-armed peer adversaries, and urgently develop additional theater range nuclear options.

Do you agree with the conclusions of the SPC regarding global threats to U.S. interests?

Answer. Yes, I agree with the SPC's conclusions about global threats to U.S. interests, the challenges posed by two near-peer, nuclear-armed adversaries, and the risk of coordinated or opportunistic aggression. If confirmed, I will consider what efforts NNSA has already undertaken to respond to such challenges and how NNSA can harness its unique assets and workforce to promote peace through strength and enable a more stable global environment.

*Question.* What is your understanding of how Russia, China, and North Korea have expanded and/or modernized their nuclear force capabilities?

Answer. The geopolitical threat landscape is dynamic, and in recent years its complexity has only increased. If confirmed, I will support NNSA's efforts to maintain America's technological superiority over our adversaries and ensure that they cannot gain a strategic advantage. I will also seek relevant briefings on nuclear threats to ensure that NNSA's work is aligned with the requirement to deter and counter potential threats to U.S. interests.

*Question.* In your view, how does NNSA support strategic competition with the countries highlighted by the SPC and contribute to the overall national security of the United States?

Answer. NNSA's multiple nuclear-related missions support the Nation's nuclear deterrent, U.S. counterterrorism and counterproliferation goals, nonproliferation, arms control, and militarily effective naval nuclear propulsion. Each of these efforts allows the United States to project power and influence well beyond its shores, and all make positive contributions to the Nation's safety and security. Each of these key mission areas contribute to a strong national defense and cause adversaries to question whether they can match our Nation in the nuclear domain.

*Question.* Do you support continued collaboration with the United Kingdom in the maintenance of its independent nuclear deterrent?

Answer. Yes, collaboration with the United Kingdom is a key element of our national security. As one of the United States' longest and most reliable partners, continued cooperation with the United Kingdom on the capabilities and technologies that underpin our respective nuclear deterrents advances out mutual defense and security.

*Question.* Past Administrations have conducted Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) to define the upcoming overarching U.S. nuclear policy and strategy. The last NPR, conducted in 2022 by the Biden administration, emphasized the importance of modernizing our stockpile, NNSA facilities, and the workforce. Although the Secretary of Defense is the primary cabinet official responsible for policymaking regarding nuclear weapons, the support of the Secretary of Energy and the Administrator for Nuclear Security are crucial to successful execution of the nuclear mission.

If confirmed, what role, if any, would you expect the Administrator to assign to you in the conduct of the Trump administration's NPR, should it choose to conduct one?

Answer. If confirmed, pending any new NPR deliberations, I will work with the Administrator to determine what duties and responsibilities I could best execute to support this Administration in its efforts to modernize the U.S. nuclear deterrent and promote peace through strength.

*Question.* If confirmed, what changes to the policies outlined by the 2022 NPR would you recommend the Trump administration consider?

Answer. I am not yet aware of what deliberations may be occurring regarding a planned or future NPR. I support full scope modernization of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, its triad, nuclear command, control, and communications, and the infrastructure and scientific capabilities that support a safe, secure, reliable and effective nuclear stockpile. If confirmed, I would prioritize the necessary briefings to understand the complex threats posed to the United States and how the nuclear security enterprise, in coordination with DOD, can best deter those threats.

*Question.* Should the upcoming NPR call for the development of additional nuclear capabilities, will you commit, if confirmed, to supporting those additions and ensuring that NNSA fully supports the new requirements?

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Arms control, when effective and verifiable, has been a valuable tool for managing competition and international security concerns. In contrast, unverifiable arms control regimes observed by only one party can generate instability.

Do you believe that further reductions should be taken only within the context of a formal, verifiable arms control agreement with Russia, China and other nuclear-armed powers?

Answer. The decision to pursue future arms control agreements will be made by the President. If confirmed, I look forward to working with partners at other agencies, including State, the Intelligence Community, and Defense, to support the President in this area. I will also leverage NNSA's unique expertise and capabilities to develop monitoring and verification tools, including the ability to unilaterally monitor activities, so that the United States is prepared to meet future arms control opportunities and challenges.

#### NUCLEAR WEAPONS COUNCIL

*Question.* In your view, what are the most significant issues the Council should take up in the coming years?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the NNSA Administrator, broadening my knowledge of the nuclear security enterprise, and collaborating with my fellow DOD colleagues through the NWC. While I am not currently informed of internal deliberations of the NWC, I do believe that the NWC should take a strategic approach to prioritizing the execution of the existing Program of Record. The NWC should continue to identify opportunities to accelerate the Program of Record, but equal attention to the recapitalization of the enterprise is required to secure NNSA's ability to continue serving the deterrent into the future.

*Question.* If confirmed, will you commit to fully supporting the Administrator's participation in NWC matters?

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

What is your understanding of the role of this position in relation to the Nuclear Weapons Council and with regard to the overall DOD relationship with the NNSA?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to engagements with my counterparts as they implement this restructuring and aim to support further coordination between our organizations. I will support the Administrator and work with DOD partners to streamline communications between DOD and NNSA.

#### DEFENSE PROGRAMS

*Question.* Do you believe that the United States currently possesses the capabilities to ensure the stockpile is safe, secure, and reliable—without the need to resume nuclear explosive testing?

Answer. Yes, and I agree with the nominee for NNSA Administrator's position on this matter. For nearly 30 years, the three national security laboratory directors and the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command have annually assessed the nuclear stockpile and determined that it remains safe, secure, and effective, with no technical issue that would require a return to underground nuclear explosive testing. The confidence provided by this annual assessment process has, in part, allowed the United States to continue observing an enduring moratorium on nuclear tests since 1992. If confirmed, I will continue to support the annual assessment process and will ensure NNSA continues to adhere to nuclear test readiness requirements while supporting a rigorous and effective Stockpile Stewardship Program.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the current nuclear weapons stockpile modernization plan?

Answer. I understand that NNSA is currently focused on delivering modernized warheads across all three legs of the nuclear triad in alignment with our DOD partners and continues to meet all DOD requirements. The current program of record includes weapons that have already been delivered such as the B61-12 and W88 Alt 370; weapons in advanced development and production stages that will soon be delivered such as the B61-13 and W80-4; and weapons in earlier stages of design and engineering that will be delivered in the 2030's, such as the W87-1, W93, and the warhead for the SLCM-N. These programs are all dependent on the recapitaliza-

tion of infrastructure for producing weapons components and designing, certifying, and assessing these modernized warheads in addition to our existing stockpile. While I am encouraged by the nuclear security enterprise's responsiveness in rapidly standing up the B61-13 and SLCM-N programs to meet emerging requirements, deterrence is not static. Rather, it is a condition that must continually be maintained. I am certain that NNSA will need to be agile in responding to new DOD requirements as the security environment and the threats posed by our adversaries evolve.

*Question.* Do you have any concerns with this level of effort required of NNSA and, in particular, concurrency between the plants and the laboratories?

*Answer.* I have a high degree of confidence that NNSA and its nuclear security enterprise will be able to meet the challenge of delivering the growing program of record on time and on budget. If confirmed, I will reinforce the Administrator's enterprise-wide coordination efforts and work closely with my counterparts across the enterprise to ensure we remain aligned in our efforts and continue building on the progress we've made toward achieving our ambitious modernization and infrastructure recapitalization schedules.

*Question.* Congress has authorized the Stockpile Responsiveness Program for the last several years in order to exercise design and engineering skills in support of the nuclear weapons mission, but this authority has not been fully utilized by NNSA.

If confirmed, how would you support the Stockpile Responsiveness Program and make full use of the authorities it provides NNSA?

*Answer.* The Stockpile Responsiveness Program (SRP) is among NNSA's most critical mechanisms for developing innovative technology, prototypes, and new capabilities needed to meet the emerging security environment. It also serves to develop talented nuclear security professionals. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator's goals for fully leveraging the SRP.

*Question.* If confirmed, what are your long-term plans for the National Ignition Facility and other critical experimental facilities?

*Answer.* The National Ignition Facility (NIF) is the world's highest energy laser and is one of the most important parts of NNSA's science-based stockpile stewardship program. It remains unrivaled due to the environments that are created, which were previously only possible with underground nuclear testing. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on NNSA's current long-term plans for NIF and other critical experimental facilities and to working with the Administrator, NNSA subject matter experts, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and Congress to determine any required updates to these plans.

*Question.* What are your views of the Advanced Computing Program and what is your vision for the use of advanced computing in furtherance of NNSA missions?

*Answer.* I understand that NNSA's Advanced Simulation and Computing Program has delivered unparalleled modeling and simulation capabilities that provide new insights into complex interactions within the nuclear weapons explosion process. As we deliver the current modernization programs of record and consider new weapon programs to meet emerging needs, I anticipate we will need even more powerful computing capabilities to run even more advanced physics models to ensure U.S. nuclear weapons remain safe, reliable, and able to meet DOD requirements. This will be especially true as NNSA integrates artificial intelligence and quantum computing capabilities. If confirmed, I will work with the NNSA Administrator to fully leverage the laboratories' deployed high-performance computing capabilities as well as acquire necessary new capabilities.

*Question.* What role do you see in the application of artificial intelligence and machine learning tools in support of NNSA missions?

*Answer.* Artificial intelligence (AI) has possible applications that may significantly advance national security activities. Integrating AI-based tools with NNSA's world-leading high-performance computing capabilities could enable greater efficiency in optimizing designs and discovering new materials to produce nuclear weapons components, which could accelerate the path from new concepts to delivering capabilities. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator to accelerate integration of AI and machine learning applications to support NNSA's stockpile modernization and sustainment mission, as well as its nonproliferation, counterproliferation, and other critical objectives.

*Question.* The NNSA depends upon a unique mix of private sector and government sources for research, development, and manufacture of critical technologies to support its national security missions. However, U.S. superiority in key areas of innovation is decreasing or has disappeared. Our competitors are engaging in aggressive military modernization and advanced weaponry development. Much of the inno-

vation in critical technologies suitable for national defense purposes is occurring outside of the traditional defense industry.

In your view, what technologies do you see as having the greatest impact on the missions of the NNSA in the future?

Answer. AI and machine learning technologies hold vast potential for allowing NNSA to improve the nuclear security enterprise's existing systems and advance our modernization efforts. Fully integrating these tools into the enterprise will allow us to leverage the significant advantage we maintain over our adversaries in historical nuclear test data and production data to make nuclear weapon design and manufacturing faster and more efficient. If confirmed, I will work alongside the NNSA Administrator and coordinate with NNSA's labs, plants, and sites to ensure we use these technologies appropriately for our national security missions.

*Question.* Do you believe NNSA is effectively developing this technology in comparison to our adversaries?

Answer. I do not yet have insight into activities NNSA may be undertaking to develop this technology, but like the nominee for NNSA Administrator, I recognize the need to compete aggressively with our adversaries in this field. If confirmed, fully understanding this question will be a priority for me, and I will immediately seek to understand NNSA's efforts to date.

*Question.* Are NNSA's investments in these technologies appropriately focused, integrated, and synchronized across all of the Administration's missions and with the DOD, where appropriate?

Answer. If confirmed, I will diligently support and amplify the NNSA Administrator's efforts to coordinate technology investments across the nuclear security enterprise and with our DOD partners.

*Question.* In general, do you see NNSA as a good partner for innovative, private sector entities?

Answer. Yes. I believe that the unique and challenging work being done at NNSA's labs, plants and sites creates unique opportunities for private sector innovation and requires public-private collaboration. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator and leadership at the labs, plants, and sites to enhance collaboration with the private sector to advance our world-class scientific preeminence.

*Question.* What steps would you take to improve the NNSA's ability to engage industry, particularly innovative firms outside the traditional Nuclear Security Enterprise?

Answer. Details about NNSA's engagements with industry partners are not yet available to me, but I understand that NNSA maintains strong engagement with industry partners on available contracting opportunities through various formal and informal means. If confirmed, I commit to soliciting feedback and suggestions from industry partners and implementing lessons learned from previous contract competitions.

#### CONSTRUCTION AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

*Question.* NNSA has been plagued by cost overruns, schedule delays, and project cancellations related to the construction of nuclear facilities, including the Uranium Processing Facility, the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility, and the High Explosive Synthesis, Formulation, and Production Facility.

In your opinion, what are the primary causes of these repeated failures in project management?

Answer. NNSA's large construction projects face cost overruns and schedule delays. This is due to several factors, including contractor underperformance, lack of effective Federal oversight, supply chain challenges leading to delays in procurement, and contracts structured in ways that insufficiently incentivize performance. COVID-19 and economic conditions have also contributed to challenges facing these projects. If confirmed, I commit to advancing these important projects in support of our national security.

*Question.* In your view, are the changes in NNSA project management practices undertaken over the last few years sufficient to address these problems?

Answer. NNSA is improving its project management practices, but I recognize the need for further efforts in this area. If confirmed, I plan to seek out opportunities to leverage innovative strategies to deliver NNSA's mission more efficiently.

*Question.* If not, what additional steps would you take, if confirmed, to improve the availability of highly qualified talent capable of managing intensive capital infrastructure projects?

Answer. NNSA's infrastructure projects cannot be successful without qualified professionals. If confirmed, I will support efforts to recruit and retain talented individuals with commercial project management experience. I am also committed to de-

veloping effective teams to address our most pressing challenges in partnerships with the labs, plants, and sites.

*Question.* If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to ensure that these project management failures are not repeated in the future?

Answer. NNSA must balance minimizing burdensome oversight requirements with ensuring optimal oversight to improve project performance. If confirmed, I am committed to holding the individuals responsible for project management accountable, acting decisively when necessary, implementing lessons learned, improving cost estimating procedures, and identifying and taking advantage of opportunities for acceleration.

*Question.* What specific change in policy, practice, organization, or regulation would you recommend in furtherance of this effort?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to taking stock of NNSA's current initiatives and policies to identify opportunities for improvement. I plan to refine policy to help the agency more accurately estimate costs, eliminate redundant requirements, and streamline acquisition and project management processes. Additionally, I will ensure that contracts are structured to incentivize performance.

*Question.* In your view, does the Administrator for Nuclear Security need any additional authorities or flexibilities to address the root causes of these project management failures? Please explain your answer.

Answer. My understanding is that DOE Order 413.3B governs program and project management for capital assets across the Department, including at NNSA. Applying thorough project management processes is key to minimizing risk and delivering capabilities in time to meet the needs they are intended to address at an acceptable cost. I support the recent memorandum released by Energy Secretary Wright, which prioritizes efficiency and mission execution at our national labs. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on how this applies to NNSA's infrastructure modernization efforts and working together to identify additional opportunities for implementing process changes in support of effective, efficient project management.

*Question.* In 2014, largely in response to a string of the large project management failures, Congress created the Office of Cost Estimation and Program Evaluation (CEPE) in the Department of Energy. CEPE was modeled on the DOD Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE).

In your view, is CEPE sufficiently staffed to effectively provide the Administrator for Nuclear Security with costing and project management advice on the variety of projects within NNSA?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not privy to NNSA's staffing details. I am also aware that, if confirmed, I will also serve as the Federal Salaries and Expenses Account Integrator and will oversee staffing needs for all of NNSA. I will ensure that CEPE is appropriately staffed to support the Administrator.

*Question.* Does CEPE have sufficient authority and access to DOE data and information to serve its statutory purpose?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not privy to the procedures for accessing DOE data. I understand the importance of data in executing NNSA's statutory mission. I understand that data is key for CEPE's ability to provide independent advice to me, the Administrator, NWC, and Congress. If confirmed, I will review whether CEPE has sufficient authority and access.

*Question.* CEPE reports directly to the Administrator for Nuclear Security. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that CEPE has adequate access to information and senior leaders in your organization, as necessary and appropriate?

Answer. If confirmed, I will have regular engagements with CEPE and ensure access to senior leaders in order for CEPE to conduct its work and provide valuable insight for decisionmaking.

*Question.* If confirmed, specifically how would you undertake to support and sustain CEPE capabilities and independence?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not privy to all of the capabilities that CEPE possesses. If confirmed, I will seek to better understand these unique and important capabilities and take the actions needed to maintain them.

#### PLUTONIUM STRATEGY

*Question.* NNSA has selected two sites for plutonium pit production: Los Alamos will produce approximately 30 pits per year and the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF) will produce up to 50 pits per year, for a projected two-site total of no fewer than 80 pits per year. These production targets were established several years ago, prior to revelations about the speed and scope of potential adversary nuclear force expansions.

Do you believe and overall production target of no fewer than 80 pits per year is sufficient to meet future demands for modernizing and adapting the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile?

Answer. I am unaware of internal discussions regarding production targets to meet the current and future demands of the U.S. nuclear deterrent. If confirmed, I plan to work closely with the NNSA Administrator and laboratory, plant, and site leadership across the nuclear security enterprise to achieve full rate production and pursue opportunities to accelerate the production capability in support of the nuclear deterrent.

*Question.* Do you support the two-site solution, initiated under President Trump's first term, for meeting statutory requirements for pit production?

Answer. Yes, I support NNSA's two-site approach to supply no fewer than 80 war reserve plutonium pits.

*Question.* What are your views on the January 16, 2025, district court settlement halting installation of classified equipment and construction of associated facilities at SRPPF until such time as NNSA prepares a new Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement?

Answer. I am aware that the settlement agreement that brought an end to the lawsuit challenging the National Environmental Protection Act work done in support of pit production was mutually agreed upon by the NNSA and the plaintiffs. Per the Agreement, NNSA will conduct a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and issue a Record of Decision based on the findings of the PEIS. The Department agreed to complete this process within two and a half years and provide for enhanced public participation. If confirmed, I plan to carefully track this matter to ensure that pit production and the specific SRPPF project are not negatively affected.

*Question.* What are your views on the Los Alamos site and its capabilities to achieve its pits per year production target to support the demands of the ongoing stockpile program?

Answer. I congratulate NNSA, LANL, and the nuclear security enterprise on producing the first war reserve plutonium pit for the W87-1 last year. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator to prioritize and accelerate the production capacity required to support the nuclear deterrent.

*Question.* SRPPF has been plagued by issues with design and construction since the decision was made to convert the partially completed Mixed Oxide Fabrication Facility into a facility for producing plutonium pits. The project also experienced significant cost growth and delays due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic spike in inflation.

What is your understanding of the status of SRPPF and the project's likelihood of supporting NNSA efforts to meet the statutory requirement to produce no fewer than 80 plutonium pits per year?

Answer. My understanding is that SRPPF will allow NNSA to produce at least 50 war reserve pits per year. I am also cognizant that NNSA must mitigate further schedule delays and cost growth.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you take to improve the performance of the project, both in terms of cost management and construction efficiency?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure NNSA's contract structures properly hold contractors accountable for their performance as well as incentivize efforts to accelerate project schedules and decrease costs.

#### URANIUM STRATEGY AND TRITIUM PRODUCTION

*Question.* Since the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) ceased enrichment operations in 2013, DOE has relied on the existing stockpile of highly enriched uranium (HEU) to support Naval Nuclear Propulsion, as well as the down-blending of recycled HEU to meet requirements for unobligated LEU for tritium production, but the available supply of HEU is finite. To address this supply limitation, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 National Defense Authorization (NDAA) directed the Secretary of Energy to identify two to four sites for reestablishing unobligated domestic uranium enrichment, for both defense and civilian energy purposes, with an eye to begin construction no later than 2027.

If confirmed, will you support the Secretary of Energy in meeting the requirement in the fiscal year 2025 NDAA outlined above?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I am eager to learn more about NNSA's current plans to support departmental leadership in meeting this requirement.

*Question.* The fiscal year 2025 NDAA specified that plans for reestablishing the enrichment capability should focus on "modular, scalable facilities". What are your ideas for how to proceed with such an effort?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed with the NNSA Administrator on how NNSA can best reestablish a domestic uranium enrichment capability in a flexible and resilient manner to meet defense mission requirements and the requirements in the fiscal year 2025 NDAA.

*Question.* A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report in 2014 entitled “Interagency Review Needed to Update U.S. Position on Enriched Uranium That Can Be Used for Tritium Production” concluded that the DOE’s policy on identification of obligated uranium was based on three international agreements and a series of policy decisions. Of the three agreements, GAO concluded that only one explicitly addressed tritium production, but that past State Department findings had consistently interpreted the other two agreements as imposing peaceful use restrictions on LEU for tritium production.

Do you believe this GAO reading of all three agreements remains consistent with U.S. policy goals? In your view, should the State Department’s prior findings be re-evaluated?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on this report. I do know that ensuring a consistent and continued supply of tritium is critical to the deterrent. I will support the NNSA Administrator in determining whether future actions are necessary. I will also work with the Administrator to ensure NNSA’s production of tritium remains consistent with U.S. governmental policy and international agreements. I also understand that the views of international partners and the U.S. interagency may have changed in the time since this report was released and it would be worth reengaging our domestic and foreign partners to assess consistency with U.S. policy goals.

*Question.* Section 3138 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 directed the Department of Energy to “determine whether the Agreement [between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland] for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes, signed at Washington, July 3, 1958, . . . permits the United States to obtain low-enriched uranium for the purposes of producing tritium in the United States.” The Secretary of Energy affirmed that such procurement of low enriched uranium can occur.

What are your views on the accuracy of the Secretary of Energy’s determination in this regard?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary and the Administrator to evaluate the previous determination. Ultimately, I seek to maintain our mutually beneficial partnership with the United Kingdom.

#### FISSILE MATERIALS DISPOSITION

*Question.* The United States and Russia committed to the disposition of 34 metric tons of weapons grade plutonium under the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PMDA) in 2000. The original plan by the United States was to convert excess weapons grade plutonium to mixed oxide reactor fuel for civilian reactors at the Savannah River Site (SRS). After spending billions of dollars, and following Russia’s withdrawal from the PMDA in 2016, this project was abandoned in favor of diluting the plutonium and disposing of it at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The dilute and dispose process involves shipping the plutonium pits from Pantex to Los Alamos to be turned into oxide powder, then shipping then on to SRS for packaging, followed by final shipment to WIPP for disposal.

Do you believe the United States should continue to dispose of its stockpiles of weapons-grade plutonium despite Russia’s abrogation of the PMDA?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue NNSA’s work to remove excess plutonium from South Carolina, consistent with the DOE-South Carolina Settlement Agreement. Regarding NNSA’s broader excess plutonium disposition work, I will work with interagency partners to assess whether the United States should continue to comply with PMDA unilaterally.

*Question.* What are your views on the dilute and disposal method?

Answer. I am not currently privy to the details of the program. If confirmed, I look forward to being informed of the details of this program so that I can provide effective executive leadership.

*Question.* What are your views on permanent disposal at WIPP?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not privy to the details of the program, though I understand that dilute and dispose, NNSA’s program of record for plutonium disposition, includes disposal at WIPP. If confirmed, I look forward to familiarizing myself with the details of this program so that I can provide effective executive leadership.

*Question.* What are your views of the logistics of shipping plutonium between Pantex, Los Alamos, SRS, and WIPP? In your opinion, could this process be simplified by shipping the pits directly to SRS to be converted to oxide powder there?

*Answer.* I am not currently privy to the details of the program. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed the details of this program so that I can provide effective executive leadership.

*Question.* What are your views on reprocessing as an alternative to dilution and disposal?

*Answer.* While I am not currently privy to the details of this program, I do know that changing NNSA's technical approach to plutonium disposition could be costly and could create challenges relative to the DOE-South Carolina Settlement Agreement.

#### NUCLEAR SAFETY AND SECURITY

NNSA was created partially in response to security lapses at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Nonetheless, periodic security lapses have continued to occur, risking exposure of some of our Nation's most closely guarded secrets.

*Question.* To what extent have the conditions that allowed such lapses to occur been corrected, in your view?

*Answer.* I am dedicated to the continuous enhancement of security across all NNSA laboratories, plants, and sites, but I do not have details regarding current security infrastructure. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on existing security measures and related operations.

*Question.* Section 3112 of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act prohibits the Secretary of Energy or the Administrator for Nuclear Security, after April 15, 2025, from admitting citizens or agents of the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or the Islamic Republic of Iran to any national security laboratory, nuclear weapons production facility, or any site that supports the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring full compliance with this provision across NNSA by the statutorily directed April 15, 2025, date for implementation?

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* In your view, are there further changes in policy, practice, management, or oversight to reduce the frequency of security issues at NNSA facilities that should be considered?

*Answer.* I am not aware of any current security infraction that prompted this change; however, if confirmed, I will seek briefings on the NNSA's adherence to this prohibition and any additional measures that should be taken to protect operations. I am committed to close collaboration with Congress to guarantee the robust protection of NNSA's labs, plants, and sites. We must ensure that no adversary gains unauthorized access, except as explicitly required by current or future treaty obligations.

*Question.* Over the past several years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of unmanned aerial systems operating, both lawfully and unlawfully, in U.S. airspace domestically and over American military installations overseas.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure the NNSA appropriately prioritizes and resources detection and defeat capabilities for UAS that pose a threat to NNSA facilities and assets?

*Answer.* Protecting NNSA facilities and assets from Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) threats is a top priority. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on NNSA's UAS detection and defeat capabilities. I will also reinforce our collaborative efforts with other agencies to proactively address evolving threats and leverage the latest Counter UAS (CUAS) technologies.

*Question.* If confirmed, will you commit to working with Congress and the interagency to better clarify U.S. Government roles and responsibilities for detecting, tracking, and if necessary, defeating, UAS within U.S. airspace?

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board and NNSA's Office of Enterprise Assessments have periodically reported accidents at various Department of Energy facilities over recent years, including explosions, radiation exposure, and leakage of hazardous materials—putting both personnel and the mission at risk. Yet, while personnel safety is critically important, the nuclear mission by definition involves some of the most hazardous materials on earth. Consequently, acceptance of a measure of risk is a prerequisite to accomplish NNSA's assigned missions.

How should we balance safety, risk, and mission at NNSA facilities?

*Answer.* The production, handling, and disposal of nuclear materials inherently involve significant risks. Therefore, prudent risk management of safety, pro-

grammatic, and other regulatory initiatives is achieved by maintaining vigilant and continuous oversight, supported by robust risk controls. If confirmed, I am committed to prioritizing safety across the organization, ensuring that risks are identified and effectively minimized while NNSA continues to successfully execute its critical and time-sensitive mission.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you recommend to improve the safety culture at the various NNSA labs and sites while still meeting mission requirements?

*Answer.* The actions of senior leadership to establish and reinforce safety expectations are essential to cultivating a positive safety environment. I will work closely with the NNSA Administrator to ensure these expectations are communicated effectively by partnering with the leadership of our Management and Operating partners. I will emphasize NNSA's long-term commitment to safe operations by fostering an effective governance and management culture. Additionally, I will underscore the critical importance of empowering and actively engaging employees to provide feedback, while also promoting organizational learning. Reinforcing these principles will establish a strong foundation for enhancing the safety culture. If confirmed, I will prioritize a safety-conscious work environment where employees feel comfortable raising safety concerns, knowing that leadership is prepared to address these issues effectively. Furthermore, I will support our leadership by ensuring they have the necessary resources and tools to address any safety concerns in a timely and efficient manner.

#### CYBERSECURITY

*Question.* What do you see as the primary cyber policy challenges for the NNSA and what suggestions do you have for addressing them?

*Answer.* Cybersecurity threats are rapidly changing and evolving. If confirmed, I will ensure that we work in lockstep across the enterprise, as well as with our partners around the globe, to bolster cybersecurity, meet mission needs, and promote national security.

*Question.* Do you believe that the NNSA's current capabilities, policies, and authorities allow for effective cybersecurity? If not, what steps should NNSA and the Department of Energy take to address any shortfalls?

*Answer.* I have not yet been briefed on NNSA's current cybersecurity capabilities, policies, and authorities, but, if confirmed, will prioritize cybersecurity briefings to gain a deeper understanding before determining effectiveness.

*Question.* What do you conclude from the recent cyber-attacks on telecommunications infrastructure involving Volt Typhoon and Salt Typhoon about the State of our cyber defenses?

*Answer.* These recent attacks show the interconnectivity between public and private sectors. These partnerships must be strong, so that communication and coordination occur, and mitigations can be implemented expeditiously. It also highlights the importance of the work NNSA must do to maintain a highly capable cybersecurity program.

*Question.* If confirmed, what specific measures would you take to improve cybersecurity culture across the NNSA workforce?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will focus on continued collaboration among cybersecurity teams across the enterprise, departmental elements, and other government partners. I will identify opportunities to streamline operations and gain efficiencies to improve secure mission activities.

*Question.* How would you empower and hold key leaders accountable for improvements in NNSA cybersecurity?

*Answer.* I have not yet been briefed on NNSA's cybersecurity posture but will leverage my experience in different fields within the Navy to drive operational improvements across the organization, including cybersecurity. If confirmed, I will ensure NNSA empowers key leaders from the top down to be accountable for adopting essential cybersecurity tools and enforcing critical cybersecurity mitigations.

*Question.* If confirmed, how do you plan to work with the Department of Defense and other agencies in the coordination of cyber security initiatives?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work to remove obstacles that could impede NNSA's responsibilities to interagency partners. I understand NNSA actively collaborates with DOD and other agencies to support cybersecurity goals and explore ways to enhance the protection, exchange, and use of data.

#### REGULATION AND OVERSIGHT

*Question.* Staff at NNSA's national laboratories often complain that they are overburdened by regulation and oversight, both internal and external, and that these

contribute to the challenges in staying under cost and on schedule for major projects.

Do you believe that environmental, safety, and construction regulations are properly applied to NNSA projects and operations?

Answer. If confirmed, I am fully committed to ensuring the safe execution of operations across the nuclear security enterprise. This includes safeguarding the workforce, the public, and the environment in a manner that aligns with and supports NNSA mission execution. I am aware of and support the Administration's initiatives aimed at streamlining permitting processes and regulations for construction projects at DOE's national laboratories.

*Question.* Do you believe these regulations undermine effective performance by the labs and efficient mission execution overall?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support efforts to streamline regulatory processes, standardize performance expectations, and promote a practical, common-sense approach to the interpretation and application of requirements—aimed at enhancing NNSA's efficiency, innovation, and modernization across the enterprise. While I am not currently informed of the detailed implementation of regulations throughout the enterprise, I recognize that excessively rigid interpretations of regulatory requirements can result in operational inefficiencies. I am committed to utilizing available flexibilities, such as exemptions and equivalencies, to implement necessary controls while also pursuing regulatory relief where appropriate.

*Question.* In your view, are the NNSA labs and production facilities subject to the appropriate level of oversight from the NNSA, DOE, the EPA, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and/or Congress?

Are there certain oversight processes that are unnecessarily duplicative or purely bureaucratic, in your view?

Answer. DOE Order 413.3B, which governs program and project management for the acquisition of capital assets, applies to NNSA. While this order provides essential structure and oversight, I recognize that its implementation can, at times, be burdensome. If confirmed, I will remain committed to ensuring that critical work is carried out in a timely and efficient manner within the framework of this order. I will leverage my experience as an acquisition professional in the Navy to actively engage with stakeholders to identify and address any inefficiencies arising from current oversight processes, and to develop effective solutions that support mission success.

*Question.* If confirmed, what changes in regulatory or oversight structures would you recommend, and why?

Answer. While I am not currently aware of the details of NNSA's regulatory and oversight frameworks, if confirmed, I will actively pursue opportunities to enhance operational efficiency, including the potential reform of regulatory requirements where such changes are both practical and beneficial.

#### SAFEGUARDS AND SECURITY

*Question.* What role, if any, will you have in ensuring safety and security in the nuclear weapons complex?

Answer. I will collaborate with the Administrator to champion initiatives that enhance modernization of safety and security at NNSA facilities, fostering a robust safety and security culture built on transparency, trust, and collaboration. This includes establishing clear expectations with our partners for sustained safety performance alongside successful mission accomplishment, recognizing that these goals are mutually reinforced. Additionally, I will partner with the Administrator and the security program office to implement systems and processes that prevent security breaches. I will actively engage in initiatives to improve security effectiveness and efficiency at all NNSA facilities. Working with our partners, we will ensure oversight practices support these objectives, driving continuous improvement in both safety and security.

*Question.* In your opinion, what are the biggest safety and security threats to the facilities and materials in the nuclear weapons complex?

Answer. If confirmed, I will collaborate with the Administrator to prioritize safe operations while accomplishing the mission and mitigating security threats such as cyber, material, transportation, and physical risks to NNSA. Ensuring the safety and security of NNSA's facilities and nuclear materials is paramount.

*Question.* What role, if any, will you have in the NNSA's interactions with the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board?

Answer. I recognize and value the importance of maintaining a constructive working relationship with the DNFSB, supported by transparent and open lines of com-

munication. While it is my understanding that the Department's overall engagement with the Board is managed by the Deputy Secretary of Energy, if confirmed, I will work closely with the NNSA Administrator in addressing DNFSB recommendations and advice related to safety matters at defense nuclear facilities across NNSA.

*Question.* The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board and NNSA's Office of Enterprise Assessments have reported a number of accidents at the national laboratories in recent years that put both personnel and mission at risk. Yet, while personnel safety is critically important, the nuclear mission by definition involves some of the most hazardous materials with which we work in this country, and risk cannot be eliminated completely at the labs while continuing to accomplish the mission. How should we balance safety, risk, and mission at the national laboratories?

*Answer.* NNSA must maintain consistent and robust safety performance, as safety and mission success are inherently interdependent. Achieving this balance requires thorough risk understanding, along with effective control and management of those risks. If confirmed, I will remain focused on strengthening collaboration between the laboratories and production sites, while emphasizing the importance of continuous improvement in the safe and effective execution of NNSA's mission. I will be dedicated to fostering a culture that empowers employees to proactively anticipate, identify, report, and resolve safety concerns.

*Question.* What steps would you recommend to improve safety culture at the labs while still meeting mission requirements?

*Answer.* Senior leadership can cultivate a positive safety environment by establishing and reinforcing safety expectations. I will work closely with the NNSA Administrator to ensure these expectations are communicated effectively by partnering with the leadership of our Management and Operating contractors. I will emphasize NNSA's long-term commitment to safe operations by fostering an effective governance and management culture. Additionally, I will underscore the critical importance of empowering and actively engaging employees to provide feedback, while also promoting organizational learning. Reinforcing these principles will establish a strong foundation for enhancing the safety culture. If confirmed, I will prioritize creating a safety-conscious work environment where employees feel comfortable raising safety concerns, knowing that leadership is prepared to address these issues effectively. Furthermore, I will support our leadership by ensuring they have the necessary resources and tools to address any safety concerns in a timely and efficient manner.

#### NONPROLIFERATION

*Question.* What do you perceive as the highest priorities of the nuclear nonproliferation programs at NNSA?

*Answer.* The first priority is addressing the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. If confirmed, I will leverage NNSA's unique technical capabilities to support the Administration's policy toward Iran, and to implement and verify any future nuclear dismantlement agreement with either country. The second priority is improving our ability to detect nuclear proliferation activities as early as possible, including in denied areas like space. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to develop cutting-edge technologies to detect such threats. This will provide maximum time for policymakers to formulate a response and to stop threats as far from U.S. shores as possible. The third priority is enabling the American nuclear renaissance while ensuring that U.S. nuclear exports advance our national security interests. If confirmed, I will strengthen NNSA's engagements with U.S. nuclear companies and nuclear newcomer countries, to facilitate U.S. exports while meeting the highest standards of safeguards, security, and emergency preparedness.

*Question.* What challenges does the emerging multilateral nuclear competition between the U.S., China, Russia, and North Korea pose to existing nonproliferation efforts?

*Answer.* Emerging nuclear competition and greater cooperation among U.S. adversaries in opposition to U.S. interests are among the most challenging aspects of today's geopolitical environment. This dynamic makes it more difficult to reach arms control agreements and to mount coordinated international responses to attempts by nuclear proliferant states to acquire nuclear weapons. If confirmed, I am committed to leveraging NNSA's unique capabilities to mount a multi-layered defense against nuclear proliferation, even in the face of this challenging global environment.

*Question.* Do you believe additional cooperative nonproliferation efforts are feasible in light of China, Russia, and North Korea's burgeoning cooperation on nuclear technologies and materials?

Answer. Cooperation among China, Russia, and North Korea poses a major challenge to nonproliferation efforts. The days when China and Russia could be counted on to stand against North Korea's violation of its Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty obligations are long gone. However, a highly dynamic global security environment can present new opportunities alongside challenges. If confirmed, I look forward to discussing such opportunities in the nonproliferation sphere at the direction of the Administration.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would be your nonproliferation R&D priorities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize nonproliferation R&D that allows for earlier detection of global nuclear threats, including:

Building space-based sensors for delivery to DOD for the U.S. Nuclear Detonation detection System (USNDS)

- Developing capabilities to detect and characterize foreign nuclear weapons activities;
- Improving capabilities to interdict nuclear materials outside of regulatory control; and
- Developing and advancing technical nuclear forensics analysis capabilities that can support strategic deterrence with time-critical decisions in the event of a nuclear or radiological incident.

I will also prioritize R&D that strengthens fundamental competencies at the national laboratories, so they are prepared to respond flexibly to future threats.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps will you take to improve coordination across the NNSA on nonproliferation R&D and reduce duplicative efforts?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not privy to the details of NNSA's organizational structure for nonproliferation R&D. However, to be effective and efficient, this office must conduct its work in full coordination with all relevant offices, not just across NNSA, but across the entire U.S. Government. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on any duplicative efforts in this area and discussing efforts to increase efficiency.

#### EMERGENCY RESPONSE

*Question.* What is your understanding of the NNSA's roles and responsibilities with regard to responding to domestic and international radiological events?

Answer. NNSA's Nuclear Emergency Support Team (NEST) is prepared to respond to radiological and nuclear emergencies that may occur around the world. Additionally, as a party to the IAEA's Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, NNSA leads nuclear and radiological response in the international arena. This includes cooperating with other states to promptly provide assistance in such cases. In some cases that involve U.S. national security, public health and safety, and economic interests, NNSA also provides direct bilateral or multilateral assistance to international partners. This includes forensic capabilities in support of international law enforcement efforts to investigate and attribute an incident. Domestically, NNSA oversees the Department's Emergency Operation Center and 24/7 Watch Office, which provides watch and warning, situational awareness, and decision support capabilities for domestic and international incidents.

*Question.* Do you believe NNSA is adequately resourced and staffed to fulfill its existing emergency response responsibilities?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not privy to details concerning the resources and staffing of NNSA's emergency response capabilities. Emergency response is a vital part of NNSA's mission. If confirmed, I will assess NNSA's current staffing levels and resources in this area, and work to ensure their sufficiency.

*Question.* In your view, how would you characterize the allocation of roles and responsibilities across the interagency, particularly with regard to the DOD and the Department of Homeland Security?

Answer. When it comes to nuclear and radiological emergency response, NNSA coordinates closely with interagency partners, especially DOD for international incidents and DHS for domestic incidents. If confirmed, I will make every effort to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear. To the extent possible, I would reduce interagency redundancies and bureaucracy so that NNSA can efficiently respond to emergencies. Leveraging decades worth of technical expertise and response capabilities, NNSA helps keep America safe, secure, and prosperous. Additionally, NNSA and its national laboratories' technical nuclear weapons program expertise allow them to assess foreign nuclear weapons programs.

*Question.* If confirmed, are there any adjustments to the allocation of interagency responsibilities you would expect to recommend or pursue?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the Administrator in streamlining emergency response processes and implementing efficiencies to ensure that NNSA provides Federal, State and local partners the support they need during crises. I will also support the agency's efforts to strengthen State and local response capabilities to enhance domestic resiliency.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

*Question.* In your judgment, what is the biggest challenge facing the NNSA in effectively and efficiently managing its workforce?

Answer. In terms of workforce, the biggest challenges facing NNSA are recruitment and retention of highly skilled technical employees. Factors contributing to this challenge include an aging workforce, remote duty stations with high cost of living competition with the private sector for the same skill sets, and the requirement for high level security clearances.

*Question.* What recommendations do you have to improve NNSA's management of its workforce?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am unaware of NNSA's workforce management practices. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator to effectively manage the workforce to include mitigating recruitment and retention challenges.

*Question.* In your judgment, how effective is the Department of Energy and the NNSA at identifying, promoting, and rewarding top performers?

Answer. I have not been briefed on the DOE's or NNSA's performance management policies and practices. However, the success of NNSA depends on its workforce. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring NNSA's ability to recognize and reward top performers.

*Question.* Similarly, how effective is the Department of Energy and the NNSA at identifying and removing underperforming or counterproductive personnel?

Answer. While I am not currently privy to personnel matters at NNSA, if confirmed, I will support the Administrator in fostering a culture of accountability and performance.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would you recommend be done to improve NNSA talent management?

Answer. Talent management is critical to NNSA's success. If confirmed, I would adopt a holistic approach to talent management, ensuring these efforts are aligned with agency goals. This includes identifying and filling talent gaps, managing employee performance through continuous feedback and recognition, offering training and professional development opportunities, and developing a pipeline of talent for future workforce needs.

*Question.* Do you believe that NNSA has the appropriate number of civilian employees to perform its mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review NNSA's staffing and ensure it is appropriately staffed.

*Question.* If not, what would be the appropriate size of the NNSA civilian workforce and what, in your view, would the additional personnel accomplish that NNSA is not able to accomplish today? If confirmed, which specific components of the NNSA would you recommend growing?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not privy to details about NNSA's civilian workforce. If confirmed, I will assess NNSA's staffing levels and requirements.

*Question.* Do you believe that NNSA has the appropriate capabilities—in both its civilian employee and contractor workforces—to perform its mission?

Answer. I am not currently privy to details about NNSA's civilian and contractor workforces, but if confirmed, I look forward to assessing NNSA's current staffing levels and future needs.

*Question.* If not, please explain what capabilities each such workforce requires to ensure that NNSA is fully mission capable?

Answer. In my current capacity, I am not aware of the full extent of capabilities required by the NNSA Federal and contractor workforces. However, I believe there are areas for improvement such as project management and AI. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator in rapidly assessing and addressing these issues.

*Question.* If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to retain critical nuclear weapons expertise in both NNSA the civilian and the contractor workforces?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to foster and develop internal talent pipelines at headquarters and across the nuclear security enterprise.

*Question.* What programs, policies, or tools does NNSA need to better attract the diverse range of skillsets required to support the missions of the Administration to national security focused careers?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to assessing current programs, policies, and tools leveraged by NNSA to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current climate regarding sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the DOE and NNSA?

Answer. I take the prevention and reporting of sexual harassment and sex discrimination seriously and, if confirmed, will continue to raise awareness and emphasize prevention at DOE and NNSA. In the event that an issue of this nature is brought to my attention, I will consult with appropriate stakeholders in DOE and NNSA and take appropriate action without delay.

*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 or contractor of the DOE or NNSA?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that complaints of this nature receive the serious attention they deserve across the enterprise. Any contractor or Federal employee who raises such an issue will be treated in accordance with all Federal laws and regulations.

#### RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS

*Question.* What are your views on the State of the relationship between the NNSA and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

Answer. Support from the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), and Congress more broadly, is vital to NNSA's ability to successfully advance its missions. Given SASC's role in authorizing the activities of NNSA, I understand the importance of sustaining a strong relationship with this Committee. If confirmed, I commit to maintaining a strong relationship with the Committee during my tenure.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the NNSA?

Answer. A productive relationship with Congress depends on the unfettered exchange of information. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting NNSA's strong relationship with Congress, including this Committee, and fostering consistent, transparent communication.

*Question.* The safety, security, and functionality of the United States nuclear weapons stockpile is of paramount importance to our Nation's national security, and any potential issues that could undermine confidence in the reliability of U.S. nuclear forces are of the highest interest to Congress.

If confirmed, will you commit, without qualification, that you will promptly notify this Committee of any significant issues in the safety, security, or reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile?

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* In much the same manner as the Combatant Commanders within the Department of Defense, the Administrator for Nuclear Security is required by Section 4716 of the Atomic Energy Defense Act (50 U.S.C. 2756) to annually submit a list of priorities that were insufficiently funded by that year's budget request by the President. While unfunded requirements lists are invaluable tools in helping Congress understand executable funding opportunities, past Administrators have only sparingly fulfilled this requirement.

If confirmed, will you commit to supporting the Administrator in fully complying with the statutory requirement to submit an annual unfunded priority list to Congress with the annual budget submission of the President?

Answer. Yes.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

*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 re-

quested of you, and to do so in a timely manner without delay? 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, and their respective staffs 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.

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[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

8(A) CONTRACTS

1. Senator SULLIVAN. Vice Admiral Pappano, I recently toured an SBA 8(a) contracting operation and saw firsthand the value 8(a) brings to the Federal customer in terms of cost and efficiency while delivering mission-critical solutions that increase our national security and warfighter readiness. 8(a) contracts represent the best “bang for the buck” for taxpayers, giving contracting officers additional flexibility while also maximizing efficiency by reducing red-tape. Do you see the value in increased efficiency in flexibility brought from initiatives such as the 8(a) program?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about small business programs supporting our national security missions. I will welcome and support approaches that streamline Federal procurement processes, provide maximum practicable opportunities to small businesses, while delivering cost effective solutions for our critical national security missions that align with the Administration’s priorities.

ALASKA

2. Senator SULLIVAN. Vice Admiral Pappano, my State of Alaska is “resource-rich but infrastructure poor”. We have fewer roads miles than the State of Connecticut, despite being 118 times larger. Alaska is also a lynchpin to American homeland defense and home to multiple bases which contribute to our national security. Some of these bases recently experienced energy security issues which highlighted the need for resiliency in our grid. The Department of Energy (DOE) contracts for many micro reactors have already been finalized. At what point will fuel be produced and allocated so that these innovators can start production?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Fuel for micro reactors is not in the purview of the National Nuclear Security Administration. I defer to the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy on this matter.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION WORKFORCE

3. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Pappano, at facilities like the Y-12 National Security Complex and Los Alamos, more than 30 percent of employees are eligible for retirement in the coming years. We need a strategy to recruit, train, and retain the next generation of nuclear professionals if we are going to sustain the stockpile and support our Navy's nuclear propulsion needs. What is your assessment of the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) current workforce development pipeline, and what specific steps would you take to strengthen recruitment and retention—especially for high-skill trades and early career nuclear professionals?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. In my current capacity, I am not aware of NNSA's current workforce development pipeline. If confirmed, I look forward to learning about NNSA's recruitment and retention efforts. In terms of workforce, the biggest challenges facing NNSA are recruitment and retention of highly skilled technical employees. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator to address these challenges. This includes working with NNSA's M&O contractors, universities, and trade schools to ensure a pipeline of talent for future workforce needs.

4. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Pappano, NNSA has struggled to add additional personnel required to update the nuclear arsenal. In your professional opinion, is this a good time to fire or offer buyouts to NNSA employees?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. NNSA's success is highly dependent on its workforce. If confirmed, I will advocate for NNSA's workforce to ensure the agency is able to deliver on its critical national security mission.

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

5. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Pappano, the NNSA is being asked to simultaneously modernize the stockpile, expand plutonium pit production, support the Navy's nuclear propulsion needs, and keep nuclear materials secure—all while a large portion of your workforce is nearing retirement. Without a robust and sustainable workforce, no amount of funding will deliver on these missions. How will you prioritize and accelerate NNSA's workforce development pipeline, particularly to replace retiring experts in areas like plutonium science, engineering, and uranium processing?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I look forward to learning about NNSA's recruitment and retention efforts. In terms of workforce, the biggest challenges facing NNSA are recruitment and retention of highly skilled technical employees. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator to address these challenges. This includes working with NNSA's M&O contractors, universities, and trade schools to ensure a pipeline of talent for future workforce needs.

6. Senator HIRONO. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you believe the NNSA has done enough to partner with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), minority-serving institutions, and tribal colleges to build a diverse and resilient nuclear workforce? If not, how would you expand these efforts?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. In my current capacity, I am not aware of the details on NNSA's partnership with HBCUs, minority serving institutions, and tribal colleges. However, I am aware that NNSA and the Department of Energy have a long history of collaboration with HBCUs, minority serving institutions, and tribal colleges. If confirmed, I will review NNSA's efforts in this area.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

ETHICS

7. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are confirmed, will you commit not to seek any employment with or compensation from a defense contractor, including through serving on a board, as a consultant, or as a lobbyist, for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations regarding future employment for executive branch officials.

8. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are confirmed, will you commit not to engage in any lobbying activities, including unregistered “shadow” or “behind-the-scenes” lobbying under the guise of consulting or advising, focused on DOD or any of its components for 4 years after leaving DOD?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations regarding future employment for executive branch officials.

9. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are confirmed, will you commit to not engage in any lobbying activities, including unregistered “shadow” or “behind-the-scenes” lobbying under the guise of consulting or advising, on Department of Energy (DOE)-related matters, focused on DOE or any of its components for 4 years after leaving NNSA?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations regarding future employment for executive branch officials.

10. Senator WARREN. Admiral Pappano, will you commit not to seek employment, board membership with, or any other form of compensation from a company that you regulated or otherwise interacted with while in government, for at least 4 years after leaving office?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations regarding future employment for executive branch officials.

11. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, during your nomination process, did anyone on the Trump campaign, transition team, or other closely related entity approach you about your loyalty to President Trump?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

12. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you sign a loyalty pledge or other similar oath? If so, please provide a copy of the text of that pledge or oath.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

13. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you were approached about your loyalty to President Trump, did you make any verbal representations of loyalty? If so, please describe this representation.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

14. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, in November 2024, the New York Times and other news outlets reported that Boris Epshteyn, a top adviser to President Trump, allegedly requested payment from prospective political appointees to promote their candidacies for top positions within the Administration. Did you discuss the possibility of joining the Administration with Mr. Epshteyn at any time?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

15. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you did discuss the possibility of joining the Administration with Mr. Epshteyn, did Mr. Epshteyn seek payment from you for promoting your candidacy for a position within the Administration?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

16. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, at any time, did lawyers for President Trump or members of President Trump’s team approach you regarding Mr. Epshteyn and the allegations cited above? If so, please describe the information that they provided you (including copies of documents), what was discussed during any calls, and any other information pertaining to this interaction.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

17. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, were you in contact with Mr. Elon Musk at any time during your nomination process? If so, please describe the nature of those contacts.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

18. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, was Mr. Musk present or involved in any interviews you did related to your nomination? If so, please describe the nature of his involvement.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

19. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, was Mr. Musk involved in any way with your nomination, including but not limited to, directly or indirectly contacting Senators regarding their position on your nomination?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. I am not aware of any such involvement.

20. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, who was in the room or participated in any of your interviews regarding your nomination?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. During the nomination process, I spoke with several members of the Trump-Vance Presidential Transition Team.

21. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you own any stock or hold any other interest in any defense industry or Department of Energy contractors, will you divest it to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will follow the counsel of DOE ethics officials regarding any potential conflicts or perceived conflicts of interest.

22. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what do you consider the role of the press in a democracy?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Freedom of the press is a clearly defined protection as stated in the First Amendment.

23. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you think it would be an appropriate use of taxpayer resources to “dig up dirt” on journalists who investigate or criticize you, your office, or the Trump administration?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Freedom of the press is a clearly defined protection as stated in the First Amendment.

24. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you commit not to retaliate, including by denying access to government officials or facilities, against news outlets or individual journalists who publish articles that are critical of you, your office, your agency, or the Trump administration?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I commit to following the law and upholding the duties of my office.

25. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, have you requested, or has anyone requested on your behalf, that any other person or third party sign a nondisclosure, confidentiality, non-disparagement, or similar agreement regarding your conduct in a personal or professional capacity?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

26. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you voluntarily release any individual from any such agreements before this committee votes on your nomination?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Not applicable.

27. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, have you ever paid or promised to pay, or has anyone paid or promised to pay on your behalf, an individual as part of any non-disclosure, confidentiality, non-disparagement, or similar agreement?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

28. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if the answer to the previous question was yes, how much was promised, how much was paid, and what were the circumstances?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Not applicable.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

29. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what is your understanding of the role of the Department of Energy Inspector General?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Per the Inspector General Act, the Department of Energy's Inspector General is charged with investigating and auditing Department programs to combat waste, fraud, and abuse.

30. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you ensure your staff complies with any Inspector General deadlines established for requested communications, documents, and witnesses, and that staff will be protected from reprisal for their testimony?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations related to service in the U.S. Government.

31. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are not able to comply with any Inspector General requests and deadlines, will you notify the Republican and Democratic members of this committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will work to comply with requests from the Department's Inspector General in a timely manner. I would defer to the Office of the Inspector General to update the Committee on the progress of ongoing reviews.

32. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are confirmed, will you commit to refusing to follow illegal orders from any individual, including the President?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. I do not accept the premise that the President will issue me an unlawful order. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations related to service in the U.S. Government.

33. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what actions would you take if you were given an illegal order from any individual, including the President?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. I do not accept the premise that the President will issue me an unlawful order. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations related to service in the U.S. Government.

34. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you commit to voluntarily provide a deposition if you are requested by Congress to provide one?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes.

35. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you commit to voluntarily testify in front of Congress if you are requested by Congress to do so?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes.

36. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you commit to testify or provide a deposition in front of Congress if you are issued a subpoena to do so?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, in such a scenario, I will follow the advice of DOE's and NNSA's General Counsel regarding compliance with a subpoena.

37. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you commit to providing information or documents to Congress voluntarily if you are requested to do so?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes.

38. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you provide information or documents to Congress if you are issued a subpoena to do so?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, in such a scenario, I will follow the advice of DOE's and NNSA's General Counsel regarding compliance with a subpoena.

39. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you commit to following current precedent for responding to information requests, briefings, and other inquiries from Congress, including the Senate and House Armed Services Committees and their minority members?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes.

40. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if confirmed, will you commit to posting your official calendar monthly?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will post official engagements as needed and as appropriate. Given the sensitive nature of much of NNSA's work, not all official engagements may be made public.

41. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you think the Federal Government has an overclassification problem? If so, please provide examples of overclassification you have encountered.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. In my current role and the one I am nominated for, I cannot speak to classification of documents and materials across the Federal Government.

42. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if confirmed, do you think your department should pursue strategic technology to support automated declassification?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will review potential efforts on the use of strategic technology that supports automated declassification while protecting national security.

## PROJECT 2025

43. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Trump campaign, the Trump transition team, or other members of the Trump administration? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

44. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, have you discussed Project 2025 with any officials associated with the Heritage Foundation? If so, please explain what you discussed, when you discussed it, and with whom you discussed it.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

## FOREIGN INFLUENCE

45. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, have you received any payment from a foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

46. Senator WARREN. Mr. Cadenazzi and Vice Admiral Pappano, have you communicated with any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. I have disclosed all connections to foreign nationals as part of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management SF-86 and the related background investigation that was previously conducted and required for my nomination as the NNSA Principal Deputy Administrator.

47. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, please disclose any communications or payments you have had with representatives of any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government within the past 5 years and describe the nature of the communication.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. I have disclosed all connections to foreign nationals as part of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management SF-86 and the related background investigation that was previously conducted and required for my nomination as the NNSA Principal Deputy Administrator. I have received no payments from representatives of any foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government.

## RETALIATION AND PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

48. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you believe that servicemembers, civilians, grantees, and contractors should be protected from any form of retaliation for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations related to whistleblowers.

49. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, have you ever retaliated against any individual for coming forward about an illegal order, sexual assault or harassment, negligence, misconduct, or any other concern that they wish to raise?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

50. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are confirmed, will you commit to protecting whistleblowers? If so, please specify how you will do so.

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with the Department's whistleblower protection policies and standards.

## IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT

51. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you believe the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Energy has the legal authority to block the disbursement of funds appropriated by Congress?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. During a transition year, it is routine for an incoming Administration to review expenditures before payments are made to ensure compliance with the law. I am not aware of any direct impacts to program funding from agency reviews related to NNSA.

52. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what is your understanding of the Impoundment Control Act?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. The Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 is a Federal law that governs the role of Congress in the U.S. budget process.

53. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you commit to complying with the Impoundment Control Act?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all laws and regulations related to service to the U.S. Government.

54. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you commit to notifying the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, including the majority and minority, if you are asked not to comply with the Impoundment Control Act or not to expend the money that Congress appropriates or authorizes?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all applicable laws and statutes regarding the Federal budgetary process.

55. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, the Constitution's Spending Clause (Art. I, § 8, cl. 1) and Appropriations Clause (Art. I, § 9, cl. 7) give Congress, not the Executive, power of the purse. The Supreme Court has unanimously upheld this power. Do you believe that impoundments are constitutional?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all applicable laws and statutes regarding the Federal budgetary process.

56. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, the funding levels in appropriations bills passed into law are not targets or ceilings; instead, they are amounts the executive branch must spend, unless stated otherwise. Congress could—if it wanted the President to have discretion—write those amounts as ceilings. Do you agree?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will execute my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law, to include appropriations legislation. I will ensure actions on this matter are informed by the Administration's legal positions.

57. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what is your understanding of the requirements for DOD/NNSA to obligate funding that Congress authorizes and appropriates, in accordance with the time period that Congress deems it to do so?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will comply with all applicable laws and statutes regarding the obligation of funds.

58. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you commit to expending the money that Congress appropriates and authorizes?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will follow the law.

59. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you commit to following and implementing every provision of the annual National Defense Authorization Act passed into law?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will follow the law.

60. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you became aware of a potential violation of the Antideficiency Act, Impoundment Control Act, or other appropriations laws, what steps would you take?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will follow all applicable law and statutes.

#### ACQUISITION REFORM

61. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what is your understanding of the Procurement Integrity Act and your obligations under that law?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. The Procurement Integrity Act (PIA) is intended to prohibit, and lay out consequences for, certain actions of Federal officials and others that would potentially compromise the integrity of Federal acquisitions. Under the PIA, I would be obligated: (1) not to knowingly disclose contractor bid/proposal information or source selection information prior to the award of a Federal procurement to which the information relates; (2) if I'm personally and substantially participating in a Federal procurement valued in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, to report any contact with offerors regarding non-Federal employment to designated officials, and either reject the offer or recuse myself from the procurement; and (3) not to accept compensation from a contractor as an employee, officer, director, or consultant, for a period of 1 year after I have taken certain actions in excess of \$10 million, that have benefited the contractor (e.g., served as a Source Selection Au-

thority or otherwise personally made a decision for NNSA to award a contract, sub-contract, order, or modification thereto).

62. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, do you believe that it is important to be able to assess accurate cost and pricing data from contractors, especially for sole-or single-source contracts?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. It is important to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. If confirmed, I look forward to understanding NNSA's procurement and acquisition processes.

63. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that contractors are not price-gouging or overcharging the Federal Government?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. It is important to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. If confirmed, I will ensure NNSA processes include protections to preclude such activities from taking place.

64. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are confirmed, will you commit to seeking refunds, including voluntary refunds, from contractors and companies that overcharge the Federal Government?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. It is important to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. If confirmed, I will ensure NNSA processes address this and will ensure those processes are implemented.

65. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if so, how do you plan to do so?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. It is important to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. If confirmed, I will work with NNSA procurement and acquisition professionals and legal counsel to leverage national security requirements to ensure contractors are refunding overcharges.

66. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, should DOD's acquisition decisions be influenced by individuals with conflicts of interest involving contracts or other business before DOD?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. As a nominee for the position of Principal Deputy Administrator at the National Nuclear Security Administration, I will not have purview over DOD acquisitions.

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

67. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, does the Federal Government benefit from partnering with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded research and development centers?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. NNSA and the Department of Energy have a long history of collaboration with such entities. Much of the work done at the national laboratories is at the forefront of science and national security.

68. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, under your leadership, will your agencies continue to work with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded research and development centers to research and address our toughest national security challenges?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I look forward to learning about the current collaborations between NNSA and such entities.

#### PROTECTING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND FEDERAL RECORDS

69. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what is your understanding of the need to protect operational security, or OPSEC?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. OPSEC is a critically important national program that applies to all agencies and is designed to deny adversaries the ability to collect, analyze, and exploit information that might provide an advantage against the United States. OPSEC protects information against inadvertent compromise through a process of continual assessment.

70. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what are the national security risks of improperly disclosing classified information?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. The improper disclosure of classified information may compromise sensitive national security information to adversaries, potentially endangering the United States and its allies and partners. Improperly disclosing classified information is also a violation of law.

71. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what would you do if you learned an official had improperly disclosed classified information?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Any person who has knowledge that classified information has been or may have been lost, possibly compromised, or disclosed to an unauthorized person must immediately report the circumstances to those who have the authority and responsibility for conducting incidents of security concern inquiries at NNSA.

72. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what is your understanding of government officials' duties under the Federal Records Act?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. The Federal Records Act of 1950 is a U.S. Federal law that provides the legal framework for Federal records management, including record creation, maintenance, and disposition.

73. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, should classified information be shared on unclassified commercial systems?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. No.

#### NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

74. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what criteria should be used to reduce NNSA's workforce?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I look forward to assessing NNSA's current staffing levels and future needs. Determination of NNSA's staffing must be based on analysis that ensures the critical national security mission the organization undertakes. The complexity of that mission dictates careful analysis to ensure that NNSA is both right-sized and staffed with the varied expertise required to sustain mission success.

75. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what will you do if you determine workforce reductions in NNSA's workforce that occurred before your confirmation put NNSA's mission at risk?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator, the Secretary of Energy, and the White House to ensure NNSA has the funding and staffing needed to execute its mission.

76. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, how will you assess the impact of potential workforce reductions on stockpile sustainment, nonproliferation, and modernization programs?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. NNSA's success is highly dependent on its workforce. If confirmed, I will advocate for the resources needed to ensure NNSA's workforce is able to deliver on NNSA's critical national security mission.

77. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, NNSA depends on a mix of Federal employees, contractors, and lab scientists to manage critical programs. If you determine that reductions in force have harmed NNSA's mission, what contingency plans would you implement to ensure continued oversight, safety, and security of the nuclear stockpile?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. I am not aware of reductions-in-force that have been implemented at NNSA at this time. If confirmed, I will review the contingency plans currently in place and will ensure the oversight, safety, and security of the nuclear stockpile.

78. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, NNSA is conducting some of the largest modernization programs in its history. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently published a report that noted that NNSA's internal review "concluded that it wouldn't be able to meet this workload without changes." Are you familiar with NNSA's review?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. In my current capacity, I am not privy to NNSA's internal review. If confirmed, I will review the report's findings.

79. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are familiar with the NNSA's review referenced in the question above, how would you address the recommendations in the review?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. I am not familiar with the review referenced above. If confirmed, I will review the report's findings and determine whether plans are needed to address its recommendations.

80. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, if you are not familiar with the NNSA's review referenced in the question above, will you provide this committee with your plan to address its recommendations in 30 days?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will review the report's findings and determine whether plans are needed to address its recommendations.

81. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what is your plan to address NNSA's significant management challenges?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will review current program management practices and explore potential innovative strategies that could be implemented to more efficiently deliver NNSA's mission, such as streamlining project management requirements. I will support the Administrator in fostering a culture of accountability, determining the optimal level of oversight, implementing lessons learned, and reinforcing best practices for cost estimating.

82. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, would it be harmful for NNSA workforce reductions to weaken U.S. leadership in nonproliferation?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. In my current capacity, I am not aware of the structure of NNSA's workforce. NNSA's success is highly dependent on its workforce. If confirmed, I will advocate for the resources needed to ensure NNSA's workforce is able to deliver on NNSA's critical national security mission.

83. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, how do you think increasing our nuclear weapons spending will impact our adversaries' interest in doing the same?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Our adversaries have already been accelerating their nuclear modernization efforts for years. Our nuclear weapons stockpile remains safe, secure, reliable, and effective. NNSA must continue to be responsive to DOD requirements while developing capabilities to meet deterrence gaps of any kind that may emerge well into the future.

84. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, how do you think our adversaries would interpret the United States resuming live fire nuclear weapons testing?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. For nearly 30 years, the three national security laboratory directors and the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command have annually assessed the nuclear stockpile and determined that it remains safe, secure, and effective, with no technical issue that would require a return to underground nuclear explosive testing. The confidence provided by this annual assessment process has, in part, allowed the United States to continue observing an enduring moratorium on nuclear tests since 1992. If confirmed, I will continue to support the annual assessment process and will ensure NNSA continues to adhere to nuclear test readiness requirements while supporting a rigorous and effective Stockpile Stewardship Program.

85. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, given the Pentagon's \$1.5 trillion nuclear modernization program and Donald Trump's commitment to examining every aspect of the Federal Government for wasteful spending, will you assess whether any nuclear modernization programs should be identified for possible re-evaluation to cut unnecessary costs for the American taxpayer?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. The U.S. nuclear arsenal is the bedrock of our Nation's defense, ensuring the United States fields modern, reliable, and effective weapons to deter our adversaries. NNSA is entrusted with stewardship of taxpayer dollars which requires appropriate scrutiny. If confirmed, I will support the Administrator to identify areas where we can adopt innovative strategies to more efficiently deliver NNSA's mission.

86. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, the NNSA's Office of Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation (DNN) works globally to prevent State and non-State actors from developing nuclear weapons or acquiring weapons-usable nuclear or radiological materials, equipment, technology, and expertise. Given that \$185 million has been redirected from defense nuclear non-proliferation to weapons development, what impact will this shift have on non-proliferation programs at NNSA?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. In my current capacity, I am not aware of the particulars related to that funding or the reasoning leading to its redirection. If confirmed, I am committed to protecting the United States from the threat of nuclear proliferation.

87. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, what will you do to ensure the non-proliferation programs referenced in the question above get the funding they need?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator, Secretary of Energy, and the White House Office of Management and Budget to ensure NNSA's nonproliferation programs have the resources needed to execute their mission.

88. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, will you provide, within 60 days, an update on how the NNSA will execute its obligation under section 3124 of the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act to "seek to enter into an arrangement with the private scientific advisory group known as JASON to conduct, not later than 2030, an assessment of plutonium pit aging?"

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes.

89. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, should NNSA generally follow GAO's best practices for an integrated master schedule to manage its programs?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes.

90. Senator WARREN. Vice Admiral Pappano, is program management enhanced by reliable lifecycle cost estimates and program milestones?

Vice Admiral PAPPANO. Yes.

[The nomination reference of Vice Admiral Scott W. Pappano, USN follows:]

**NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT**

**PN22-21**

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,  
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
February 3, 2025.

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

Scott Pappano, of Pennsylvania, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration, vice Frank A. Rose.

\_\_\_\_\_, 2025.  
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Wicker \_\_\_\_\_  
(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 Vice Admiral Scott W. Pappano, USN, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]



**Vice Admiral Scott Pappano, USN**

**Principal Military Deputy  
Assistant Secretary of the Navy  
(Research, Development, and Acquisition)**

Vice Adm. Scott W. Pappano is a native of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He is a 1989 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering and also holds a Master of Science in Nuclear Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

At sea, Pappano served onboard USS City of Corpus Christi (SSN 705), USS Albuquerque (SSN 706), USS Michigan (SSBN 727 Gold), and USS Ohio (SSGN 726). He commanded USS Buffalo (SSN 715) while forward-deployed in Guam.

Assignments ashore include duty with Commander, Submarine Development Squadron 12 Tactical Action Group; onboard X-Daniel Webster (MTS 626) at Naval Nuclear Power Training Unit Charleston, South Carolina; Military Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy; and Executive Assistant to the Director, Programming Division (N80) on the Navy Staff.

After selection as an acquisition professional, Pappano served in the Special Operations Forces Mobility Program Office (PMS 399); as Executive Assistant to Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command; and as Major Program Manager for the Strategic and Attack Submarine Program Office (PMS 392).

Pappano was assigned as Principal Military Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) in July 2024. His previous flag assignments include Program Executive Officer, Strategic Submarines; Commander, Naval Undersea Warfare Center; and Director, Comprehensive Test Facility.

Pappano served on teams that have been awarded the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Navy Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, and the Navy "E" Ribbon.

He is married to the former Kathryn (Kate) Haley of Needham, MA. They have two grown children and one grandchild, and currently reside in Ruther Glen, VA.

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[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 Vice Admiral Scott W. Pappano, USN in connection with his nomination follows:]

119<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, 2025 -- 2026  
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 (Include any former names you have used):**  
Scott William Pappano
2. **Position to which nominated:**  
Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration (NA-2)
3. **Date of nomination:** 03 FEB 2025
4. **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 on-line], dates attended, degree received, and date degree granted):**
  - Massachusetts Institute of Technology, university, JUN1989-SEP1990, Master of Science in Nuclear Engineering, SEP 1990

- United States Naval Academy, military college, JUL1985-MAY1989, Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering, MAY1989
  - Freedom High School (Bethlehem, PA), high school, AUG1982-JUN1985, High School Diploma, JUN1985
  - East Hills Middle School (Bethlehem, PA), middle school, AUG1979-JUN1982, no degree received
5. **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):**
- Principal Military Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), US Navy, Washington DC, JUL2024-Present
  - Program Executive Officer Strategic Submarines, US Navy, Washington DC, MAR2019-JUN2024
  - Commander Naval Undersea Warfare Centers, US Navy, Washington DC, DEC2018-FEB2019
  - Director Comprehensive Test Facility, US Navy, Washington DC, MAR2018-NOV2018
  - Program Manager Strategic and Attack Submarines, US Navy, Washington DC, AUG2014-MAR2018
6. **Have you ever received approval, pursuant to section 908 of title 37, United States Code, to accept civil employment (and compensation for that employment), payment for speeches, travel, meals, lodging, registration fees, or a non-cash award from a foreign government?**  
No
7. **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):**  
Not applicable
8. **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):**  
Not applicable
9. **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):**

National Rifle Association, Life Member  
Naval Submarine League, Life Member

**10. 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):**  
Not applicable

**b. List all memberships and offices held in, and services rendered to, all political parties or election committees during the last 5 years:**  
Not applicable

**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:**  
Not applicable

**11. Honors and awards (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognition received for outstanding service or achievements):**  
Not applicable

**12. 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):**  
Not applicable

**13. 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).**  
Not applicable

**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.

14. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress? Yes
15. 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
16. 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
17. 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
18. 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
19. 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
20. 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

**FUTURE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS**

21. If you are confirmed by the Senate, will you sever all business connections with your present employers, business firms, business associations, and business organizations? Yes
22. Do you have any plans, commitments or agreements to pursue outside employment, with or without compensation, during your service with the government? If so, explain. No

[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.



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This 16th day of February, 2025

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[The nomination of Vice Admiral Scott W. Pappano, USN was reported to the Senate by Chairman Wicker on May 13, 2025, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on September 18, 2025.]

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