

THE NOMINATIONS OF: MR. MATTHEW L.  
LOHMEIER TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AIR  
FORCE; MR. JUSTIN P. OVERBAUGH TO BE  
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR  
INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY; AND MR.  
DANIEL L. ZIMMERMAN TO BE ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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MAY 1, 2025  
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This hearing is printed to include all available information  
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BE DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DE-  
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AND MR. DANIEL L. ZIMMERMAN TO BE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

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**THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2025**

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:39 a.m. in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Roger Wicker (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Ernst, Sullivan, Scott, Tuberville, Mullin, Budd, Schmitt, Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Duckworth, and Kelly.

Also present: Senator Hagerty.

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

Chairman WICKER. I thank our witnesses for being here. We have a familiar face at the desk also, and I welcome all the families of our witnesses and thank them for being here this morning.

As I've said many times, we face an axis of aggressors that deepen their cooperation every day. A new cooperative engagement between our enemies strengthens every day. We need qualified people who are willing to step up and serve during these dangerous times.

Matthew Lohmeier has served our country as an Active Duty officer in the Air Force and Space Force. Based on his experience in uniform, he's been an outspoken proponent of eliminating the divisive DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] agenda that was the hallmark of the Department of Defense in the earlier Administration. Fortunately, President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have done much toward removing DEI at DOD.

Mr. Lohmeier's nomination for Under Secretary of the Air Force represents an opportunity to evaluate closely the kind of leadership we need in the Air Force and Space Force at this pivotal moment. This role requires a steady, unifying presence, and needs someone who can work across the department to advance readiness, morale,

and mission focus. I look forward to hearing how Mr. Lohmeier intends to be that needed presence.

Mr. Justin Overbaugh has been nominated to be the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for intelligence and Security. In this role, he would serve as the principal assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, overseeing the intelligence, counterintelligence, security, and law enforcement functions of the DOD.

Mr. Overbaugh's deep experience as an Army officer in the fields of intelligence and special operations make him ideal for a candidate of this position. I look forward to hearing his priorities for ensuring our defense intelligence enterprise is best postured to provide timely and accurate intelligence to our warfighters, safeguard DOD sensitive information from our adversaries, and inform our acquisitions and investments.

Mr. Daniel Zimmerman has been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. In this role, he would serve as the principal advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the lead policy advisor to all matters related to Europe, NATO, and Russia.

Mr. Zimmerman will have responsibility for managing the NATO alliance, encountering Russian aggression and malign activities. His background as an intelligence officer and his experience working in Congress make him an ideal candidate for this position. I look forward to hearing his priorities, and how he plans to revitalize the NATO alliance, and develop initiatives to counter Russian aggression.

With that, I turn to my friend and colleague, Ranking Member Reed.

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

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Want to recognize Mr. Lohmeier, Mr. Overbaugh, and Mr. Zimmerman, and also our colleague Senator Bill Hagerty. We also want to recognize the families that are here today.

Now, Mr. Lohmeier, you've been nominated to be the Under Secretary for the Department of the Air Force. If confirmed, you would run the day-to-day operations of the Department of the Air Force and assist the Secretary in leading the largest fleet of aircraft and space assets in the world. Most importantly, you would be responsible for managing the hundreds of thousands of men and women who make up the Air Force and Space Force.

Mr. Lohmeier, I must confess, I have deep concerns about your ability to represent these men and women. While I appreciate your past military service, your record of troubling conduct in uniform, extreme partisanship, and animosity toward military members with whom you disagree politically is, in my view, disqualifying to be the Under Secretary.

We must acknowledge your record of behavior and statements. In 2021, while you were an Active Duty Space Force Lieutenant Colonel in command of a large formation, you self-published a book titled *Irresistible Revolution: Marxism's Goal of Conquest and The Unmaking of the American Military*. The book argues that Marxism is rampant within the ranks and is leading to the collapse of

our military and our society. As you wrote, and I'll quote to be perfectly clear, "The path we're on as the country leads to fratricidal and genocidal warfare."

While still on Active Duty in command, you went on a far-right podcast, which was known for spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories to advertise your book. All this was done without knowledge or approval of the Department of Defense. You were immediately relieved of command when your book and podcast were discovered.

After leaving the Space Force, you have continued to write and speak extensively about Marxism in the military. You appeared on dozens of podcasts and panels, and made hundreds of social media posts about this specific issue. As you write in your book, *Irresistible Revolution*, I quote in one respect, "U.S. military servicemembers are no different than members of the People's Liberation Army. Each is composed of humans, humans who share a common nature. Because we share the same nature, what Marxist's ideology does to the Chinese military servicemembers, it will do to the American."

Mr. Lohmeier, I've read much of your writing, and frankly, I would question your interpretation of Marxism. Nonetheless, I would make one point clear. I'm concerned that you have a misguided opinion of American military servicemembers and their leaders. If confirmed, you would lead an organization that, like the country it represents, is composed of Republicans, Democrats, Independents, men and women of all racist creeds and sexualities. Yet, your language suggests that you regard many of these men and women as adversaries to be rooted out and purged from the force.

I would ask that you explain why servicemembers and civilians who do not share your political opinions can trust that they will not be targeted under your tenure. Just as importantly, I hope you'll pledge not to seek a retribution against any military members or civilians with whom you have disagreed and publicly criticized in the past, especially as many of them would serve under you, if confirmed.

I hope you'll address these issues thoroughly and truthfully during your testimony. The Department of the Air Force faces enormous challenges in the years ahead. I'm going to ask for your views and how you would address them.

Mr. Overbaugh, you have been nominated to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security. If confirmed, you would serve as a principal intelligence advisor to the Secretary of Defense and would oversee the Defense intelligence enterprise. Your experience in the special operations and intelligence community should serve you well in this role.

Among many issues you will oversee is the complicated network of Defense intelligence agencies. These agencies, DIA, NRO, NSA, and others continue to face challenges in efficiently coordinating intelligence among themselves in providing adequate resources to joint all-domain military operations. Such operations require split second targeting support, and I would like to know how you would ensure their success.

Mr. Zimmerman, you have been nominated to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. If confirmed,

you would be the principal advisor of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Secretary of Defense on international issues that relate to Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere. I would note your experience as a career CIA officer with expertise in several of these regions.

If confirmed, one of your challenges will be to ensure we continue to have cooperation and support from partners and allies in Europe and the Middle East, and I'm deeply concerned about the Administration's comments and actions regarding NATO and Ukraine. As the Administration continues to expand its campaign against the Houthis in Yemen, it would be more important than ever that we have reliable friends abroad to assist us in other areas. Mr. Zimmerman, I would like you to know your plans of balancing U.S. long-term international security objectives against short-term demands.

Thanks, again, to our nominees. I look forward to your testimonies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Reed. I now have the pleasure of recognizing our colleague, Senator Hagerty, who I understand will be introducing Mr. Zimmerman this morning. So, I now turn to you, sir.

#### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR BILL HAGERTY**

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Chairman Wicker, and I want to thank you as well, Ranking Member Reed, and to all my esteemed colleagues here. Thank you for holding this hearing today, and importantly, to all of the very capable staff that are sitting behind you. Because I hope you'll look at Mr. Zimmerman and the position that he's in today, and realize that he was amongst your ranks, and he's sitting here today. I hope that many of you'll take this as an inspiration.

It's my honor today to introduce my good friend Daniel Zimmerman, President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. Daniel is tailor-made for this role. For nearly two decades, Daniel has served with distinction at the Central Intelligence Agency, the White House, and most recently, right here in the U.S. Senate.

While many of the details of his career remain classified, I can share a few anecdotes that highlight his experience and his expertise. Daniel has risked his life in war zones, working with special operations forces out of Soviet, Arab bunkers in Iraq to hunt ISIS and other terrorists. He's dealt face to face with Russian energy oligarchs, and traveled the world from Europe, to the Middle East, to the Indo-Pacific, all on sensitive matters that are related to energy and trade security. Daniel was one of the first people whom the White House hired to support the historic Abraham Accords, which is one of President Trump's signature achievements from his first term that is still bearing fruit in the Middle East today.

For the last 15 months, I've had the great pleasure of having Daniel on my Senate staff. He's been a detailee who served with distinction. During this time, I found that his tremendous leadership skills, his knowledge of global issues, are matched only by his humility and his character. He's been a wonderful colleague and a friend.

Daniel's the right person to serve as the next Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and I urge the members of this committee to move quickly on his nomination. Thank you all for taking him into account this morning.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much, Senator Hagerty, and you are free to stay, but I'm sure your schedule is quite busy.

Senator KAINE. So, Mr. Chair, I think a number of us, were hoping to cross-examine Senator Hagerty before he departs.

[Laughter.]

Chairman WICKER. Five minutes each for the first round.

[Laughter.]

Chairman WICKER. Only because it's a Thursday, we'll skip that today. Thank you. We will now begin with opening statements and we'll go in the order of Lohmeier, Overbaugh, and Zimmerman.

Mr. Lohmeier, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your opening statement, sir.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MATTHEW L. LOHMEIER, TO BE UNDER  
SECRETARY OF AIR FORCE**

Mr. LOHMEIER. Thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of this committee for considering my nomination to be Under Secretary of the Department of the Air Force. I'm grateful for the opportunity, and for the trust of President Trump. To the many troops, men, and women, both uniformed and civilian, who have expressed overwhelming support for me, thank you to those listening who have served or who presently serve. You have my gratitude.

I wish to acknowledge and thank my friends and family for their support, some of whom are here today, including my parents. I'd especially like to acknowledge and thank my wife, Sarah, who is here. What a blessing it is for a man who personally cares deeply about the Air Force core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do, to live with a wife who likewise believes in and embodies those values. Furthermore, she more than anyone else knows that I strive to be a man of integrity, and that I hope to inspire others to live in that same spirit.

The Under Secretary of the Air Force is by law the Chief Management Officer of the Department of the Air Force. My breadth of experience serving in both the Air and Space Forces makes me uniquely qualified for the job at this pivotal time in American history, a time in which we face very serious threats to our national security.

Even before receiving my commission, while still a cadet at the United States Air Force Academy 20 years ago, I began to become aware of the threats we face when I participated in a special exchange program to China that we no longer have. The U.S. Government sent a small contingent of Mandarin-speaking Air Force Cadets to the People's Liberation Army Air Force Academy in Changchun, China. It's north of North Korea.

For a brief cold stint in March 2005, I lived in the dorms with the PLA cadets, attended their classes, even aeronautical engineering, did PT with those cadets in the snow, ate in their chow hall, and was wittingly placed on a losing basketball team so that they

could film our crushing defeat in front of their entire cadet body, no doubt for distribution in State media.

Most U.S. Air Force Academy cadets know what I mean when I say there's no better view of the Air Force Academy than in the rear-view mirror. But after spending time at the Chinese Air Force Academy, returning to USFA was a treat. Later, after graduating and receiving a commission from the Air Force Academy, I finished pilot training and became a T-38 instructor pilot where I taught future fighter pilots for both the United States and our foreign mission partners.

I then flew F-15Cs out of Kadena Airbase in Okinawa, Japan. That assignment served as yet another reminder to me of the threat posed by the PRC to our allies and our strategic partners, as well as to our own economic prosperity, and military interests at home and abroad. I am keenly aware of that threat, and I understand the need for ready Air and Space Forces well trained and equipped to meet the China challenge to deter any aggression, and if needed, to defeat that aggression.

Following my time in the cockpit, I transferred to what was then Air Force Space Command, and provided strategic and theater missile warning for the United States and our allies. When the Space Force was subsequently created, I was entrusted with command of that same mission leading a combined operation of U.S. and allied partners in control of our Nation's \$18 billion space-based missile warning architecture.

I share that background to make this point. I speak the language of both the Air Force and the Space Force. I am air-minded and space-minded. I understand the necessity of United States superiority in both of those war fighting domains. Space, in particular, is a strategic domain. It is a theater where we pursue many objectives, and where the United States must prevail. Space is necessarily also an operational domain because our ability to access and use space is a vital national interest.

Despite my background, I've been startled by just how much has changed and developed technologically since I left Active Duty just shy of 4 years ago. My surprise is evidence of the dynamic and rapidly evolving threat environment, mentioned here several weeks ago by Dr. Troy Meink. Combatant commanders are calling for more air and space power capacity, not less. I'm persuaded that, if confirmed, I must be a strong advocate for a larger and better funded Department of the Air Force. Every single national security option the President needs is underpinned by air space power.

The President has nominated me for this important position with the trust that I'll be a driving force behind a culture of integrity in the Department of the Air Force. This includes eliminating all unnecessary distractions, and enabling military members to focus on their mission.

Secretary Hegseth has said his priorities include restoring the warrior ethos, and a focus on warfighting, rebuilding the military, and reestablishing deterrence. I am firmly aligned with those priorities, and there are unique ways in which they must be accomplished in the air and space forces. If confirmed, all of my efforts will be nested within that framework.

Thank you, and I look forward to taking your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Matthew L. Lohmeier follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY STATEMENT OF MR. MATTHEW L. LOHMEIER

Thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of this Committee, for considering my nomination to be the Under Secretary of the Department of the Air Force. I'm grateful for the opportunity, and for the trust of President Trump.

To the many troops—men and women, both uniformed and civilian—who have expressed overwhelming support for me: thank you. To those here or who may be listening who have served or who presently serve: you have my gratitude.

I wish to acknowledge and thank my friends and family for their support, some of whom are here today. I'd especially like to acknowledge and thank my wife Sara, who is here with me today. What a blessing it is for a man who personally cares deeply about the Air Force core values of Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do, to live with a wife who likewise believes in and embodies those values. Furthermore, she, more than anyone else, knows that I strive to be a man of integrity, and that I hope to inspire others to live in that same spirit.

The Under Secretary of the Air Force is, by law, the Chief Management Officer of the Department of the Air Force. My breadth of experience serving in both the Air and Space Forces makes me uniquely qualified for the job at this pivotal time in American history.

Even before receiving my commission, while still a cadet at the United States Air Force Academy 20 years ago, I participated in a special exchange program to China that we no longer have. The U.S. Government sent a small contingent of Mandarin-speaking Air Force cadets to the People's Liberation Army Air Force Academy in ChangChun, China (it's north of North Korea). For a brief, cold stint in March 2005, I lived in the dorms with PLA cadets, attended their classes, did PT with those cadets in the snow, ate in their chow hall, and was wittingly placed on a losing basketball team so that they could film our crushing defeat in front of their entire cadet body, no doubt for distribution in the State media.

Later, after graduating and receiving a commission from the Air Force Academy, I finished pilot training and became a T-38 instructor pilot, where I taught future fighter pilots for both the United States and our foreign mission partners. I then flew F-15Cs out of Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan. That assignment served as yet another reminder to me of the threat posed by China to our allies and strategic partners, as well as to our own economic prosperity and military interests at home and abroad.

I am keenly aware of that threat, and I understand the need for ready air and space forces, well-trained and equipped to meet the China challenge, to deter any aggression and—if needed—to defeat it.

Following my time in the cockpit, I transferred to what was then Air Force Space Command and provided strategic and theater missile warning for the United States and our allies. When the Space Force was subsequently created, I was entrusted with command of that same mission, leading a combined operation of U.S. and allied partners in control of our Nation's \$18 billion space-based missile warning architecture.

I speak the language of the Air Force and the Space Force, I am air-minded and space-minded, and I understand the necessity of United States superiority in both of those warfighting domains. Despite my background, however, I've been startled by just how much has changed and developed technologically since I left Active Duty just shy of 4 years ago. My surprise is evidence of the dynamic and rapidly evolving threat environment mentioned here several weeks ago by Dr. Troy Meink. Combatant Commanders are calling for more air and space power capacity, not less. I'm persuaded that, if confirmed, I must be a strong advocate for a larger and better-funded Department of the Air Force. Every single national security option the President needs is underpinned by air and space power.

The President has nominated me for this important position with the trust that I will be a driving force behind a culture of integrity in the Department of the Air Force. This includes eliminating all unnecessary distractions and enabling military members to focus on their mission. The American people, like me, want nothing less than to enable our Department's men and women to succeed so that our military can—through strength—deter conflict.

Secretary Hegseth has said his priorities include 1) Restoring the Warrior Ethos and a Focus on Warfighting, 2) Rebuilding the Military, and 3) Reestablishing Deterrence. I am firmly aligned with those priorities, and there are unique ways in

which they must be accomplished in the Air and Space Forces. If confirmed, all of my efforts will be nested within that framework.

Thank you, again, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Mr. Overbaugh.

**STATEMENT OF MR. JUSTIN P. OVERBAUGH, TO BE DEPUTY  
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE AND  
SECURITY**

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the chance to appear before you today, and for your consideration of my nomination to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security. I am honored and grateful for this opportunity to serve our great nation.

I'm truly humbled by the nomination, and thankful to President Trump and Secretary Hegseth for placing their trust in me. Above all, I am profoundly grateful to God for his countless blessings, and the unmerited grace and forgiveness He so generously offers through his son Jesus Christ. I'm joined today by my precious wife of 21 years, Rebecca, and our four sons; Joshua, Benjamin, Gabriel, and Matthias of whom we are so proud. We are also blessed to have a number of family, friends, and former teammates with us here today and watching online as well. Having their love and support means the world to me.

If confirmed, I look forward to bringing over 25 years of intelligence and security experience to the role. Most recently, I served as director of intelligence for a special operations joint task force, supporting a new U.S. Special Operations Command organization focused on global coordination of unique capabilities against great power competitors. I collaborated extensively across the intelligence community, the interagency, and with foreign partners to address high priority threats.

Prior to that, I held leadership and staff positions in human intelligence, counterintelligence, and counter-terrorism. In these roles, I led both military and civilian teammates in tactical and operational deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq, and strategic assignments in Europe and the United States.

I routinely informed Pentagon and Combatant Command decisionmaking regarding joint and multilateral sensitive intelligence operations, which I also personally coordinated with chiefs of station and foreign intelligence partners across Europe. These operations were instrumental in countering foreign influence and terror threats against the United States and our partners, strengthening relationships with key allies and positioning our forces to deter, and if necessary, defeat our adversaries.

If confirmed, along with supporting the priorities of Secretary Hegseth and Mr. Hansell, should he also be confirmed, I will advocate for the following areas of emphasis. I hope to lead the enterprise in strategic assessments that shape defense requirements, ensuring they are data-driven, actionable, and aligned with national security priorities. I believe that we do not have the resources to cover all threats simultaneously. Therefore, we must be deliberate and discerning about the capabilities we pursue to defend our Nation and deter, or if necessary, defeat our adversaries.

If confirmed, I would encourage the enterprise to reassess established analytical frameworks, fostering innovation and adaptive thinking to tackle dynamic threats. I believe the warrior ethos includes the courage and mental clarity required to challenge personal and institutional bias, and overcome bureaucratic intransigence.

Finally, I would drive the enterprise to prioritize actionable intelligence, providing clear insights to support decisionmaking from the platoon leader to the President. I believe intelligence professionals must be able to separate signals from noise in order to be value added to the warfighter.

Progress in these areas would improve decision support and security for the enterprise and the American people. This is desperately needed as I sincerely believe we face some of the most daunting challenges in the history of our Nation.

Again, I thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Justin P. Overbaugh follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY STATEMENT OF MR. JUSTIN P. OVERBAUGH

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of this Committee, thank you for the chance to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination to be the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security.

I am honored and grateful for this opportunity to serve our great Nation. I am truly humbled by the nomination, and thankful to President Trump and Secretary Hegseth for placing their trust in me.

Above all, I am profoundly grateful to God for His countless blessings and the unmerited grace and forgiveness He so generously offers through His son Jesus Christ.

I am joined today by my precious wife of 21 years, Rebecca and our four sons, Joshua, Benjamin, Gabriel, and Matthias, of whom we are so proud.

If confirmed, I look forward to bringing over 25 years of intelligence and security experience to the role. Most recently, I served as director of intelligence for a special operations joint task force, supporting a new U.S. Special Operations Command organization focused on global coordination of unique capabilities against great power competitors. I collaborated extensively across the intelligence community, the inter-agency, and with foreign partners to address high-priority threats. Prior to that, I held leadership and staff positions in human intelligence, counterintelligence, and counterterrorism. In these roles, I led both military and civilian teammates in tactical and operational deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq and strategic assignments in Europe and the United States. I routinely informed Pentagon and Combatant Command decisionmaking regarding joint and multilateral sensitive intelligence operations, which I also personally coordinated with chiefs of station and foreign intelligence partners across Europe. These operations were instrumental in countering foreign intelligence and terror threats against the United States and our partners, strengthening relationships with key allies and positioning our forces to deter, and if necessary, defeat our adversaries.

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Progress in these areas would improve decision support and security for the enterprise and the American people. This is desperately needed as I sincerely believe we face some of the most daunting challenges in the history of our Nation.

Again, I thank you for your consideration and look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, sir. Mr. Zimmerman.

**STATEMENT OF MR. DANIEL L. ZIMMERMAN, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Armed Services Committee, thank you for the chance to appear before you today to be considered for the role of Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

I am honored by the President's nomination and by his trust. I also thank Secretary Hegseth and Under Secretary Colby for their support. I'm humbled by Senator Hagerty's introduction, and grateful for his leadership and example.

Mr. Chairman, with permission, I'll briefly mention some priorities that, if confirmed, I would anticipate meriting my full attention from day one. The International Security Affairs role spans Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Eurasia, the Middle East, and Africa. These theaters present many issues of consequence, which must be addressed judiciously and in ways that fully support the Department's primary goals of securing the homeland and deterring China.

In my view, doing this will require cultivating strong partnerships in these regions that further U.S. interests, and encourage our allies urgently to embrace greater responsibility and burden sharing, which is both in their interest and ours.

Resolutely addressing with allies persistent threats to our interests, such as those posed by Russia, Iran's potential to develop a nuclear weapon and terrorism, and countering China's ability to project military power influence in these theaters. All this can and should be done in a way that advances the President's and Secretary's America First, peace through strength agenda.

If confirmed, I would draw on almost two decades of national security experience, intelligence, in policy roles, and in the field where I've had the privilege to work on many of the same issues and regions involved in this portfolio. The challenges are serious, yet familiar.

Mr. Chairman, if I may introduce my family. My parents, David Zimmerman and Beth Zimmerman are here, to whom I owe immeasurable gratitude. I would like to acknowledge my sister, Tabitha Zimmerman, and three brothers; Ethan Zimmerman, Luke Zimmerman, and Nic Zimmerman, who along with my dad, have all served or are serving in our military and along with their exemplary colleagues. They hold my deepest respect.

My four brave children are here; Ransom Zimmerman, Anchor Zimmerman, Haven Zimmerman, and Liberty Zimmerman. I have asked them to behave unless I get asked a tough question.

[Laughter.]

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Most important, my wife, Chloe Zimmerman, is here, a constant friend without parallel who continues to transform my life. I'm grateful for many other family and friends attending or listening today, and I give thanks to my great shepherd, the Lord Jesus.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed to this role, I would apply myself with all the humility, vigor, and excellence our country expects and deserves to help preserve the inestimable blessings of liberty for us and for the next generation. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Daniel Zimmerman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY STATEMENT OF DANIEL ZIMMERMAN

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and Members of the Armed Services Committee—

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to be considered for the role of Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

I am honored by the President's nomination, and by his trust. I also thank Secretary Hegseth and Under Secretary Colby for their support.

I am humbled by Senator Hagerty's introduction and am grateful for his leadership and example.

Mr. Chairman, with permission, I will briefly mention some priorities that—if confirmed—I would anticipate meriting my full attention from Day One. The International Security Affairs role spans Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Eurasia, the Middle East, and Africa. These theaters present many issues of consequence, which must be addressed judiciously and in ways that fully support the Department's primary goals of securing the homeland and deterring China. In my view, doing this will require:

- Cultivating strong partnerships in these regions that further U.S. interests and encourage our allies urgently to embrace greater responsibility and burden sharing—which is both in their interest and ours;
- Resolutely addressing, with allies, persistent threats to our interests such as those posed by Russia, Iran's potential to develop a nuclear weapon, and terrorism;
- And countering China's ability to project military power and influence in these theaters.

All this can and should be done in a way that advances the President's and the Secretary's America first, peace through strength agenda.

If confirmed, I would draw on almost two decades of national security experience in Intelligence, in policy roles, and in the field, where I have had the privilege to work on many of the same issues and regions involved in this portfolio. The challenges are serious, yet familiar.

Mr. Chairman, if I may introduce my family, my parents David and Beth Zimmerman are here, to whom I owe immeasurable gratitude. I would like to acknowledge my sister Tabitha and three brothers Ethan, Luke, and Nic—who along with my Dad have all served or are serving in our military. Along with their exemplary colleagues, they hold my deepest respect.

My four brave children are here—Ransom, Anchor, Haven, and Liberty. Most important, my wife Chloe is here—a constant friend without parallel, who continues to transform my life.

I am grateful for many other family and friends attending or listening today. And I give thanks my Great Shepherd, the Lord Jesus.

Mr. Chairman, I love this country. If confirmed to this role, I would apply myself with all the humility, vigor and excellence our country expects and deserves—to help preserve the inestimable blessings of liberty for us and for the next generation.

Chairman WICKER. Well, thank you.

Thanks to all three of you, and again, welcome to the family and friends. We now move to standard questions which are required of all civilian nominees. So, if you'll each turn your mics on and answer audibly. Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

[Witnesses answer 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?

[Witnesses answer 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?

[Witnesses answer 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 a requester regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such records?

[Witnesses answer 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?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

Chairman WICKER. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests?

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

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

[Witnesses answer in the affirmative.]

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much.

Now, we will move to questions by individual members of the committee, and I'll begin. First, for each of you. Much of the funding in the Reconciliation Bill, which is being put together now in the House and Senate, because of our rules, has to be unspecific and will technically be at the discretion of the Department of Defense, though we will write recommendations for them.

A quick yes or no from each of you, and begin with Mr. Lohmeier. Do you commit to follow unequivocally the Congress's spending recommendation in Defense reconciliation?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Mr. Overbaugh?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, Chairman Wicker.

Chairman WICKER. Mr. Zimmerman?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much.

Then let's move then to Mr. Zimmerman and your prepared testimony. You mentioned burden sharing. Let's talk about NATO and the first Trump term. The President demanded that all NATO allies meet their burden-sharing obligations. Do you think the NATO members took this challenge seriously? It seems that they're reversing nearly two decades of decline. Do you believe this spending marks a renewed commitment on the part of our NATO allies to burden sharing, Mr. Zimmerman?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator, thank you for the question. NATO is a very important alliance that U.S. commitments there are grave

and serious. I do think there's general consensus that the alliance has to adapt. You mentioned very appropriately in your opening remarks, a threat environment where our adversaries are colluding and collaborating even more and more, underscoring the need for strong alliances and partnerships and greater burden sharing.

I think there is reason to be encouraged by actions that some NATO members have taken to take greater ownership of their security needs and be alliance partners. I think the Administration has identified an urgent need for that process to accelerate.

Chairman WICKER. Okay, and one other thing, and I'm glad to hear you come down strongly on behalf of our participation in this very important NATO alliance. As far as I know, we do not yet have a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for NATO. Will you commit to filling this position at the earliest opportunity?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator, to the extent I can manage that, I commit.

Chairman WICKER. Okay, and do you agree it would be very important for that to be filled based on your earlier testimony?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator, the NATO alliance is a very important alliance.

Chairman WICKER. Okay. Thank you very much.

Let me go back to Mr. Lohmeier, and let me choose my words here. As the Department of the Air Force makes major basing decisions, currently including platforms and mission sets like F-15EX, KC-46, and space control, and very soon the future CCA and the F-47 support infrastructure, many of us on the committee remain concerned about the consistency, fairness, and transparency of the process.

Mr. Lohmeier, are you aware that in the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA, which was passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President, we prohibited programmatic basing decisions or programmatic sole source basing decisions? Are you aware of that?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator.

Chairman WICKER. If confirmed, will you commit to upholding this law?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator. I am committed to upholding the law in every respect, if I'm confirmed.

Chairman WICKER. Okay. Well, and let me just say, how you do this is going to be very important. There are strategic imperatives and objective criteria that should be paramount rather than political considerations.

Frankly, I'm going to say this after the politicization of the Space Command Headquarters basing decision, do you think we've got some confidence rebuilding to do, and what specifically will you do to restore confidence that this is being called according to statute and called by the numbers?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Well, I think it's very important, Senator, and I share your concern that we eliminate the politics of the decision-making process. The service secretaries and the Under Secretaries should work very carefully to make data-driven decisions and decisions that will most benefit the warfighter and our strategic posturing around the globe.

So, you have my commitment, if confirmed, that we'll do our very best to make sure those decisions are based on the needs of those capabilities in various locations and strategy, not based on politics.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. How's your Mandarin?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Hai hao.

Chairman WICKER. Did you get that Madam Clerk? Thank you very much. Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lohmeier, you posted the following on your X account on October 19th, 2024. "If we are fortunate enough to see a Trump presidency once again, then there will be serious consequences for those senior leaders who have broken their oath, betrayed the trust of the American people, and participated in the hyper-politicalization of the uniformed services. Let me tell you about one such officer who still serves—" Mr. Lohmeier, what did you mean by serious consequences for these officers, many who are still serving and would be serving in the Air Force?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Thank you for bringing this up, Senator. I share your concern for and commitment to ensuring that we've got a relatively apolitical military workplace. It was one of the driving motivating factors prior to my separation from service in the fall of 2021 for the things that I wrote and spoke about.

I was never publicly critical of my chain of command. I was never publicly critical of my senior leaders while I served in the uniform of my country. As you mentioned, that post was put on X in my private capacity as a private citizen in 2024. I've been out of uniform for the past 4 years, nearly, and have rather enjoyed my ability to speak freely and express a full range of the expression of my ideas on platforms such as X.

However, I'm very committed, if confirmed, to making sure that we eliminate political distractions from the military workplace. Our servicemembers and the American people truly deserve the opportunity to serve in a nonpartisan military workplace. What I meant by the statement was that I believe that a Trump presidency or a Trump administration would take accountability very seriously. We wouldn't overlook that kind of partisan politicization of the military workplace that I believed we had experienced in the past years.

Senator REED. Do you commit then to not take any action against any individual military or civilian who carried out DOD policy and regulations or implemented any laws enacted by Congress?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, I think I heard all of the question. I missed probably part of it, but the tenor was that asking of me a commitment to not hold certain leaders accountable who were following the law or implementing policy. In that vein, or that spirit, or in principle, I'm only interested in holding people accountable who don't follow the law and who don't honor their oath to the Constitution, which I take very seriously.

Again, I'm very interested in nonpartisanship from our uniform wearers in particular, and giving the right to the American people to entertain their partisan arguments. But I have no vindictive spirit. I'm not interested in retribution, but I am interested, if confirmed, and looking forward in making sure we have proper ac-

countability and high standards in the Department of the Air Force.

Senator REED. Then you disavowed the statement you made in October 2024, saying, if Trump takes over, there will be consequences for people. Most of the consequences, I assume would be targeted to people who you were had differences with because of their support of the policies including equity and other policies. Is that true, or you were just making up all the stuff in your post in the last several years?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Well, Senator, I'd love to look at the context of all of the statements that I've made, but I will make just one point that as I've contemplated the path to confirmation or through the confirmation process, which I've taken very seriously. I very much had in mind the social media presence, podcast appearances, media appearances I've had for 4 years, and I've left every last jot and tittle of that up online and available because I'm very deliberate in what I choose to say.

I believe in what I say, and I also reserve the right to be wrong about things and to change my opinion about things. But I have nothing to hide. I try and speak what I believe to be true, and I'm happy to be corrected about things in which I'm mistaken. But in principle, what I was intending to say in that post was that I believe accountability matters, and that's the spirit of what I was trying to get at.

If confirmed, I'd look forward to ensuring we've got a culture of accountability in the Department of the Air Force. That was not intended to be retroactive or retribution in nature, but simply intended to communicate that leaders who prioritize accountability and high standards will do the American people and servicemembers service by committing to that.

Senator REED. Well, I think we all want to see leaders who are accountable themselves and also the highest standards, but those standards have to be consistent with this country and the servicemen and women who serve. They come from, as I indicated, many races, many nationalities, different views, political, or otherwise.

The goal is, as you indicated, is an apolitical military force. Everything that I've read in your book and everything else is far from apolitical. You've targeted individuals that you felt had for political reasons unfortunate views. If you carry that attitude into your job, you'll cause great confusion in the Air Force and great animosity within the ranks, fear, et cetera.

So, thank you for your previous service. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Or Senator Cotton, are you in charge?

Senator COTTON.

[Presiding.] Mr. Overbaugh, I see the intelligence and the security shop in the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, not just through my work on this committee, but my work on the as chairman of the Intelligence Committee as well. I&S should be the central advocate for the DODs intelligence priorities and the central orchestrator to ensure that all defense intelligence agencies are meeting DOD needs. Yet, it has often seemed to me that all the agencies under the I&S umbrella appear to largely act on their own accord. Oftentimes, it seems a little direct oversight.

Can you commit to working with me on this committee and on the Intelligence Committee to ensure that we improve I&S's enterprise governance to meet the Defense—to make sure that the Defense intelligence agencies are providing the intelligence that all of our warfighters need?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, Senator. I absolutely can.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

Do share that assessment that it seems like oftentimes they're kind of all going off in their own direction?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Senator, I share your concerns in that regard, and what I can commit to you is, if confirmed for this position, I would place an emphasis on ensuring that the entire Defense, and intelligence, and security enterprise remains responsive, particularly to combatant commanders and the warfighters to ensure that they're well positioned to deal with global threats.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

I believe that part of the issue here is that I&S is not optimally organized to meet that role of guiding the Defense intelligence enterprise and advocating for Defense intelligence priorities.

I put report language in last year's NDAA that mandated a GAO review of the authorities, the roles and responsibility of I&S. Can you commit to using the findings of that review to inform any potential organizational changes that might be made in I&S?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, Senator, and as I mentioned in my open statement, I'm particularly concerned about bureaucratic intransigence. So, analyzing the structure and process within the organization would be a key focus, if I'm confirmed.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

As is often the case, while boxes and lines on a chart are important, they're not the only thing to consider. Sometimes, it's not the most important thing that needs to change. Sometimes, it is leadership and culture. I&S was dual headed as the Director of Defense Intelligence and the principal director or advisor to the Director of National Intelligence because Congress recognized the urgent need for a single proponent to ensure the broader national intelligence community meets Defense requirements.

Yet, I don't think there's any documented processes or procedures for ensuring that collaboration between I&S and the ODNI, and I think the past interactions between ODNI and I&S have not been adequate. Can you commit to working with Mr. Hansell to make sure I&S is collaborating closely and productively and constructively with the ODNI?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I absolutely can, Senator, and this is something that Mr. Hansell and I have already had an opportunity to talk about. I share his passion, and I know that if we're confirmed, we look very much forward to working with ODNI, and Gabbard, and the rest of her team to ensure that that lash up takes place.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

To be clear, the work that the Defense intelligence agencies produce, I think it's stellar and topnotch. It's often some of the best intelligence reporting I see on this committee, and especially on the Intelligence Committee. We want to make sure that we're providing proper guidance for all those agencies underneath your

orbit. Also, that they're having their proper influence within the broader intelligence community, especially claims on resources.

Mr. Lohmeier the Air Force has been underfunded for a long time, especially in the last two Democratic Administrations. That's led to a dramatically smaller fighter force than we've had at any times since World War II. Yet, we need air superiority given the broad range of threats we face.

Do you commit to working with the Administration and with Congress to be ensure that we increase resources going forward for the Air Force and Space Force?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator. I commit to that.

Senator COTTON. You agree that we need those additional resources?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do agree.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

Part of the problem we've had, too, is a shortage of pilots. 1,800 pilot shortage across the total force. As of Fiscal Year 2024, retention is only averaging about 40 to 50 percent. Do you agree that we need to focus very intently on both recruiting and retaining pilots?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator, and this is a problem we've had for many years. It transcends Administrations, and I know that Air Force leaders and Administrations have tried to fix this problem. We try and throw money at the problem sometimes, and I think that that tends, frankly, to keep in those who are already probably on the fence and want to stay in any way. But I talked to many pilots, they're interested in fixing their quality of life and quality of service concerns as well. You have my commitment to try and solve these problems.

Senator COTTON. The work I've done on this committee with Senator King are just the same. They're always welcome the money, but they don't join the Air Force, the Space Force for, you know, a couple thousand dollars more a month. They join it because they want to fly high-performance aircraft in defense of our Nation.

One final question. The Ebbing Air National Guard Base in Arkansas is home to a growing international fighter training mission. We have 48 F-35 scheduled to be located at Ebbing over the next 3 years. The Air Force has worked with Senator Boozman, and Congressman Womack, and I, very well over the years to get this critical mission bedded down. I assume you agree that foreign military sales training remains a vital Air Force mission.

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do, Senator,

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

If confirmed, we can count on you to continue to ensure the Air Force supports the mission in Ebbing, and has the resources necessary to train our allies?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator, you have my commitment that I'll work very closely with the, with Dr. Meink, if he's confirmed. Also, be very transparent in my comms with you about the situation in your State.

Senator COTTON. Thank you. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, gentlemen, for your past service to the country, and for your willingness to continue to serve. Welcome to all your families.

On Tuesday, Secretary Hegseth announced by tweet that he was ending implementation of Women, Peace & Security at DOD, claiming it was a Biden era, DEI policy. Unfortunately, he missed the fact that President Trump and members of his current Administration, including Secretary Rubio, Mike Waltz, and Secretary Noem, all worked on this policy in 2017, and President Trump signed it. U.S. combat units began using female engagement teams during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to gather intelligence and build trust with local communities.

Years later, because of the success of those efforts, we enshrined this concept into law as part of the WPS Act. Since that time, WPS has been used by the warfighters to identify victims of human trafficking and joint exercises on non-combatant evacuations, to provide human intelligence on violent extremist groups like ISIS and Al-Shabaab, and to understand the human terrain to improve kinetic and non-kinetic targeting.

I'm very concerned that taking away these tools does not make us a stronger or more lethal fighting force, and in fact, it takes away some of the options we have to be successful. Secretary Hegseth also claims that warfighters hate it, and yet, the newly confirmed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs not only told this committee about WPS's operational value, but he was very clear that this is not DEI.

Lawfare made public in an article last night, a memo from the Director of the Joint Staff providing their best military advice to the Secretary, and this is a direct quote from that article. Mr. Chairman, I would ask that the article be introduced into the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

## LAWFARE

Executive Branch**Secretary Hegseth Ends WPS Program Despite Joint Staff Support****Tyler McBrien**

Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 6:00 PM

*A Joint Staff memorandum reviewed by Lawfare casts doubt on Secretary Hegseth's claim that troops "hate" implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Act.*

"This morning, I proudly ENDED the 'Women, Peace & Security' (WPS) program inside the @DeptofDefense," Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth posted on social media on April 29. "WPS is yet another woke divisive/social justice/Biden initiative that overburdens our commanders and troops — distracting from our core task: WAR-FIGHTING." For this reason, he announced, "DoD will hereby executive [sic] the minimum of WPS required by statute, and fight to end the program for our next budget."

Contrary to the secretary's characterization, it was President Trump who signed into law the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Act, which seeks to to increase the role of women in national security sectors, in 2017. The first Trump administration voiced support for the program and its implementation. And as The Hill reports, "The Trump campaign website even cited the initiative as one of his top accomplishments for women during his first term."

Hegseth justified his decision by pointing to the military's own preferences: "Politicians fawn over it; troops HATE it," he wrote. But according to a recent unclassified Joint Staff memorandum sent to the defense secretary's office and obtained by *Lawfare*, nearly every combatant command in the U.S. military recommended maintaining the WPS program and touted its benefit to national security.

"WPS ultimately contributes to a more secure Homeland," the memorandum concluded.

On April 15, two weeks before Hegseth's social media post, Joint Staff Director Douglas A. Sims issued a memorandum addressed to the under secretary of defense for policy with the subject line, "Way Forward on Department of Defense

Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Act 2017.” Based on input from the leaders of the combatant commands, Joint Staff submitted a recommendation to the office of the under secretary of defense for policy—and ultimately Secretary Hegseth himself—on the future of WPS implementation. The Joint Staff’s mission is to provide recommendations to the secretary of defense and ultimately support the decisions made by civilian leadership.

Out of three apparent proposed courses of action reviewed by the Joint Staff and combatant commands, Director Sims recommended “course of action (COA) 3,” which would maintain WPS legal requirements and “mitigate[] operational risk to Combatant Command (CCMD) execution of Secretary of Defense priorities, while reducing the Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) WPS program.” The memorandum noted that eliminating WPS legal requirements, proposed by COA 1 and COA 2, would require congressional approval. The recommendation to adopt COA 3 suggests that U.S. military leaders understood the need to limit expansion given the current administration’s priorities but did not believe the program should be cut entirely.

In support of the officers’ recommendation, the joint staff director notes that maintaining the WPS program “provides operational value to the Joint Force” and calls WPS, which costs the Defense Department less than \$5 million annually, “a low-cost, high-yield uncontested advantage over our competitors.” He further states that “China and Russia have no equivalent of WPS,” and that the combatant commands’ 80 engagements with partners over the next two years under the program “counter China by gaining access to a population China largely ignores.” The director continues that WPS engagements “prevent radicalization by violent extremist organizations and disrupt the smuggling of narcotics, weapons, and humans into the United States.”

An associated coordination sheet indicated that officials from every major combatant command and from several other military components either concurred or concurred with comment on the recommendation. Only one component did not concur, but nor did it dissent—it was listed as “copy provided.”

Yet despite the Joint Staff’s praise of the program and recommendation to continue its implementation, Secretary Hegseth concluded his own social media post with “GOOD RIDDANCE WPS!” The “troops” he was referring to who “HATE” the program apparently don’t include the leadership of ten combatant commands of the U.S. military.

*The Department of Defense did not respond to a request for comment by the time of publication.*

Chairman WICKER. [Presiding.] Without Objection.

Senator SHAHEEN. The article points out from that memo, and I quote, “China and Russia have no equivalent of WPS,” and that the combatant commands 80 engagements with partners over the next 2 years under the program, “counter China by gaining access to a population China largely ignores.” The director continues that WPS, “prevents radicalization by violent extremist organizations and disrupts the smuggling of narcotics, weapons, and humans into the United States.”

Officials from every combatant command and from several other military components concurred with this recommendation from the Joint chiefs. This is information that’s not new to this committee.

Every four-star combatant commander has told us about the strategic advantage that WPS provides to our forward deployed forces.

So, Mr. Zimmerman, you're nominated to oversee regional security for Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere. Don't you need all the tools that are available to counter violent extremism in Africa and the Middle East? That's a question.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator, thank you very much for the question. The violent extremism counterterrorism problem is a major concern, and if confirmed to this role, one that I'll be focused on. It does require, in my view, a whole-of-government type of approach. Sometimes, we can be too siloed as a government.

In my background in the intelligence community, I've had the opportunity to work with many other inter-agency partners and see the value that comes from across our government. If confirmed to the role, I would of course make a priority to work with all the tools and coordinate to make sure all the tools are available.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

That argues in my mind for the importance of the WPS effort. Mr. Overbaugh, you're nominated to oversee intelligence functions for the Department of Defense. Again, if confirmed, I assume that you would like all tools available to gather human intelligence on the ground, especially in a conflict scenario?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Every single one I can get, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Lohmeier, you're nominated to be Under Secretary of the Air Force. If confirmed, I assume your forward deployed airmen will want to understand everything they can about the human terrain before taking strikes, like on Houthis targets in Yemen. Would you agree?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I would agree with that, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Senator Rounds.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, to all of you, thank you for your offer of additional service to our country. Mr. Overbaugh, how would you recommend addressing the evolving threats posed by near-peer adversaries in the domains of cyber artificial intelligence in space? It would appear to me that right now there is an overarching challenge from multiple near-peer adversaries with regard not just to airline and sea, but space and cyberspace. The areas that you'll be overseeing include both cyberspace and real space coordinated.

Talk to us a little bit about how you see your role in terms of coordinating our response to those adversaries.

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Senator, thank you for the question. We've already had a little bit of experience dealing particularly with a soft space cyber triad. It's a critical effort because as we continue to push into new domains to meet adversarial threats across the globe, we have to stitch those domains together in a way that achieves combined effects for the warfighter and in defense of the American people.

As it relates to cyber threats that you mentioned, I am concerned about the threats to our critical infrastructure, the disinformation that can come through cyber threats, and also zero-day exploits. I

think some of our solutions in zero trust architecture, active cyber defense, private-public collaboration, and offensive cyber capabilities are tools that would be able to bring to bear to meet those threats.

Space threats, the presence of ever increasingly sophisticated ASAP weapons, particularly interested in space-based surveillance of our enemies, as well as jamming, and spoofing are of significant concern to me. I would look to advocate from the position that I'm being nominated, resilience and redundancy in our constellations, as well as ensuring complete space domain awareness and encouraging commercial partnerships to ensure that we're able to meet those threats effectively.

Senator ROUNDS. One of the items Senator Cotton started on this line of questioning a little bit, and I want to pursue a little bit more, there clearly are stove pipes, some intended, some unintended, with regard to the sharing of information between Title 10 and Title 50 participants. But you've also added another item in which is also critical, and that is the private sector as well, which adds additional challenges.

Could you talk about what your role is in terms of making sure that appropriate information is shared and that we make the most out of the information that we do gather?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Senator, I believe that the defense intelligence and security enterprise has a role in ensuring that we identify the threats accurately so that both public and private entities can work effectively to design solutions to deal with those threats as opposed to coming up with solutions that don't match up with the threats that we face.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Mr. Zimmerman, look, I've got just one real quick question for you, and that is basically right now, we've got the possibility if we have one of our near-peer adversaries confronting us in one theater, there's a very, very high probability that we'll have a second near-peer adversary confronting us in another theater.

How do you see your role in terms of coordinating with our partners to make sure that we have the best advantages to be able to deal with two threats in two different theaters?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this just for a moment. I think the threat that you have articulated is one that requires utmost attention and underscores the relevance of this Administration's emphasis on partnering with allies, and for them to take greater ownership and take seriously their need to boost Defense spending.

If confirmed to the role, one of the principal aspects of the job, as I understand it, is to manage Defense relations in the area of responsibility. If confirmed, I would do all I can to partner effectively with allies and partners to ensure that their security capabilities are at a level where we can have the right posture to address the threat you're describing. So, partnerships are extremely important, and if confirmed to the role, I would take that seriously.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Mr. Lohmeier, the B-21 Raider coming online shortly, probably one of the best and finest of the major projects out there on time, on budget. Currently, we're coordinated to have about 100 of them

in. Clearly, that's not going to be enough. Would you seriously consider any requests out there to increase the number of B-21s that could be acquired by the Air Force as the needs arise?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, this issue is also very important to me. One of my priorities is going to be modernizing the nuclear enterprise. Of course, the B-21 is an important piece to that, and I understand that 100 B-21 program of record discussion to be rather maybe a floor. I'm very open to discussing more.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to ask each of you to respond very quickly to the following two initial questions that I ask of all of the nominees on any of the committees on which I sit. This goes to fitness to serve, and we'll start with Mr. Lohmeier. Since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted request for sexual favors, or committed any verbal or physical harassment, or assault of a sexual nature?

[Witnesses answer in the negative.]

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

[Witnesses answer in the negative.]

Senator HIRONO. Before I get to my questions for Mr. Lohmeier, let me be clear. Mr. Lohmeier, you were fired, removed from command for going on a partisan podcast and pushing political conspiracy theories while in uniform. Since leaving Active Duty, you have spread divisive, harmful views on race, equality, LGBTQ rights, and talked openly about seeking retribution against those you perceived did you wrong. Exactly the kinds of comments that undermine the unity and professionalism of that our military depends on.

As if that wasn't bad enough, you're also a January 6th conspiracy theorist, calling it, "a government-led false flag and hoax at the Capitol." I have deep concerns about your nomination to be Under Secretary of the Air Force, and just as much concern about what this nomination says to the members of our military.

I'm very glad that Senator Shaheen asked of questions relating to—by the way, that this is a comment to all of you about the importance of WPS, and I'm glad that she pointed out that this is a very useful tool that neither Russia nor China have to combat extremism. To me, this is yet another example of the obsession that this Administration has against a whole swath of programs and efforts that this Administration deems DEI.

So, I'll get to my questions. Mr. Lohmeier, I hope you can answer these questions yes or no? Do you believe that January 6th attack on the Capitol, it was, "a government-led false flag operation"?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, let me begin by respectfully saying that I believe you've mischaracterized me and my views. Now—

Senator HIRONO. Excuse me—

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes.

Senator HIRONO.—could you just respond to whether or not you believe that that January 6th attack was a government-led false flag operation? If you no longer believe that, just tell me.

Mr. LOHMEIER. I have never said exactly what you've just attributed to me, but I will answer your question, Senator. I believe that

it's evident that there were, in fact, undercover government agents at the Capitol on January 6th, but I have not said exactly what you've said. I'm always careful the way I characterize things.

Senator HIRONO. Excuse me, my time is running out. You deny saying it. Do you believe the January 6th attack on the Capitol was a hoax?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I've never used the word hoax, I believe, to characterize the event. But what I have just stated, I do believe, which is that there were most certainly——

Senator HIRONO. So, excuse me, again, you deny saying that. Oh, are you planning to reprise against, I know that Senator Reed asked you some questions, but I want to actually name names. Are you planning to reprise against General Whiting, Major General Pepper, Colonel Fran, or any other Active military servicemember for perceived slights against you?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, as I've said previously in the hearing, I'm very focused on moving forward in the future, and making sure that I hold people accountable for their——

Senator HIRONO. Actually, that's why I'm asking you the question. So, let me ask you this. If confirmed, will you recuse yourself from initiating or being involved in any administrative or personnel actions involving General Whiting, General Pepper, and Colonel Fran, yes or no?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I know two of the——

Senator HIRONO. Will you recuse yourself?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, I know two of the individuals you've mentioned. One of them is a combatant commander who I presume has the trust and respect of the President of the United States, and——

Senator HIRONO. Could you just respond to my question, please? I know you're taking up my time.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, I——

Senator HIRONO. Will you recuse yourself against in any actions that relate to these people that I just mentioned?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, what I will commit to is that I will treat all people fairly according to the law, and I'll try and do my job to the best of my duty, if I'm confirmed.

Senator HIRONO. That is totally not reassuring. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have other questions for this nominee, for the record.

Chairman WICKER. We'll have other rounds. Mr. Lohmeier, you were beginning to say what you do believe about January the 6th. So, go ahead and finish that thought if you——

Mr. LOHMEIER. Thank you, Senator. What I was saying is that I believe there were many Americans who were gathered that day as a part of a protest, and I also think it's been politically fraught for many years, and it continues to be brought up because there's so much uncertainty about what was really going on. Totally outside of my lane as a nominee for the Under Secretary of the Air Force. If confirmed, it's my job is to organize training and equip forces to provide the combatant commanders and the Air and Space Forces, and that's what I'd be focused on.

Chairman WICKER. Okay. Senator Hirono, in light of my intervention, do you have any followup question at this point?

Senator HIRONO. No, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Oh, okay. Thank you very much.

Senator HIRONO. My only comment is that his refusal to answer very clearly the questions does not reassure me at all that he is qualified to take this position.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, ma'am. Senator Ernst.

Senator ERNST. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks to all of our witnesses for being here today, and for continuing your service to these great United States of America.

I do want to start—Mr. Lohmeier, we'll start and talk about an issue that is extremely important to me and to all of Iowa, and that is about our Air National Guard Refueling Wing, located in Sioux City, Iowa. When the National Guard's 185th Air refueling wing in Sioux City was converted from the F-16 fighters to the KC-135 tankers back in 2003, the Air Force said it would upgrade the airfield at the Iowa National Guard Facility. Again, this is 22 years ago. This is an important issue. It is one I have pushed with the Air Force for a number of years now. So, this line of questioning should be no surprise.

Because the tankers require—they do have heavier airframes, they have greater fuel loads that they will be delivering. The runway is unable to hold that load. Okay? So, this is critical importance. Unfortunately, the Air Force and the National Guard never followed through on their promise to upgrade that runway. They failed in their commitment to complete the runway upgrade.

So, I am additionally concerned with this failure, because now we have a conversion of the 135s to the KC-46s, and the 185th Air refueling Squadron could potentially lose its mission because of the failure to upgrade this runway. It will directly impact the retention of the immense talent of these guardsmen in Sioux City. This is completely unacceptable, and the Air Force must live up to its commitment as of 22 years ago.

So, Mr. Lohmeier, is the Air National Guard a vital component of the Air Force?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator. It is.

Senator ERNST. Is it essential that the Air National Guard has the infrastructure and resources necessary to execute its missions effectively?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes. Every time the Guard comes up, Senator, I often reflect on the fact that when I was an F-15 fighter pilot, I never even knew what unit happened to be providing fuel to me on the tanker in front of me. There's such a seamless integration between our Active Duty reserve and guard personnel. I think this is a very important issue.

Senator ERNST. Absolutely, and I appreciate that. If confirmed, do I have your commitment unequivocally, that you will fully fund the runway upgrade at the Iowa National Guard facility in Sioux City, and ensure it's at the top of the Air National Guard MILCON priorities for the fiscal year 26 NDAA?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Well, Senator, like you, I don't like it when people make commitments and can't keep them. I think it's important to the trust of the American people, and it's important for the Air Force to keep its commitments. So, I'm familiar with the history that you've laid out.

Unlike perhaps those that have gone before, I'll commit a little bit differently to you, that I'll be very transparent in my communications with you. I'll take this particular issue very seriously, and I want to make sure that if I make commitments to you or to the American people, that I'll be able to follow through, or the Department of the Air Force will be able to follow through. That is, so I'll take that very seriously.

Senator ERNST. That is disappointing, though, Mr. Lohmeier. I think I heard a commitment to Senator Cotton about his home State priority. I am asking for a commitment for my home State priority. The very mission of this unit relies upon an upgrade of its runway. So, this is very problematic for me. I have been bringing this up with the Air Force for years now.

I'm asking that a commitment be honored for our Iowa Air National Guard and the community that supports this National Guard Unit. So, given the lack of commitment around this project and its direct impact on the 185th's ability to perform its mission, I want to make sure we're not putting the cart before the horse.

So, again, Mr. Lohmeier, I'll give you a second chance here. Can I at least have your commitment that you will work with the Secretary of the Air Force to pause any discussion on changing the 185th Air Refueling Wing's mission set?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, yes, you have my commitment that I will, if confirmed, work very closely with Dr. Meink, if he's confirmed, to carefully make data-driven decisions and consider all variables. I don't think these are decisions that should ever be taken lightly. I certainly don't like that we can't follow through with commitments that we've made.

So, I make the same commitment to you that I've made to Senator Cotton, or that I'd be willing to make with any Senator in this room, that I'll weigh each matter in a nonpolitical manner, try and make the best decisions for the Force. Of course, I'm very interested, Senator, as you suggested, in honoring the commitments that the Department of the Air Force has made in the past where that's feasible. I'd look forward to learning more about that.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Lohmeier.

I want to be clear. This isn't just about the runway. It's about whether our Air National Guard is treated as an equal partner, as you stated earlier, international defense, or as an afterthought. Unfortunately, they have been treated as an afterthought. The Iowa's 185th has served with honor, and they absolutely deserve infrastructure that matches their operational demands. I'm going to continue to press on this, and I hope that I have resolution in the near future. We need to make sure these commitments are honored. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman WICKER. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to the witnesses, congratulations for your nominations.

There's a beautiful phrase in the New Testament in both the Gospels of Luke and Matthew that goes something like this; From the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaks. Mr. Lohmeier, I want to ask you about your very active mouth and what it reveals about your heart, your tweeting.

I'll just give you a few examples. August 9th, 2024, "The left lies about nearly everything it does, and tens of millions of Americans believe the lies." So, trashing the left and calling tens of millions of Americans, dupes. August 2d, 2024, "If today, you're wondering why the left and Mit Romney seem to have entirely lost any semblance of a moral compass, Vladimir Lenin provides you the answer." April 1st, 2023, "Of all that is good and decent, the left is the real oppressor."

But the one I want to ask you about is the one that Senator Hirono asked you about, and she read you an excerpt. I'll read the whole thing. A tweet from August 9th, 2024, "Picked this up in my basic exchange at Buckley Air Force Base, several weeks after J6. This is what the Biden/Harris administration ushered in after a government-led false flag and hoax at the Capitol. They immediately demonized the men and women in uniform. Then they purge conservatives and Christians with their shot mandates. Brilliant planning, actually."

Tell me what the phrase that you wrote, "government-led false flag and hoax at the Capitol." What does that mean with reference to January 6th?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Thanks for bringing this up again, Senator. I like the verses that you've read. I agree that it matters a great deal that we try and speak truthfully. I'll remind you, respectfully, that the comments that I made that you've just shared, were shared on my X account, I presume, while I was a private citizen in this country in 2024. I'd been out of uniform for 3 years. In fact, with absolutely no intention of returning to public service, I was quite enjoying private life and being able to criticize people as I wish.

Senator KAINE. So, they were a sincere reflection of what you had in your heart at the time?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Well, in as much as those statements were properly contextualized, and I can't speak to the context from which you've read. I always do try and speak honestly, and again, reserve the right to be wrong about any of my views. That is—

Senator KAINE. But how about just the phrase. With respect to January 6th, what does your phrase, a government-led false flag and hoax at the Capitol.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Let me share, too, that I while I do recognize the other quotes that you've read, I don't recall having written those words that you've just read about January 6th. So that could be partly a memory problem. It could be that I retweeted something and that quote has been pulled, but I don't recall using that phrase.

What I do believe is that private citizens in this country can have the right to express their views as mean or as wrong as they might be, and that the men and women in uniform defend the right of the private citizen to speak those views. That my concern while I was in uniform was in fact that the kind of partisan rhetoric that I had used, that you've just quoted from, for example, was actually being inserted into the military workplace in a way that divides troops.

So, I was trying to hold our military, cultural, and workplace environment accountable to a standard of nonpartisanship, as I've in-

licated, so that we could thrive in unity and not division. Now, private citizens have the right to say this.

Senator KAINE. I completely agree. Private citizens have the right to say and believe whatever they want. This is a hearing about your qualifications for the position. The qualifications are essentially, in my view, a mixture of three things; background, character, and judgment. It's about judgment. I don't want to confirm somebody into the Pentagon who would fall for a conspiracy theory that a fourth grader would find incredible.

If I searched your social media, and I saw you praising the Great Pumpkin over and over again, you would have the right to have that view. But I wouldn't want somebody who believed in the Great Pumpkin to be in the position that you're nominated for. So, if I'm thinking about people in the military. I know Virginia has an awful lot of people in the military. One of my kids is in the military. There are people in the military who are left, right, center, and maybe even more who are completely disinterested in politics, and we got crazy.

But how would somebody who's in the left, or considers themselves in the left serving in the Air Force, when you say the left lies about nearly everything it does, of all that is good and decent, the left is the real oppressor. How would any person who identifies that way feel any confidence that you as a leader would have their back?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator. I think it's a great question. It's one I actually share your concern for and care greatly about. Let me just share briefly in a 10-second answer. That at the time that I departed from Active Duty, I had young men and women in uniform of all racial or ethnic backgrounds, certainly different political backgrounds coming to me privately, sending me notes and saying, "Sir, I never knew what your political worldview was. I don't understand completely why you've chosen to now take a stand for these issues or write about what you did, but I respect you as a leader." If confirmed, I'd be happy to come back—

Senator KAINE. My time has run over, but I'll just—in yielding back to the, to the chairman. I don't know where you were on January 6th. Most of us were here. A lot of us had a friend, a guy named Howie Liebengood, who was a Capitol Police Officer who died as a result of January 6th, whose widow Serena is one of my constituents.

When I hear somebody, anybody talk about what happened here as a false flag or a hoax, it's insulting to those of us who were here. It's particularly insulting to those who lost loved ones that day. I yield back.

Senator SCOTT. [Presiding.] Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lohmeier, I'm going to cover kind of the topics that you and I talked about in my office a couple days ago. First of all, I like to ask nominees, maybe I'll ask all of you. Billy Mitchell was testifying in front of the—I think it was Senate Armed Services Committee, the father of the U.S. Air Force in the mid 1930's. He was talking about a certain place in the world. He called it the most strategic place on the planet, and whoever controlled that place

would control the world. Mr. Lohmeier, I'll start with you. As an Air Force guy, you know where Billy Mitchell was talking about?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do, Senator.

Senator SULLIVAN. What place was he talking about?

Mr. LOHMEIER. It was the State of Alaska.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Can I get that confirmation from the two other witnesses?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, Senator, you can.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, Senator.

Senator SULLIVAN. Most strategic place in the world. Great. Good. You guys are starting out really well here. Thank you, and our adversaries, also see it as quite strategic.

[The information referred to follows:]





Senator SULLIVAN. This is a depiction of the Russian and Chinese incursions into our ADIZ and into our EEZ in the last two and a half years. I'm going to flip that over and show you the numbers. It's like several.

That's in the last two and a half years. Pretty remarkable. Doesn't make a lot of news in the Lower 48, our airspace, northern airspace. The green, the green ones are depictions of joint strategic bomber task forces and joint United States—or I'm sorry, Russia, Chinese naval incursion. So, they're doing joint ops in the Northern Pacific and Alaska. Just a couple—2 weeks ago.

So, Mr. Lohmeier, I want—you're a former F-15 pilot. Can you put the other slide up? When you do an intercept mission, say from Alaska, how tough are those missions? Our guys do them all the time. Every one of those incursions, we intercepted them with F-22s, F-16s, F-35. How tough of a mission if you're flying from JBER or Eielson Air Force Base out to the ADIZ here, is that a tough mission?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator. The seat in the F-15 and even in our newest fighters, isn't comfortable when you're spending hours in there hitting the tanker multiple times.

Senator SULLIVAN. So, you're hitting a tanker probably four or five times just to go do the intercept. Correct?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Correct.

Senator SULLIVAN. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, in February, you're doing an intercept up there. If you're in a single engine F-16 intercepting Russian Bear Bombers in the middle of the night in February, and you got to punch out, you lose an engine, how likely are you going to survive in that—

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, those are incredibly high-risk missions, and we've got great men and women who put their necks on the line every day doing just exactly what you've described. Especially if you're having to punch out in that environment, you're not in a good position.

Senator SULLIVAN. No. So, what the NORTHCOM Commander and the INDOPACOM Commander and even the CNO of the Navy has said we need more infrastructure up here to support these missions because they keep saying we're going to—the Russians and Chinese are going to keep doing this even more. So, would you work with me and this committee on those goals? We're looking at Adak as a Navy Base with two 8,000-foot airstrips. We're looking at a hangar up at Utqiagvik, that's Barrow, to be able to station search and rescue operations, or Galena, that was a former Air Force Base.

Would you work with me and this committee on looking at that kind of infrastructure that can support the men and women in Alaska who are literally on the front lines of great power competition doing these kinds of missions. You know, just a couple weeks ago, hard missions. Our military up in Alaska do such a great job. But can you support me in this committee in working on those infrastructure projects that the two combatant commanders in this region INDOPACOM and NORTHCOM have testified that they need?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator. I share your interest in this area. This is in many respects a cornerstone of our projection of power into the Indo-Pacific Theater. You have my commitment to work very closely with you on what the Secretary and I are trying to do from a basing perspective, an infrastructure perspective in the Department of the Air Force, if confirmed.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask one final question. The secretary nominee in his testimony also committed to me, the Air Force has committed to me and this committee for about eight or 9 years now to get more tankers up at Eielson. The last Secretary of the Air Force did, the previous Secretary of the Air Force did, Democrats, Republicans.

Can you commit to me, as the Secretary just did, to work to get the four KC-135s that they've been promising these brave men and women who need tanking capacity to go do these intercepts, real-world missions. No. 2, can you work with me and commit to me to getting those four KC-135s up to Eielson?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, if confirmed, I commit to you that I will work to ensure that the commitments that Dr. Meink has made are fulfilled.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lohmeier, the role of Under Secretary of Air Force is not a platform for ideology or grievance. It's a demanding leadership position that's responsible for overseeing a budget, personnel, institutional integrity. It requires a strategic vision, and really impor-

tantly, managerial experience. That is to say, hands-on experience managing a major organization.

I'm at a loss to see what in your background qualifies you to lead or actually run the Air Force when you've never led an organization that approaches this one at anything like the scale and scope of what you would be expected to do, if you're confirmed.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, thanks for the opportunity to address that. As I mentioned in my opening statement, I've spent time in both the Air Force and the Space Force. I was trusted to be an aircraft commander on the \$50 million F-15 Eagle air superiority fighter, and then later was placed in command of our \$18 billion space-based architecture a decade ago. In fact, that was my first foray into working with program managers, acquisition experts.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Well, what is the largest number of people under your direct responsibility that you've—

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, at the time that I finished my career, I was a squadron commander, and we had just over 100 people in our unit.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. 100?

Mr. LOHMEIER. That's right.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. How many will you be responsible for if you are confirmed?

Mr. LOHMEIER. The Department of the Air Force is approximately 700,000 Active Duty guard, reserve, and civilian personnel.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So, 100 versus 700,000. How long were you in charge of that squadron?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I was a squadron commander for 1 year, Senator.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. One year. Is that the standard length of time?

Mr. LOHMEIER. It is not.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Why was it shorter?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, it was cut short when I was relieved of my command for publishing a book that's been mentioned in this hearing that was advocating for a return to an apolitical military workplace instead of dividing troops along political ideological lines.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So, this is very strikingly reminiscent of what we've heard before in these confirmation hearings, seemingly for the Secretary of Defense who, also in effect, was relieved of his responsibility when he was running a veterans organization, and in effect, ran it into the ground, which should have been a warning for all of us, as it was for me and others on the committee, about lack of managerial experience being potentially a really grave pitfall. I'm very fearful that we are going to see the same in others in the Department of Defense. There's no room for managerial misguidance or mistakes.

Again, let me ask you, what in your experience qualifies you for this job?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Thank you. I agree with you and share your concern. We have no room in the—at this critical time with the threats that we face for our service, secretaries and our under secretaries, to mismanage, to break the law, to not take the priorities of an Administration appropriately seriously.

In fact, we need real leaders in place to make hard decisions about budgets and acquisition processes, major defense programs. We need them to make hard decisions about the nuclear modernization efforts that we have underway. If confirmed, I'll take that very seriously. I'm a fast learner, and I'll surround myself with experts, including Dr. Meink, if he's confirmed, to try and solve those problems for the Department of Air Force.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Would you use Signal to—

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do use Signal, Senator?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. To talk to others in the Department of Defense or the National Security establishment about the plans for pilots in the Air Force to do military missions?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, one of the things I've become quite good at over my 15-and-a-half-year career in the Air Force and Space Force is understanding very well that there are sensitive and classified materials that should only be discussed in appropriate platforms. We have appropriate platforms and mediums for those communications.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So, the answer is no?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Signal is an unclassified messaging app just like other apps, although it's end-to-end encrypted. So, if confirmed, that's something you need to take very seriously in those roles. Yes, Senator,

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Is your answer no?

Mr. LOHMEIER. My answer is that I would—

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Would you use Signal?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I'll abide by the law, and I'll make sure that any sensitive or classified communications are accomplished on the appropriate mediums.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. This is a yes or no answer.

You would not use Signal, I assume from your answer, yes or no?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I will use Signal for private discussions that are unclassified with friends or colleagues as I always have.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So, you would not use it to discuss missions that pilots in the Air Force? You're going to be—

Mr. LOHMEIER. Correct.

Senator BLUMENTHAL.—the Under Secretary of the Air Force, if—

Senator BLUMENTHAL.—you're confirmed—

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes. Easy commitment, Senator.

Senator BLUMENTHAL.—would be flying in hostile territory, such as those pilots were when the Secretary of Defense used Signal on two occasion to communicate about those highly sensitive, confidential, potentially dangerous missions, putting pilots at risk. You wouldn't do it. Correct?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, you have my commitment. I will not use Signal to discuss those things.

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

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you, Chairman.

Well, first off, congratulations on your nominations. Your jobs are going to be exciting. It's going to be an—it's an exciting time to be part of building and making sure we have a great military. So, you guys are—you're all three going to do a great job.

So, I just I didn't know I was supposed to come and ask for a military base in my State, but I've got one that's important, Homestead. But anyway, I just got back from Europe, and this has been consistent for—since I've been up here. As I talk to allies, they complain. They complain about two things. That they are trying to buy our equipment. They complain about the, I guess, foreign military sales process to get approval from the government. Then, they complain about they can't get the equipment quickly because our defense contractors are not on time.

So, Mr. Zimmerman, can you talk about what you think we can do, and what you plan on doing to make it easier to make a decision? Because I just—we were just in Denmark, Finland, and Estonia, the two that we had the conversation with, all three of them, but a lot of it they don't understand when they are ally and they can't get an answer.

I'm a business guy. What frustrates me about the government is just give me a stupid answer. Because if you tell them no, that they can go to Israel, they can go to South Korea, they can go to other places and buy some of the equipment they need. But if it's just a black hole, that doesn't make any sense.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator from my understanding from the issue, I think I share your frustration and understand why allies have thoughts about the process. If confirmed to the role, I understand that the way in which I would be connected to the FMS process is an advising role, and particularly looking at prioritization in both with our European allies.

Here we are in a situation dealing with an underinvestment in the defense industrial base over the last several years that has limited the supply of what they need. So, that's a challenge, but I would give my best advice, if confirmed, to the Secretary and Under Secretary about how to prioritize allied security needs through the FMS system.

Senator SCOTT. So, you might not be involved in this, but it's my understanding that with our defense contractors, we pay for them to develop a product, and then they own the IP for that product. Is that true, or do you know?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator, I don't know the answer to that. I would like to get back to you about that.

Senator SCOTT. Does that make sense? Just off the top of your head? Did that make much sense? If we for it, if our government pays for it with our taxpayer dollars, they own the IP?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. It sounds like if true, it might be one of the challenges in the program.

Senator SCOTT. So, what do you think we can do to get our defense contractors to fulfill the obligations that they've committed to? Because we hear this all from our allies all over the world; that our defense contractors are not meeting, not just with their commitments to us on time, but commitments to our allies for equipment that they need to make sure they can defend, which is exactly what President Trump wants them to do, be able to defend themselves first.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator, it's a great question, and if confirmed, I would do all that I could within the scope of the ISA portfolio and how it touches on FMS to ensure that the process is as painless

and seamless as possible. It is very important for our allies and for the Administration's goal of burden sharing to have an efficient FMS process.

Senator SCOTT. Okay. Thanks. You-all three are going to do a great job. Thanks, Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator King is next, and he is graciously yielded to Senator Kelly. So, Senator Kelly, you're recognized.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Senator King. Mr. Lohmeier, you recently made a post that seemed to indicate Russia was justified in its invasion of Ukraine because Russia feared NATO expansion. This isn't just untrue. It's also the exact kind of misinformation that Russia pushed to justify them rolling troops and tanks across the border into Ukraine and bombing Ukrainian cities.

So, Mr. Lohmeier, I want to be very direct here. In your opinion, was Russia justified in its invasion of Ukraine?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Thanks, Senator Kelly, for taking the time to meet with me a week and a half ago. In answer to your question, I'll say as directly back as I can as well, and in respect, I don't believe I used the word justified in my post. However, I am a bit of a historian. I like context, and what I've always said publicly is that all heads of State have to make determinations for their own security. So, when I say something like that, whether it's with Vladimir Putin or any head of State, I'm saying that they are entitled to make those decisions whether we agree with them or not.

Now, it's a bit outside of the lane of the Under Secretary of the Air Force, of course, whose role as the chief management officer will be to organize training and equip forces for the fight in—for any given Administration to meet combat and commander needs?

Senator KELLY. Well, I'll give you that. That the post did not say that. But you did post an article by John Mearsheimer that said why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault. You did not say that was your opinion. So, I'm going to ask you the question, again. In your opinion, was Russia justified in its invasion of Ukraine?

Mr. LOHMEIER. For context, which always, of course, Senator, as you aware, matters a great deal. That was an article that was written by John Mearsheimer, an international relations scholar, in 2014. It was a comment about Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and some of the history leading up to that. It was not an article that had any bearing upon what happened in the decade that followed, per se, but it was an international relation's academic piece that talked about the annexation of Crimea.

His opinion in that article, and this is a very insightful article, in fact, traces through the history of native expansion since it was created. It's, again, an academic piece. It's something that we study at strategy—

Senator KELLY. Crimea was part of Ukraine. In my view, still is part of Ukraine.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator, and the point I just make in bringing that up is that the opinion that was shared in that post about that article had to do with past conflict and implications for the ways in which allies interact on the world stage and how that influences the decisions that heads of State make. It was not in any

way intended to excuse the behavior of any head of State, including President Putin.

Senator KELLY. So, now I've got two questions. So, the title of the paper was, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is The West Fault." Do you agree with that premise?

Mr. LOHMEIER. It's an enticing title. Again, it was pertaining to decisions that were being made a decade prior to the conflict that you're asking about. It's an incredibly informative academic work that is based in international relations theory. I very much like the paper and would still recommend to people today if they're interested in understanding the conflict in the region. It's a rich resource of information.

Senator KELLY. Do you agree that the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No, because that's far too simplistic. Again, global politics is a messy and complicated affair. What I will say is that it's very clear, a couple of years ago, Russia invaded Ukraine, and Ukraine's been on the defense of trying to fight that war. Of course, it's had bipartisan support in this Congress.

Senator KELLY. So, was Russia justified in invading Ukraine?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, with respect, I've not said that.

Senator KELLY. Well, that's why I'm asking you the question.

Mr. LOHMEIER. I know you are, and I really—the reason I'm hesitating shouldn't be taken or interpreted to imply and answer one way or the other. I really—I like context. I don't like yes and nos, and I don't like soundbite media. I'll say that I believe that heads of State retain the right to make decisions on who they'll go to war with. That's not something I decide. That's not something even the United States or its leaders get to decide even as much as we want to weigh in on those positions. I can say, though, for certainty that I'm grateful—

Senator KELLY. But it sounds like you think it's okay for one of our adversaries to invade one of our allies.

Mr. LOHMEIER. I did not say that. What I will say is that I'm grateful that there are currently efforts underway by this Administration to try and seek a peaceful resolution of that conflict. I think it's time that it ended.

Senator KELLY. All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman WICKER. Senator Tuberville.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for willingness to serve.

Mr. Zimmerman, since March 15th, CENTCOM has forces that have conducted a sustained campaign targeting the Houthis terrorist organization in Yemen to restore freedom of navigation in American deterrence. As of April 27th, CENTCOM has struck over 800 targets. These targets have killed hundreds of Houthis' fighters and numerous Hootie leaders, including Senior Hootie Missile and UAV officials. Mr. Zimmerman, in your assessment, have U.S. operations against the Houthis been a success?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Senator, I support the Administration's forcible approach toward the Houthis beginning in the early days of the Administration with the executive order that called for the elimination of the threat of the Houthis with allies and designating them as a foreign terrorist organization. I don't think I have access

to the, to the classified information that I would like to have to make an assessment about the efficacy of the strikes, but I support what the Administration is trying to do.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you.

Mr. Overbaugh, one of the organizations you'll help oversee, if you are confirmed, is the Missile and Space Intelligence Center, we call MSIC, which is a component of DIA, and located in my State at Huntsville, Alabama. MSIC provides a world-class analysis on the performance of foreign weapons systems, which is critical to ensuring our warfighters dominate the battlefield against our adversaries.

Mr. Overbaugh, are you familiar with MSIC and MSIC's analysis? If so, can you talk a little bit about how important this mission is?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Senator, I am familiar with MSIC, and particularly their role in feeding quality intelligence into other entities like DIA, to ensure that we have an accurate threat picture. I think even more important is the potential for MSIC to play a key role in ensuring we understand the adversarial threat as it relates to ensuring that our Golden Dome is as effective as it possibly can be.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Have you had the opportunity to visit MSIC headquarters in Huntsville?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Huntsville, yes. MSIC, no, not yet, Senator.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. Hope you get too soon. Thank you.

Mr. Lohmeier, you have an absolutely outstanding, unique career path as a respect to military officer. Thank you for your service. You've got a breadth of experience in both the Air Force and Space Force, which is very uncommon, but none of those experiences were in managing large budgets. Why should you be trusted now with such a heavy responsibility at a time when we are taking fiscal responsibility more seriously, thank goodness, than ever before, and while there is a growing demand from the American people that we have a clean audit of the Defense Department?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Thanks, Senator. I'm glad I get to readdress this. While it's true that I don't personally have extensive experience with a large budget in an organization or acquisition experience, I have sound judgment. I've demonstrated it throughout my life. I'm a fast learner.

Secretary Meink, if he's confirmed, has demonstrated that you can pass 16 or 17 clean audits at the National Reconnaissance Office. He'll be a phenomenal leader to work with on this problem in the Department of the Air Force. What I can say is that we've got exceptional professionals who have been trying Administration after Administration to solve our budget problems, our acquisition problems in the Department of the Air Force. Many of them have had extensive acquisition and budgeting experience. But that doesn't mean you're able to solve the problems well.

So, if confirmed, what I can commit to this committee and to the American people is that I'm interested in making data-driven decisions. I'm interested in exercising keen judgment, discernment about these budget decisions, and coming to the right decisions that I believe the American people will be grateful for and trust. Doing that in concert with Secretary Meink in support of the Presi-

dent's priorities and in support of the Secretary of Defense's priorities.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you.

Your knowledge will be very important moving into space. You have a lot of experience in that area. We look forward to working with you in that area because as we know, it's going to be a much, much more important part of our military in the very near future. Thank you, gentlemen. Look forward to confirming you.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, Senator Tuberville. I would mention to members a vote is going on on the floor. I think we can possibly finish this hearing before that vote ends. Senator King.

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

Mr. Lohmeier, I deeply respect your career in the Air Force and the Space Force. But to followup on Senator Tuberville's question, my concern is that the Air Force, and particularly your position, is going to be responsible for two-thirds of the modernization of the nuclear triad. The Sentinel piece is looking like the most consequential civil works project that the Pentagon or perhaps in this whole country has ever undertaken. It's already in a Nunn-McCurdy breach.

So, I'm not satisfied with saying you're data-driven, and you're going to hire good people. My concern is, I mean, you're the boss, and you would be, if you're confirmed. I'm just uncomfortable. I'm not talking about past tweets or books or anything else. I'm talking about the future, and that is the management of probably the most complex and important defense project that's ever been undertaken by the Pentagon.

Try to reassure me. I mean, a great center fielder for the Red Sox is not necessarily qualified to be general manager. Your service is important, but you're talking—we're talking about these critically important acquisitions projects that are intensely managerial. Try to reassure me, if you can.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Well, thank you, Senator. I agree with your concern. I share your concern for the criticality of the Sentinel Program, concern over the Nunn-McCurdy breach that's experienced. Modernization of the nuclear enterprise is, of course, a priority of mine. So, here's the way in which I can try and reassure you, as I have throughout the rest of the hearing.

I've been entrusted throughout my entire career with both leadership of men and women in uniform, as well as being entrusted with safeguarding and employing exceptionally exquisite and expensive weapon systems, both in the Air Force, in the F-15C and in the space-based infrared system, the space-based missile warning architecture, an \$18 billion architecture. I've worked with acquirers' program managers in that process.

This is not a question of whether or not someone has had the qualifications before to manage the Defense Department, because who in their most human beings have never had that experience? In fact, this is a question of scale or scope, and I'll say that I've always been faithful to the trust that's been committed to me, even though the scale has been much smaller.

I'll say, humbly, that I believe I'm up to this challenge. I'm well qualified for this job. I'm air-minded and space-minded, and I understand very well the threats, especially that we face from our

peer competitor in China, and so, thank you. That's my best attempt to say, Senator. I'm grateful for the opportunity, but I'm also humbled by it, and very concerned about it as well. I look forward, if confirmed, to doing my utmost very best to manage those very serious programs.

Senator KING. I appreciate that.

Mr. Overbaugh, every time, and I like Senator Cotton, I also serve on the Intelligence Committee. To me, the most important quality for any intelligence official is the willingness to tell the truth to the boss, even if it isn't what they want to hear. Dan Coats, former DNI, said the job of the intelligence community is to find the truth and tell the truth.

Will you commit to me that you are willing to walk into the Oval Office or walk into the office of the Secretary of Defense and say this is the intelligence that we have about this particular problem that contradicts the policy desires of the President or the Secretary, or the Head of the Joint Chiefs?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Senator, I can absolutely commit to that. I agree with you wholeheartedly, that seeking the truth is one of the most important, if not the most important components of an intelligence professional's job.

Senator KING. If you look back on recent history, some of our real disasters have been caused by slanted, or what I call, cooked intelligence. That's to be avoided. Simple question. Did Russia start the war in Ukraine by invading?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Senator, it's a military fact that Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Senator KING. Thank you.

There's one challenge about intelligence that we've learned, particularly in Afghanistan, and then again in Ukraine, and that is the analysis of the will to fight of a population. We blew it in both cases. We overestimated the Afghan's will to fight, and had the disaster of the end of that war. Then, we did not—we underestimated the Ukrainian's will to fight, and all the intelligence was that it would—you know, the Russian would be in Kyiv in 2 weeks.

I challenge you, and I know the Department has done serious work on this, to pay attention to that because that, for example, will be a factor in our policy decision about Taiwan. So, it's not an easy question. It's not as easy as counting tanks from a satellite, but it's nonetheless an incredibly important intelligence challenge. So, I hope that's something you'll pay some attention to.

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Senator, I will, and apologize, I see that we're over time, but I do want to address this. I mentioned it in my opening statement about the importance of evaluating and questioning the assumptions that we use to make the assessments that we make, and examining the frameworks to determine how much they are may be influenced by personal bias or bureaucratic bias, political influence, or any other type of interference, which would inhibit our ability to provide our decisionmakers with the very best picture of adversarial threat to include, which I personally think is one of the most important components of enemy capability is will to fight.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Find the truth and tell the truth. That's what we're looking for. Mr. Zimmerman. I'll submit some questions for the record.

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

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Chairman, and, again, congratulations to each of you. Thanks for the family and friends to be here today.

Mr. Lohmeier, are you familiar with the strategic basing process?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Somewhat, Senator.

Senator BUDD. Okay, great.

Last month, the Department of Air Force transmitted its plan to Congress for the sustainment and recapitalization of the Air National Guard fighter fleet. Now, it was the result of much analysis and careful planning. It's this document right here. Have you had a chance to read this?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I have not, Senator.

Senator BUDD. Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Michigan, is receiving 15 EXs, and that is not part of this plan, which I can guess will change things for the Air Force's frontline units. Not the Guard units, but the frontline units. So, as an example, Seymour Johnson will have to train these A-10 pilots on the platform of the F-15 and the mission using their F-15 Eagles. You flew the F-15, correct?

Mr. LOHMEIER. C models. Yes, Senator.

Senator BUDD. Well, that's a large unplanned increase in flying training compared to the simulator-based differences training for transitioning currently qualified F-15 pilots to the EX model. So, I want to paraphrase a statement from the Air Force about the training capacity down at Seymour Johnson.

"F-15 program flying training requirements will jump by greater than 50 percent in Fiscal Year 2027 and 2028, and currently, the Air Force has no training-coded aircraft capacity to meet that requirement without reflow of combat-coded F-15E. The Air Force is being forced to examine drastically cutting the F-15 syllabus length to meet those requirements. This creates risk on both quality and basic course air crew graduates and on-combat air forces that will receive aircrew with potentially subpar combat airmanship skills."

Just to be clear, that statement was given by the Air Force in February, and that's before Selfridge basing decision was made. So, if confirmed, what will you do to ensure that the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson Base has what they need to make ends meet with this additional training requirement?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, I'm really glad you brought all of this up. You have my attention. I understood everything you've said. It's of great interest. I'll say that I'm very familiar with the missions being flown out of Seymour Johnson. In fact, I'll just say publicly, it matters a great deal to the Air Force and the American people that we had over 80 drones shot down in the Middle East this past year, over a 6-month period, by a unit out of Seymour Johnson, and we have dozens—

Senator BUDD. They just arrived at that very moment.

Mr. LOHMEIER. They performed potentially mass casualty events and dozens of these men and women suit up every day out of Sey-

mour Johnson doing an absolutely critical mission in defense of the homeland.

So, you have my commitment that, if confirmed, I'll look forward to working with Dr. Meink, if he's confirmed, to looking at these things in a nonpartisan way, these basing decisions, and the proper force structure, and bed down of forces. But I'm interested in learning more from you about Seymour Johnson, in particular.

Senator BUDD. Thank you for that answer.

Just to be clear, if confirmed, you'll be responsible for assisting the Secretary in organizing training and equipping the Air Force. Correct?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes. Thank you, and, in fact, as we've mentioned, that's exactly what the role of the Under Secretary of the Air Force is, that's our chief prerogative is organizing, training, and equipping Air and Space Forces to provide to our combatant commanders.

Senator BUDD. Thank you for that.

So, if confirmed, I look forward to hearing the plan soon on how the Air Force is going to solve this issue, and at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. Thank you-all, Mr. Chairman.

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

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lohmeier, you know as well as I do from your military service that upholding good order and discipline is a foundation for our professional fighting force. Lethality relies on a honed practice of servicemembers following lawful orders. I, myself, even though as a progressive serving in the military, did not agree with President Bush's decision to look for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq when we should have been destroying the Taliban in Afghanistan. Still volunteered to go and proud of my service to this day.

Sometimes, servicemembers have to serve against their own personal opinions. Circumventing commanders on the battlefield in real time could lead to life-or-death mistakes. As former Secretary of Defense matters wrote, officers must carry out a policy to the best of their ability, even when they might disagree with that policy. To that end, I have questions about your commitment to this core principle and the troubling signals that your confirmation would send to those in uniform.

You claim to have only written your book and gone public after the Inspector General concluded that your complaint had no merit. But we all know that there are other channels available to servicemembers concerned about commander decisions or policy choices beyond the IG. Before you chose to write your book or speak out in the media about policies that concerned you, did you consider being a whistleblower to your Senators or Representatives, which would've been protected under title 10, section 1034, yes or no? Did you consider?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, Senator.

Senator DUCKWORTH. You did consider it? That is news to us. I ask that you present this Committee any correspondence that you may have had with Members of Congress.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Copy. I'll do that, Senator.

[The information referred to follows:]

May 14, 2021

Congressman  
United States House of Representatives  
Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman

Thank you for your continued service to our great country at such a critical time in its history and for your many years of prior military service. My name is Matthew Lohmeier and I am an active-duty lieutenant colonel and commander in our newest branch of the armed forces, the United States Space Force (USSF).

I write this letter with great concern for our country, for my fellow citizens, and for every servicemember in our military. Since you have publicly exhibited interest in and concern for the issues I describe herein, I respectfully request your help confronting the Marxist ideologically driven agenda that is afoot within the uniformed services by conducting an inquiry into these issues.

As a commander, I have paid keen attention to trainings that have been provided to the airmen and guardians under my stewardship that facilitate the proliferation of divisive and anti-American narratives. The many ideas I've seen and heard presented to our young servicemembers in the form of "Diversity and Inclusion" trainings, discussions on race, as well as in other forums such as the recent "Extremism down day," include at least the following elements: that virtually all white people contribute to racism; that racism runs in the DNA of white Americans; that when the US Constitution was ratified, white supremacy was codified as the law of the land; that white supremacy is a terrible problem within the armed forces; and narratives of oppressor vs. oppressed identity politics based on race.

As you are aware, these ideas and others are all part of a cynical school of thought called *critical race theory* (CRT), which is rooted in Marxist ideology and which makes race the lens through which the world is assessed and criticized. Despite the Marxist origins of these narratives, the Defense Department recently referred to its Diversity and Inclusion initiatives as a "moral imperative" and, as the 2021 "Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan" of Special Operations Command refers to it, an "operational imperative."

In order to combat these ideas, I teed up conversations with my chain of command and filed a formal complaint with the USSF's Office of the Inspector General in mid-November 2020. The seven-page complaint states that under the banner of "Diversity and Inclusion," a divisive agenda was pursued by leaders at my own base that was racist and hostile and that undermined our

obligation to ensure the fair and equal treatment of individuals before the law. I provided specific examples of this behavior spanning a period of nearly six months and related how it was negatively impacting morale and good order and discipline. I explained how military servicemembers were being trained to hate America's founding, history, and current standing of privilege in the world. I further documented that I was seeing these trainings engender division and resentment within the ranks at a break-neck pace. And I requested that an investigation be initiated.

While I awaited a response from Space Force senior leadership, I became aware of a group of veterans consisting of Air Force Academy alumni and others that had filed a similar complaint with the Air Force IG Office regarding the occurrence of the very same kinds of Marxist-rooted, CRT-informed issues at the Air Force Academy. At the time we filed our formal complaints, neither that group nor I had any knowledge of one another but have since become aware of each other's efforts to combat neo-racism and discrimination within the services. Sadly, both their formal complaint and mine—filed *after* former President Trump's executive order banning race and sex stereotyping in federal agencies on September 22, 2020—were dismissed.

As my own and others' efforts to combat this destructive ideology within the services by formal complaint appear to have proven ineffective, I authored a book during the four months that followed, which is now published. The book is titled *Irresistible Revolution: Marxism's Goal of Conquest & the Unmaking of the American Military*. The book is my best effort to explain to the American people and to our military servicemembers and senior leaders what is happening so that we might understand how to course correct before it is too late.

In the past 12 days since its publication, I have received an overwhelming response of gratitude and support from many, many active-duty servicemembers, veterans, parents, and other concerned citizens. In fact, I have only received incredibly positive feedback. But earlier today, I received a phone call from the chief of base public affairs informing me that it has come to the attention of the Space Force leadership that I have published a book with material that is "very concerning." My guess is that they have not yet read the book. It is my hope that they will yet read it and seek to forge a better future for military servicemembers in a force that is united and non-partisan rather than partisan and ideologically polarized.

In the book, I warn of the effect these hate-filled, ideologically fueled, and anti-American narratives are having on our servicemembers. I document how military culture is changing in noticeable and unfortunate ways, and that we are eroding the confidence military professionals place in their oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. And I document that many servicemembers are losing their desire to serve in our armed forces. This is

true regardless of their political affiliation. The Defense Department was once (even until fairly recently) an honorably non-partisan institution but is now being turned into a politicized battleground. This must stop or it may destroy the unity of our armed forces.

As you and other elected officials are becoming concerned about the threats I have described and because my efforts to combat CRT-type indoctrination within the military have been futile, I am providing this information to you hoping you will investigate it and get Congress to take corrective action. I forego further detail here and instead point you to the attachments containing the two formal complaints filed with the USAF and USSF IG offices that I mentioned above, and the military's dismissal of those complaints. I hope you will ask military senior leaders to explain why they dismissed those complaints, whether they condone the actions described in those complaints, and what corrective action, if any, was taken or will be taken regarding the matters described in those complaints. But more importantly, I hope you will investigate why the United States military is providing Diversity and Inclusion trainings that are steeped in CRT, which is rooted in Marxism.

Thank you for your assistance with these matters.



Matthew L. Lohmeier, Lieutenant Colonel  
United States Space Force

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

Did you file an article 138 complaint, which under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, allows servicemembers to seek redress for a wrong conducted by a commander?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I did not, Senator.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Okay. So, why did you not?

Mr. LOHMEIER. There are many months in question, the time-frame that we're talking about here, but at the time that we separated after I had been relieved of my command, and there was a command directed investigation about me as well as the general officer that had relieved me of my command, it was a traumatic period, a hard period of hardship for my family and my children.

Senator DUCKWORTH. No, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about when you were writing the book and you were still in uniform. You chose to write—you made the decision to write the book because you said there was no other way for you to address your concerns. You said that you did reach out to Members of Congress, which is news to me, but you did not file an Article 138 complaint prior to writing your book and speaking in public.

Mr. LOHMEIER. I understand. I misunderstood your question, Senator. My answer to your previous question, you asked if I had considered reaching out to Members of Congress, and the answer to that question was yes.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Did you do it?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I had communication with Members of Congress, and I'd be happy to provide that to you. I exhausted all of the means that I understood available to me. I'd been counseling with the Base IG, Space Force IG, Base legal, Pentagon Public Affairs,

and the entire chain of command to include members of the Joint Chiefs before I published the book.

Senator DUCKWORTH. So, nobody talked to you about Article 138 complaint, which is a recourse that you could have taken?

Mr. LOHMEIER. If that was discussed specifically Article 138, I don't recall the circumstances as to why I chose what I did at that time regarding Article 138, specifically,

Senator DUCKWORTH. I'm concerned that you didn't follow through on all of the recourses that were available to you. You are allowed to have your personal views, but there are rules governing how public servicemembers can be in opposition to lawful orders with your actions, you signal to those under your command that it is okay to be insubordinate. As Peter Feaver, a scholar who served in George W. Bush's National Security Council has written, and I quote, "Military officers who believe that the policymaking process is heading in a bad direction have ample recourse to advise within the chain of command if their advice is not heeded. The country would not be better served by senior officers provoking a civil military crisis to advertise their policy differences with civilian leaders."

You were relieved of command, not for your beliefs, but for how you chose to express them on Active Duty while holding a position of authority over others. That is not persecution, that is accountability, and if as a former commander you cannot recount the basic recourses available to servicemembers, how can we expect you to lead airmen and guardians? You were relieved of command, not for your beliefs, but for how you chose to express them on Active Duty while holding a position of authority over others.

So, if it's true that you followed these steps, you still decided to circumvent the chain of command while still on Active Duty to speak up publicly without informing your leadership. You could have resigned and spoken out, or continued serving and kept your mouth shut, but instead, you decided to continue serving and violate your professional ethics. You are allowed to have those personal views. But there are rules governing how servicemembers can be in opposition to lawful orders.

So, I sort of feel like you broke the rules. There are ways to do this, and you chose to instead circumvent those rules that sets the standards for the people that you are about to take charge of to continue to circumvent the rules, and that is not conducive to good order and discipline within the military. Do you understand that? That is my concern.

Mr. LOHMEIER. If Chairman Wicker's okay with me responding, I'd be happy to.

Chairman WICKER. Sure. I think the question is; do you understand that that's her point of view?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I understand your view, Senator. I think in value or in principle, you and I agree on many things that you've said. I will reject the idea that I did anything unlawful, unethical, or publicly contrary to—I never publicly criticized my chain of command. I never publicly was politically partisan while acting in an official capacity. Both of those allegations were the reasons I was relieved of my command that I wasn't found guilty of either of those things.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you, and thank you, Senator Duckworth. I think the distinguished ranking member has a followup question.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lohmeier, earlier this year, it came to my attention that current serving military personnel have been receiving emails, threatening them with being fired for supporting the current DOD policies. One email that was sent to a military officer with the subject line, "Clean House," states, "With the incoming Administration looking to remove disloyal, corrupt, traitorous liberal officers, such as yourself, we will certainly be putting your name onto the list of those personnel to be removed. We know you support the woke, DEI policies and will ensure you never again influence anyone in the future. You and—" the redacted spouse's name—"will be lucky if you are able to correct your military retirement."

Mr. Lohmeier, if you became aware of someone sending threatening emails to currently serving officers, what would you do in your capacity?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Well, Senator, I think the way in which leaders go about communicating with their troops matters a great deal. Having been in command, there's no way to retain the respect of your troops if you don't communicate respectfully to men and women of every background.

I don't particularly appreciate the tone in which that email was written. I don't know who wrote it. I'm not familiar with the background of that email, but I will say once again that I share this committee's commitment to an apolitical military. I don't believe witch hunts are healthy in the military. I think that unity is our strength. I believe that when we start to go down the path of discussing partisan politics and ideology, it divides men and women. That's why the American people tend to be so divided. They have a full range of expression of these ideas.

Our uniform wearers, to Senator Duckworth's point, ought to be focused on their mission and not being caught up in this kind of rhetoric. But if these kinds of things came to my attention, then of course they deserve attention. Every man and woman in uniform deserves to be treated with respect.

Senator REED. Do you believe it would be disqualifying firing for someone on Active service in the military as an officer listed or civilian if they sent such an email?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Notionally, I think the context always matters, Senator, and I've expressed that I don't necessarily—I wouldn't write an email with that tone, personally. I'll speak for myself. What's qualifying and disqualifying at a very high level is whether or not people are acting ethically and legally, upholding the oath to defend and support the Constitution and following the lawful orders of those that have been appointed over them to lead them. That's what every enlisted and officer, troupe across every branch of the military is taught to believe in.

It's that, "Hey, whatever baggage I bring to my service in uniform, politically, ideologically, I leave that at the doorstep. I get the same ugly haircut as those next to me. I wear the same uniform, bleed the same color, focus on the same mission, and we care about readiness and lethality."

Senator REED. Well, I too believe that context is important. If you look at the context, particularly your comments since you were left the service, they created an impression of someone committed to, frankly, a reprisal, revenge, weeding out from the service those people who did not ascribe to your thoughts. You said it in your—in so many words, in your X filings and in your book.

I find it very difficult that suddenly you will have this transition, this enlightenment that will disabuse you of all those notions and make you someone who you claim today is apolitical, not concerned about the extracurricular activities of people in terms of their political positions, et cetera. That's totally inconsistent what you've done over the last 4 years. I think you've made that evident today.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Senator, am I allowed to respond?

Senator REED. Of course. That's the system here.

Mr. LOHMEIER. I'll say briefly that I really do believe—one, I believe that everyone who's been in this hearing understands that I'm authentic, and try and be true in what I say. Second, I believe that every man and woman that's ever worked with me would be glad to welcome me back into public service.

Senator REED. Does that include the people that you've by name threatened to—

Mr. LOHMEIER. I've not by name threatened anybody, Senator.

Senator REED. Well, you've certainly indicated your displeasure with lots of people by name.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Well, I'm displeased with the cowardly behavior of many people, but I've never threatened anybody. I think that we have many great men and women in uniform, high and low, who all have the right to try their best to serve this country faithfully. I don't necessarily agree with all the decisions they make, but I'm not a vindictive person. I think that men and women in uniform will be very grateful to see me come back into service, if I'm confirmed.

Senator REED. Well, thank you for your testimony, gentlemen. I will have questions for Mr. Overbaugh and Mr. Zimmerman. Thank you very much, sir.

Chairman WICKER. Thank you very much. This concludes today's hearing. I'd like to thank our witnesses for their testimony. For the information of members, questions for the record will be due to the committee within two business days of the conclusion of this hearing, which is right now we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:41 a.m., the Committee adjourned.]

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[Prepared questions submitted to Mr. Matthew L. Lohmeier by Chairman Wicker prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

## QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*Question.* What is your understanding of the current duties and functions of the Under Secretary of the Air Force?

*Answer.* According to Title 10, the Under Secretary shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of the Air Force may prescribe. To my understanding, the Under Secretary of the Air Force is responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the Department of the Air Force (DAF), including the organizing, training, and equipping of the Department's approximately 700,000 Active Duty, Guard and Reserve airmen and guardians as well as Department civilians. The Under Secretary serves as the "Chief Management Officer", overseeing the Department's budget and directing strategy and policy development, risk management, acquisitions, investments and the management of human resources across the enterprise.

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

*Answer.* I have served in both the United States Air Force and the United States Space Force. In the former, I served as an F-15C pilot; in the latter, I served as a squadron commander of a space-based missile warning system, including a multi-billion-dollar satellite architecture responsible for the security of the U.S. homeland. In both of these roles, I have accumulated a deep background in strategy, policy, operations, and issues relating to human resources of our airmen and guardians. This includes the welfare of the servicemembers and their families.

*Question.* If confirmed to be the Under Secretary of the Air Force, what role would you establish for yourself in the overall supervision of the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force and the Air Force General Counsel?

*Answer.* To my knowledge, the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force and the Air Force General Counsel report directly to the Secretary of the Air Force. If confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with them in realizing the vision of the Secretary and synchronizing the Department's efforts across all of their respective portfolios. I would represent their equities in senior Department of Defense governance bodies focused on the budget, policy, strategy, personnel and other matters.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would bring my extensive experience as a leader in both the Air and Space Forces to realize the Secretary of Defense's vision of reinvigorating the warrior ethos of the Department. Furthermore, I would leverage the relationships with my Under Secretary counterparts to ensure that all services are synchronized in realizing the Secretary's vision.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including investments, business ties, family relationships, or other connections that could be perceived as influencing your 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.* I will comply with all recusal requirements under 18 U.S.C. § 208.

*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.

## MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

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

*Answer.* To my knowledge, the Department of the Air Force faces several modernization requirements that need to be addressed simultaneously. This includes nuclear modernization, which I believe is long overdue. The Air Force maintains two legs of the nuclear triad and a substantial portion of its command and control. Ensuring our nuclear deterrence is unquestioned is a top priority. Additionally, we

must ensure our conventional capabilities are modernized for the high-end fight. This includes the Next-Gen Air Dominance (NGAD) program and a resilient space architecture that denies any so-called “first-mover advantage.”

As the Department moves forward on these modernization efforts for the long-term, I acknowledge that both the Air and Space Force must be ready to “fight to-night” with what we already have in our arsenal. This means that—in the near-term—I will prioritize the readiness of our airmen and guardians and restore a warrior ethos throughout the Department.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I suspect that the modernization of the nuclear portfolio and ensuring the resilience of our space-based architecture will be the most pressing challenges.

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

Answer. For nuclear modernization, I plan on executing the vision of the Secretary of the Air Force. If confirmed in this role, I believe that my greatest contribution will be on communicating that nuclear modernization is not an option; it is the very foundation of our national security strategy—and we must get it right. This will require more than just an all-of DAF effort, or even an all-of-DoD effort; this requires buy-in from Congress as well as the many communities across the country that host these capabilities. I look forward to working with this Committee and this Congress, as well as civil leaders across the country, to prioritize this.

On resilient space architectures, I believe that we must continue to build partnerships with the commercial sector, leveraging what is available and only building what we absolutely must.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

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

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

Answer. I strongly believe that China poses the greatest military threat to our forces. While the United States was focused on countering violent extremists in the Middle East, China took advantage of the last two decades by modernizing its forces and learning from the successes and failures of the U.S. military. Ensuring that our modernization timelines are ahead of theirs is crucial. If confirmed, I commit to assisting the Secretary and the Department on shortening those timelines.

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

Though I have not been fully briefed on the Russian military threat, evidence in open-source reporting suggests that Russia continues to be an acute threat to Europe and our many partners and allies there. While the military threat is real, I am perhaps more troubled by the pursuit of asymmetric advantages in space, cyber and electromagnetic warfare.

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

Answer. Based on what is publicly available, I have become concerned with the growing cooperation among these actors. This has been exhibited specifically in the conflict in Ukraine, to include soldiers from North Korea and drones coming from Iran and China. If faced alone, the U.S. maintains overmatch, but growing cooperation allows this group to cover down on shortfalls in each country’s capabilities. If confirmed, I commit to assisting the Secretary in organizing, training, and equipping our airmen and guardians to ensure advantages based on this collusion are never realized.

*Question.* In 2024, the Air Force announced a refocus on “Great Power Competition,” with a series of reorganizations intended to modernize force structure and force design, to align to the 2022 NDS.

In your view, has the GPC initiative been successful?

Answer. To my understanding, the Secretary of Defense has directed a pause in the implementation of the Department’s initiatives to “re-optimize” for Great Power Competition. I have not been fully briefed on the progress made in those efforts to this point. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the progress and making a threat-informed analysis of any future efforts in this vein. I commit to sharing the results of that assessment with this Committee and this Congress.

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

*Answer.* In my opinion, the role of the Department is to achieve a level of readiness, capability, and capacity that will deter China from pursuing military aggression to achieve its national security objectives. This requires an unquestionable nuclear deterrent and a conventional force able to achieve effects for the joint force anytime, anywhere. No joint military operation can be conducted without some element of the Department of the Air Force—a claim no other department can make.

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

*Answer.* I have not been fully briefed on the size, structure, and resourcing of the Department. However, based on what is publicly available, I am concerned with the fact that our Air Force fleets are smaller than they have ever been and that their average age, in most cases, is older than desired. Lower mission capable rates are reported frequently and the costs of maintaining aging fleets keeps resources from our modernization efforts.

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

*Answer.* There are three lessons I have taken away from what is reported in the conflict in Ukraine that are of importance to the Department. First, the increased proliferation and usage of unmanned systems—and their successes—mean we must analyze what the proper mix of our manned and unmanned Air Force fleet needs to be. Second, the resilience of our space-based architecture needs to be a focus area, as actors are becoming more adept at jamming position, navigation and timing services, like those provided by our GPS constellations. Third, the contests in the electromagnetic spectrum mean the Department will need to re-evaluate our investments there.

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

*Answer.* I do not have enough information to make a judgment on the soundness of our analytic capabilities and tools. However, if confirmed, I commit to reviewing those within the Department, conducting my own assessment, and will commit to sharing the results of that assessment with this Committee.

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

*Answer.* I have not received briefings regarding operational plans or the Air Force's ability to meet the demands therein. However, as a private observer, the small fleet sizes, the ages of those fleets, and the mission capable rates of those fleets are concerning. If confirmed, I commit to assisting the Secretary in addressing those issues and will be a vocal champion for the resources needed to solve them.

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

*Answer.* While I applaud the Department's efforts to focus their two Services and the Secretariat on high-end conflict and competition, I have not been fully briefed on the implementation. I understand there has been a pause directed by the Secretary of Defense on some of these efforts. If confirmed, I plan on working with the Secretary to evaluate the efficacy of current efforts, analyzing any proposed efforts that are currently on pause, and sharing the results of my assessment with this Committee.

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

*Answer.* While my familiarity with civilian leaders of the militaries of other nations is not substantial—given my years of being a private citizen since leaving the U.S. Space Force—I recognize the importance of leveraging these relationships to ensure shared security objectives are met throughout the world. The acute threat posed by Russia demands that we maintain a very tight military relationship with our NATO allies and other partners who face unchecked aggression. Additionally, Chinese rhetoric and actions require that we bolster the relationships with our treaty allies in the Indo-Pacific as well as other friends and partners who are observing malign behavior in that region. In light of this, I would prioritize forums like the Munich Security Conference, the Quad, and ASEAN, and I would ensure the many

joint and combined exercises we conduct with these partners are not only maintained, but strengthened.

#### AIR FORCE READINESS

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

Answer. To my knowledge, the Department of the Air Force is ready to deter, defend, and fight today. However, our advantage is shrinking, and overmatch is a concern of mine. If confirmed, I see my role as assisting the Secretary in enhancing that overmatch for our Air and Space Forces.

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

Answer. The Secretary of Defense has been very clear in focusing on re-establishing deterrence, a warrior ethos, and rebuilding our military. Due to this, Air and Space Force should be trained and ready to execute five core missions: air & space superiority, global precision attack, rapid global mobility, global intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), and command and control. Together, these functions provide a range of pre-emptive and reactive options to the National Command Authority and allow the Department to integrate with the joint force in peacetime, crisis, strategic deterrence, and project power for high-end conflict. As we maintain readiness, individual units may not train to all five core functions, but as a department we stand ready to provide Air Superiority, Global Precision Attack, Rapid Global Mobility, Global ISR, and Command and Control, homeland, anywhere in the world, in support of U.S. national interests.

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

Answer. The Air Force analytic and wargaming tools are essential to understanding our readiness and modernization portfolios and to make the right decisions that save taxpayers money and ensure the U.S. unparalleled advantage. While good, additional capability and capacity is required to modernize our wargaming, link models, and improve our ability for rapid, timely analysis. We require sophisticated capability tradeoff tools that enable a deep understanding of risk-to-mission, risk-to-force, and the true costs associated with different force structure choices at the speed a scale required to for thorough, data-driven judgments that outpace our adversaries. To best support the joint force, our Air Force requires advanced wargaming tools and dedicated spaces, rapid modeling and simulation capabilities, improved and cost-efficient data architecture, and interconnected tradeoff tools.

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

Answer. In the near term, the Air Force must focus on developing readiness for a peer threat while making smart risk decisions to prevent overconsuming current force readiness. To ensure future readiness, I believe the Air Force should focus efforts toward finding balance between readiness and modernization. This is a tough challenge because modernization cannot happen only in time of need and should not be conducted across the force simultaneously. If confirmed, I will work with Air Force leadership to phase in modernization that minimizes impact upon total force readiness and take only calculated and appropriate risk to either.

#### BUDGET

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

Answer. If confirmed as Under Secretary, I will collaborate with military leaders to ensure Air and Space Force budgets prioritize homeland defense and deterring China and other adversaries. The DAF must align with Defense strategy, maintain readiness, and modernize to meet evolving threats. DAF must maintain air and space superiority to project power and support the Joint Force. I look forward to ensuring the resources given by Congress are used efficiently to maximize the DAF's effectiveness.

#### ACQUISITION

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

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

Answer. Delivering the capabilities our warfighters need on time and within resources requires a collaborative effort between military, civilian, and industry stakeholders. Strong and decisive civilian leadership is necessary to ensure these efforts are executed with discipline and rigor. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of the Air Force's Senior Acquisition Executives to ensure cost, schedule, and performance is maintained within our acquisition system.

*Question.* As Under Secretary of the Air Force, what would be your role in the Air Force acquisition process—including in the processes of defining requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?

Answer. If confirmed, I will fulfill my role in the acquisition process as assigned to me by the Secretary of the Air Force and as prescribed by 10 U.S.C. § 9015. This will include executing all aspects of acquisition and budgeting as requested by the Secretary and in accordance with department policy. Additionally, I will work the Secretary of the Air Force, the Service Chiefs for the Air Force and the Space Force, and their staffs, to ensure requirements, acquisition, and budgets align.

*Question.* As confirmed, what specific actions would you take to improve each of the three aspects of the Air Force acquisition process—requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?

Answer. If confirmed, I will team with the Assistant Secretaries for Financial Management; Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics; and Space Acquisition and Integration to review current processes and identify where there is room for improvement. Next, I will work with them to develop potential efforts for consideration by the Secretary and support the decision throughout implementation. We must ensure we maximize our budget resources to deliver effective programs that meet requirements.

*Question.* What specific measures would you recommend to ensure producibility and speed to field are considered for program requirements in the Air Force acquisition system?

Answer. Efficient production is a key factor in delivering warfighter capabilities in an affordable manner within a relevant timeframe. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary, Department of the Air Force leaders, and industry to ensure requirements prioritize producibility, agility, and speed in the Air Force acquisition system.

*Question.* What metrics are used to measure the success of rapid acquisition projects? How is accountability ensured to maintain quality and performance standards while accelerating the acquisition timeline?

Answer. Success in rapid acquisition projects hinges on balancing speed with effectiveness. Several key metrics are used to measure this success including cost, schedule, and performance. If confirmed, I will work with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment as well as Service Acquisition Executives to ensure rapid acquisition projects are executed with discipline and rigor.

*Question.* How will you seek to balance the need to rapidly acquire and field innovative systems while ensuring acquisition programs stay on budget and schedule?

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

*Question.* What are your views on the appropriate roles of OSD developmental and operational testing organizations with respect to testing of Air Force systems?

Answer. Collaboration with our teammates in OSD development and test organizations is crucial for ensuring effective use of defense funding for next-generation warfighting capabilities. As the Air Force prioritizes rapid capability development, OSD guidance may require streamlining to expedite testing and evaluation without compromising thorough oversight.

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

Answer. I believe the developmental and operational test and evaluation communities are critical stakeholders within acquisition processes and play a key role in ensuring the timely deployment of systems that deliver operational advantages to our warfighters while meeting their requirements. For any program, regardless of its structure, the sequencing and content of testing should be customized to the spe-

cific program, considering factors such as technical and operational risks, the urgency of operational needs, and the efficiency of the testing process.

*Question.* In which areas, if any, do you feel the Air Force should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?

*Answer.* In my opinion, faster capability delivery requires streamlined developmental and operational testing using real-time data analytics and AI-driven assessments for rapid feedback and assured mission effectiveness.

*Question.* To what extent should the Air Force exploit non-developmental or commercial off-the-shelf solutions to meet Air Force requirements? Would this put capabilities into the hands of airmen and guardians more quickly, in your view?

*Answer.* I believe the Department of the Air Force should exploit non-developmental items (NDI) and commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions where feasible, balancing the benefits of rapid acquisition and cost savings against potential drawbacks. Prioritizing readily available solutions can indeed put capabilities into the hands of airmen and guardians more quickly.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you accelerate the development of these new capabilities?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would advocate for simplifying and accelerating the acquisition process for NDI/COTS solutions. This includes reducing bureaucratic hurdles, streamlining documentation requirements, and empowering program managers to make rapid decisions. Exploring and expanding the use of Other Transaction Authorities (OTAs) and similar flexible acquisition mechanisms would be a priority.

#### REQUIREMENTS

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

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

*Answer.* In my opinion, top-level requirements could be written in broad mission areas to allow the acquisition community to decompose them in ways that allow for rapid technological insertion, increased adaptation of commercial capabilities, and the flexibility to trade performance for speed in certain circumstances. I believe a robust discussion of the reforms proposed in the FoRGED Act and the report directed under Section 811 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 will allow the Military Services to work with Congress on potential process reforms.

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

*Answer.* The Joint Staff (JS) acts as the integrator for service needs, ensuring the services are working together to provide effective mission solutions as a joint team. Furthermore, the JS must provide oversight, ensuring the voice of the joint warfighter is front and center in the requirements process. In addition, the JS ensures the voices of all Services and Combatant Commands are taken into consideration and manages the process of joint requirements development. The Space Force has unique authorities in the requirements process due to the designation of the Chief of Space Operations (CSO) as Force Design Architect for the Armed Forces, and as the Joint Space Integrator, which provide him broad latitude to capture and satisfy joint warfighting gaps that can be filled with space capabilities along with developing Service specific requirements.

#### AUDIT

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

*Answer.* To my knowledge, the Air Force has made substantial audit progress, with roughly 70 percent or so of its general fund balance sheet audit-ready. If confirmed, I will prioritize completing an audit quickly, leveraging industry tools and software to accelerate the process.

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

*Answer.* Annual audits drive positive change, bolstering mission readiness while streamlining operations. Pursuing a clean audit opinion enhances Air Force accountability for assets (aircraft, munitions, satellites, engines, property), directly impacting mission effectiveness.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary to establish Air Force accountability through new governance, strict remediation timelines for senior leaders, and targeted investments to achieve a clean audit by the 2028 congressional mandate.

*Question.* Based on your experience, how do you see improved data from Air Force financial management IT systems that support audit help Air Force decisionmaking and readiness?

*Answer.* In my opinion, auditable financial IT systems improve readiness reporting (asset status), budget accuracy (focusing on real needs), and vendor negotiations (cost-effective mission support).

*Question.* As the Air Force continues down the path to a clean audit, there are still lessons that can be gleaned beyond the end goal of a clean audit opinion.

Based on your experience, how do you anticipate operationalizing any intermediate lessons from audit into the Air Force' overall management reform objectives?

*Answer.* My experience here is limited, but I believe a clean audit opinion demonstrates a level of organizational competence and control directly supporting readiness efforts through efficient business operations. This approach enables the DAF to quickly adapt to change while maintaining a consistent readiness posture.

#### AIR FORCE PROGRAMS

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

*Answer.* The Air Force needs a mission-driven research and development (R&D) approach (science and technology, prototyping, experimentation). If confirmed, I will collaborate with the Secretary and Acquisition Executives on a risk/mission-balanced portfolio addressing near/long-term needs aligned with interim National Defense Strategy guidance.

*Question.* Where do you believe are the greatest gaps that remain between required and current capability in both the Air and Space Forces?

*Answer.* Any USSF capability gap would be concerning. We must develop both offensive and defensive space control for any potential conflict and for day-to-day operational freedom. Enhanced resilience, via proliferated constellations, commercial capabilities, and protection against kinetic and non-kinetic threats, is absolutely crucial.

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

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

*Answer.* In my opinion, the Air Force requires sufficient 4th and 5th generation aircraft located and operated in areas suited to their capabilities. Fourth generation aircraft have many roles to play, and where those roles exist, they should be performed by 4th generation—not 5th generation—aircraft in order to preserve 5th generation aircraft for missions only they can perform. From a capabilities perspective, our 4th Generation aircraft still have an active role to play in all but the densest and most advanced threat environments around the world. Where the threat increases, specifically as we move closer to Chinese mainland, the integration of 5th generation capabilities becomes more important. But the question of fighter fleet composition isn't just about capability, it's also about managing the overall health of an aging aircraft fleet. We need to continually replace 4th generation fighters with 5th generation fighters over time, not just to address a growing, proliferating adversary threat, but also to efficiently and effectively manage readiness and sustainment over the coming decades.

*Question.* Given the importance of extending the range of U.S. aircraft, what do you believe to be the overall tanker requirement for the Air Force? At what rate and on what schedule must the Air Force procure the new KC-46 to meet that requirement?

*Answer.* Global Air Force deployments rely on aerial refueling. Tankers extend the reach of fighters, bombers, reconnaissance, and cargo aircraft. A robust, adaptable tanker force is crucial for future conflicts. Tankers must refuel receivers when and wherever they need gas, ensuring Joint Force deterrence. Studies show benefits from tankers with enhanced battlespace awareness, survivability systems. KC-46A procurement, KC-135 modernization continue. Given tanker criticality, the Air Force needs all current and modernized assets, ensuring no capability gaps.

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

What are your views as to the appropriate balance of contract and organic adversary air capability?

*Answer.* The Air Force prioritizes adversary air for combat training. Ideally, organic generation (unit sorties/aggressor force) would suffice. From what I understand, aircraft availability and instructor pilot manning necessitate contracted adversary air.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force properly addresses the challenges associated with the availability of adversary air to ensure that its 5th generation fighters are properly trained and ready for combat?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would consider pursuing a professional 5th-generation aggressor force while also funding contract adversary air to support pilot production, absorption, and readiness, aligned with budget priorities.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force properly addresses the challenges associated with the availability of adversary air to ensure that its 5th generation fighters are properly trained and ready for combat?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would consider pursuing a professional 5th generation aggressor force while funding contract adversary air to support Air Force pilot production, absorption, and readiness commensurate with budget priorities.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the readiness of the Air Force heavy bomber fleet? As to each of the airframes listed below, what improvements would you direct, if confirmed, to increase the mission readiness of each airframe (B-1, B-2, B52)?

*Answer.* Currently, I am not aware of the challenges facing the heavy bomber air frames and am unable to assess the appropriate improvements that would enhance the readiness of the fleet. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the readiness of our bomber fleet by working with the Secretary, Chief of Staff, and other the Air Force leadership.

#### MUNITIONS

*Question.* Air Force munitions inventories—particularly for precision guided munitions and air-to-air missiles—have declined significantly due to high operational usage, insufficient procurement, poor program execution, and a requirements system that does not adequately account for the ongoing need to transfer munitions to our allies. Due to draw down of certain weapons systems to support Ukraine, the Department of Defense has begun to increase production and bolster the industrial base.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would review procurement plans, ensuring maximum production of critical weapons and looking to expand capacity as needed and where possible. I would also explore affordable mass weapons and expanded munitions production overall.

*Question.* What changes in budgeting and acquisition processes would you recommend to facilitate faster Air Force munitions replenishment rates?

*Answer.* Long lead times hinder munitions replenishment. If confirmed, I will explore solutions, including advance/multi-year procurement and industrial base expansion.

*Question.* What is your view on the implications of DOD's self-imposed restrictions on area attack and denial munitions, which are intended to be consistent with the terms of the Ottawa Convention, to which the United States is not a party?

*Answer.* To my knowledge, the US hasn't signed or ratified the Ottawa Treaty. If confirmed, I will ensure Air Force compliance with DOD directives, including munitions limitations.

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

*Answer.* The Air Force will collaborate with Allies and partners to project and formally submit long-term munitions needs. This demand signal enables US industrial base expansion, engaging lower-tier suppliers. Multi-year procurements provide industry stability for infrastructure, workforce, and supply chain investments, supporting defense industrial base revitalization.

*Question.* The Fiscal Year 2024 NDAA required the Department of Defense to establish a pilot program to incorporate CL-20 into existing munitions.

What is your understanding of the efforts by the Air Force to execute any activities under this pilot in order to improve the explosive yield or operational envelope of any of its munitions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review Air Force efforts to understand the utility of CL-20 to improve the performance of existing munitions and for weapons currently in development.

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

Answer. I am aware of research on improved warheads and propellants for increased effectiveness and range solely based on publicly available information. If confirmed, I will ensure Air Force collaboration with industry to identify, develop, and implement these advancements.

#### SPACE

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

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

Answer. The 2022 NDS recognized space as key to joint warfighting and highlights growing Chinese space capabilities. Secretary Hegseth emphasized space's importance, vowing investment in offensive and defensive capabilities. If confirmed, I will provide inputs in support of prioritizing a secure space environment for the US, our Allies, and partners, reflecting its growing importance.

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

Answer. I believe China and Russia will continue to use coercion to undermine US partnerships. This is particularly true in the space domain, which is crucial to US security and prosperity. Achieving space superiority is vital for the Air Force and the Joint Force overall. If confirmed, I will work to ensure a robust US force structure with offensive and defensive space capabilities to achieve national security objectives.

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

Answer. Space is becoming more accessible for a greater number of actors. North Korea and Iran, though not rivaling great powers, exploit space and possess counterspace technology (e.g., jamming). Any actor can leverage space tech (navigation, communications, imagery) via smartphones, potentially challenging US interests. China's space expansion, particularly in developing nations, threatens US space influence, in my opinion.

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

Answer. The USSF must leverage private and commercial space industry innovation and take advantage of agile acquisition approaches. Driving speed into our acquisitions allows the Space Force to deliver new capabilities faster to outpace U.S. adversaries and maintain the technological advantage received from space. If confirmed, I will work with the office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, the other Departments, and with congressional stakeholders to implement policy and statutory reforms and integrate commercial space solutions needed to support moving space capabilities to orbit faster and cheaper.

*Question.* The Space force is now acquiring space systems for protect and defend missions no different than any other weapon system of the Air Force.

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

Answer. The Space Force is rapidly developing its acquisition processes for space-based weapon systems, but the unique features of the space domain require tailored testing and evaluation approaches. Increased resources and infrastructure for space-specific testing, including innovative methodologies and expanded capabilities, are

crucial for robust assessments. Continuous adaptation and refinement of these processes will be essential for the Space Force to effectively deliver capabilities to Combatant Commands. This iterative approach will ensure the Space Force can meet the evolving demands of space-based defense.

*Question.* What recommendations would you make to this acquisition and testing process to improve its effectiveness in supporting the combatant commands?

*Answer.* The rapid pace of emerging technologies from adversaries requires an increasingly agile acquisition and testing process to integrate and operate capabilities that support the requirements needed by combatant commanders to meet warfighting timelines. If confirmed, I would review the current processes for acquisition and test and evaluation, work to reduce bureaucratic obstacles, and promote collaboration and integration with commercial capabilities to improve the Department's support to combatant commands and ensure they have the capabilities needed in the Joint fight.

*Question.* What is your vision for the ideal relationship between the Space Force and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)? How will you minimize duplication of effort between the organizations?

*Answer.* If confirmed, my vision is to ensure the Space Force works across the national security space community, including the NRO, to efficiently acquire and deploy the capabilities the guardians need to maintain the U.S.'s advantage in space. To minimize duplicative efforts with the NRO, I would prioritize a comprehensive review of current integration efforts to determine how the Department of the Air Force could better collaborate with its mission partners to successfully achieve this vision.

#### CYBER AND ELECTRONIC WARFARE

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

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

*Answer.* As mentioned, the role of the PCA is codified in law. If confirmed, I will advocate for the PCA to continue providing trusted advice on all cyber matters impacting the DAF.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will recommend to the Secretary that we maintain the PCA's role as an independent cyber advisor within the DAF's leadership structure.

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

*Answer.* In the current resource constrained environment, the DAF must field emerging technologies and novel solutions that enable warfighting and the warfighter. There are numerous challenges resident in the cyberspace domain, however top challenges include keeping pace with malicious cyber actors to ensure warfighting systems have integrity and are available to support warfighting requirements; the ability of the AF and USSF to provide fully trained and equipped forces for presentation to the Joint Force; and, the DAF's ability to address the resources required to secure, protect and defend Air and Space capabilities. The PCA's statutory role as an independent advisor is crucial to providing unbiased advice and feedback on recommendations from the Services on proposed solutions to the challenges across the cyberspace domain.

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

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

*Answer.* The DAF is focused on implementing the current DOD Cyber Strategy. If confirmed, I will advocate for continuous reassessment of current and future investment strategies, resources, and policies necessary to mitigate any gaps that exist in our capability and capacity to maintain warfighting readiness and lethality across the cyberspace domain.

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

*Answer.* Protecting Americans requires prioritizing cybersecurity. Our military and civilian workforce is key. If confirmed, I will champion cyber workforce modernization: streamlining careers, deepening expertise (via industry/academia collabo-

ration), aligning roles with classifications, improving talent management, enabling outside transitions to public service, and securing competitive incentives and development programs to attract and retain top talent.

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

*Answer.* Air and Space Force missions require information dominance. JADC2 and GIISR development must consider system interconnectedness and actionable information for timely decisions. Future operations need near real-time, accurate tactical information globally, without disruptive classification or sharing barriers. If confirmed, I will leverage partnerships to field information systems optimizing air and space power, enabling joint and combined forces to achieve national security objectives.

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

*Answer.* Cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility. If confirmed, I will empower the workforce to identify and mitigate risks, fostering shared responsibility for system and information security. We will embed cybersecurity in acquisitions, prioritize critical vulnerability investments, and enforce accountability for negligence. I will champion cybersecurity in exercises and inspections, informing investments. This fosters cybersecurity ownership, keeping the Air Force ahead of threats.

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

*Answer.* To my knowledge, the Department's new EMS superiority policy addresses contested spectrum, restructuring/modernizing EW, and promoting EMS/EW awareness (training/doctrine). This aligns with the interim National Defense Strategy guidance. EW is crucial; Air and Space Force investment in it is essential. Joint and combined operations require EMS-focused, software-defined, rapidly updatable capabilities. If confirmed, I will prioritize EW, supporting innovation and new doctrine in this area.

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

*Answer.* Enhanced Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (EMSO) training (operational/tactical/personnel) is likely needed. A finite spectrum and increasing demand (military/civilian/commercial) creates congestion. Training is constrained by physics, technology, and domestic/international law/policy. Collaboration with stakeholders is needed to find realistic joint training solutions minimizing impact on other spectrum users.

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

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will review the Department's electronic warfare/spectrum operations posture, focusing on cross-domain integration, the 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing's support capacity, and the feasibility and benefits of a dedicated career field.

#### UNMANNED SYSTEMS

*Question.* What is your opinion on the manned and unmanned teaming envisioned by the Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) program?

*Answer.* In my opinion, to dominate in contested and highly contested environments, the Air Force must innovate with regard to risk-tolerant and runway-flexible capabilities that strengthen combat power generation, credible mass, and forward posture. Collaborative Combat Aircraft, teaming with crewed platforms like the F-22, F-35, and F-47, represent an innovative capability that can be purchased at lower costs than a comparable crewed platform, will help reduce our dependence on

traditional Main Operating Bases, and will increase the lethality and survivability of our more exquisite, crewed platforms during conflict.

*Question.* Do you see utility in encouraging the Military Services to conduct more joint development in the area of aircraft and unmanned systems?

Answer. There is significant utility in ensuring compatibility and adaptability of unmanned systems across the Joint Force. Similar systems can be used for different service missions; and specific service systems can be used to address gaps in Joint Concepts. Joint development increases alignment, opens options for missions, and targets and helps to give direction and vector to spur growth in the industrial base. While there is benefit in compatibility and adaptability, we must ensure joint development does not increase unit cost or reduce capability.

#### AIR FORCE MILITARY END STRENGTH

*Question.* In your view, is the Air Force's current end strength sufficient to meet national defense objectives? If not, what end strength do you believe is necessary to do so?

Answer. Combatant commanders are calling for more air and space power, not less. Based on publicly available information, I am concerned as to whether the Air Force's current end strength is sufficient to meet national defense objectives, especially when contemplating the prospect of waging conflict in multiple theaters or regions simultaneously. However, I do not, at present, know what that proper end strength is. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to investigate this matter and communicate my findings and recommendations with this committee.

*Question.* How will the continued stand up of the Space Force, and the related transfer of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard personnel, impact Air Force and Space Force end strength requirements over the next 5 years, in your view?

Answer. The capabilities of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard personnel performing space missions is essential. I will ensure DAF submits end strength and resource requests to Congress commensurate with the transfer of space missions and personnel to the Space Force, including end strength adjustments required by Section 514 of the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA as covered space functions transfer from the Air National Guard to the Space Force.

*Question.* What additional force shaping authorities and tools does the Air Force need, in your view? Is the Air Force's current end strength sufficient to meet national defense objectives? If not, what end strength do you believe is necessary?

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

*Question.* What additional force shaping authorities and tools does the Air Force need, in your view?

Answer. I am not aware of any additional authorities needed at this time. If confirmed, I will review force shaping tools, ensuring proper DAF force strength management. I will work with Congress to maintain DAF agility regarding needed force size and skills.

#### AIR FORCE RECRUITING AND RETENTION

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

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

Answer. The Department constantly evaluates recruitment and retention programs, optimizing for talent competition. Recruiting and retention rates are high. If confirmed, I will review these, ensuring we attract and retain high-quality talent needed for national defense.

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

**Answer.** Maintaining readiness while building the future force is crucial. Data-informed recruiting and retention is key. If confirmed, I will assess standards and policies, ensuring they support readiness and warfighting needs.

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

**Answer.** I do not have access to information that would give me a reason to doubt current standards. In my view, we must balance standards with medical science/modernization and force readiness. If confirmed, I will review qualifications and will prioritize this balance, working with DOD to maximize effectiveness and ensure readiness.

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

**Answer.** To my knowledge, Air and Space Force recruiting is on track for fiscal year 2025, with record highs. If confirmed, I will evaluate recruiting personnel, marketing, policies, and programs to ensure we attract the talent needed for warfighter readiness.

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

**Answer.** Developing and retaining personnel requires continuous training, education, and experience, fostering DAF leadership. If confirmed, I will collaborate with development and management experts and career field managers to align officer/enlisted/civilian development with Air and Space Force needs, ensuring robust quality of life and quality of service programs supporting our airmen and guardians and their families.

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

**Answer.** If confirmed, I will evaluate operational requirements, recruiting, retention, and readiness to prioritize strategic force management, quality-of-life, quality-of-service, warrior ethos, and technology/innovation. I will tirelessly advocate for our airmen and guardians, ensuring they have the necessary resources, training, and support.

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

**Answer.** To my understanding, DOD's tier-one recruiting standards (education/aptitude/fitness) are valuable. Robust standards aid initial unit integration, but predicting attrition and success is difficult given evolving warfare and diverse career paths. If confirmed, I will ensure DAF prioritizes meritocracy and refines recruitment metrics.

**Question.** If confirmed, how would you ensure the Air Force and Space Force can continue to bring in new talent, while managing high retention?

**Answer.** If confirmed, I will work with our services to continuously evaluate our recruiting force, our marketing strategies, and our recruiting policies and programs to recruit new talent. We will continuously evaluate our training, education, and experiential development to retain the right leaders, and continuously look at how we are providing quality of life and quality of service to keep retention high.

**Question.** How would an individual's job performance factor into your decisions to grant enlistment extensions or officer continuation?

**Answer.** If confirmed, I would evaluate how job performance is currently considered in Air Force and Space Force retention decisions, recognizing that force structure requirements are also important considerations in granting enlistment extensions and officer continuation to ensure the services maintain necessary manning across career fields.

**Question.** If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Department of the Air Force maintains sufficiently high recruitment and retention standards?

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

*Question.* In your view, what impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the Department of the Air Force have on restricting the number of individuals eligible for military service?

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

*Question.* If confirmed, what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for service in the Air Force or Space Force without degrading the quality of recruits?

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

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

*Answer.* Developing and retaining personnel requires continuous training, education, and experience that fosters DAF leaders. If confirmed, I will collaborate with development and career field managers to align officer, enlisted, and civilian development with Air and Space Force needs, ensuring robust quality of life and quality of service programs.

#### PILOT RETENTION

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

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

*Answer.* I believe airline hiring growth challenges Air Force pilot retention. This represents a risk to critical experience in the force. Congress enabled historically high pilot retention bonuses. If confirmed, I will monitor bonus effectiveness and work with Air Force leaders and Congress to improve pilot production and retention.

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

*Answer.* The Department prioritizes pilot retention (compensation, talent management, quality of life/service), using targeted bonuses, assignment stability and transparency, and a holistic approach. If confirmed, I will monitor these efforts, working with Air Force leaders to ensure effectiveness.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will review whether and/or what additional authorities are needed to address the pilot shortage.

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

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

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

*Answer.* The Air Force's mission requires addressing the pilot shortage. If confirmed, I will consult experts within the Department and externally to enhance pilot pipelines, optimize training, and prioritize retention.

#### AIR FORCE RESERVE COMPONENTS

*Question.* In your view, what is the appropriate relationship between the Active Air Force and the Air Force Reserve and Air Force National Guard?

*Answer.* Active/Guard/Reserve interoperability is crucial. Seamless integration enhances Total Force capability and readiness. If confirmed, I will evaluate component dynamics to leverage each component's unique strengths.

*Question.* What is your vision for the roles and missions of the Air Force Reserve Components? If confirmed, what new objectives would you seek to achieve with re-

spect to the Air Force Reserve Components' organization, force structure, and end strength?

Answer. The Total Force, including the uniquely capable Air Reserve Component, needs roles/missions aligned with interim National Defense Strategic Guidance. The Guard/Reserve provide strategic depth/operational capacity across all missions/domains. If confirmed, I will ensure an integrated Total Force approach to organizing, training, and equipping airmen.

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

Answer. In my opinion, sustained operations tempo creates challenges. If confirmed, I will consult Guard/Reserve leadership, assessing impacts and identifying necessary support for long-term force health.

#### NUCLEAR ENTERPRISE

*Question.* The Air Force is responsible for maintaining and operating two legs of the nuclear triad, including its nuclear weapons and the majority of the 107 nuclear command, control and communications systems that link the President to the nuclear forces. There have been a number of troubling incidents since 2007, including the inadvertent transportation of six nuclear armed AGM-86 cruise missiles without authorization by a B-52 from Minot Air Force Base to Barksdale Air Forces Base, and the shipment of ICBM fuses to Taiwan. There have also been continued reports of low morale and incidents of cheating on exams at ICBM bases. These actions resulted in a loss of confidence and dismissal of the two senior leaders of the Air Force, both the Secretary and the Chief of Staff. They also resulted in number of reviews, including a DOD enterprise review in 2014 by Secretary Hagel. The reviews resulted in such actions as creation of Air Force Global Strike Command, and its elevation to a four-star command, and the establishment of a Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration (A10).

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

Answer. The Secretary (through the Under Secretary and Chief of Staff) ensures nuclear deterrence mission safety, security, reliability, effectiveness and credibility. If confirmed, this will be a top priority.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I would assess implementation and effectiveness of these reforms to determine their positive impact and I commit to sharing the results of that assessment with this Committee.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize monitoring Air Force nuclear enterprise resourcing to ensure sufficient support for mission safety, security, reliability, effectiveness, and credibility.

*Question.* Will you commit that, if confirmed, you will personally visit Air Force nuclear facilities and bases to gain an in-depth understanding of both the infrastructure, hardware, and especially how our airmen operate, maintain and secure them?

Answer. Yes. Strategic nuclear deterrence is a top DAF priority. If confirmed, I will personally visit airmen executing this 24/7 mission, ensuring they have the necessary resources and facilities.

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

Answer. Consistent with the direction of the Secretary, the CSAF and I, if confirmed, will ensure any restructuring of AFGSC will improve the nuclear enterprise obligations to USSTRATCOM and not adversely impact it.

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

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

Answer. Yes, modernizing the nuclear triad and the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons complex is not just a priority, but a necessity for maintaining America's defense superiority. A robust and modern nuclear deterrent is the cornerstone of our national security, and it is essential that we invest in its modernization to stay ahead of emerging threats and maintain our strategic edge. If confirmed, I will assess the status and provide the needed advocacy to continue to have a capable, and ready nuclear deterrent.

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

Answer. As I understand it, the current plan modernizes the triad (delivery systems, warheads, infrastructure). If confirmed, I will review existing nuclear systems and modernization initiatives to best maintain a safe, secure, effective deterrent.

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

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

Answer. Sentinel, certified as essential, underwent restructuring. If confirmed, I will follow Nunn-McCurdy recommendations. ICBM modernization is absolutely foundational to deterrence. I will continue to seek schedule and cost improvements for the program. Success requires coordinated government, industry and community effort for this massive, once-in-a-generation modernization.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the status of the Long-Range Stand-Off (LRSO) program, ensuring on-time delivery of this critical deterrence capability and adequate resourcing.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the B-21 program and work with Air Force leaders and the Commander of USSTRATCOM to assess the total number required for the Joint Force.

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

Answer. To my knowledge, the Air Force has assessed what it would take to achieve full B-52 nuclear reconversion. If confirmed, I will review this assessment and ensure the Air Force is postured and responsive to Presidential direction.

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

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

Answer. Maintaining safe, secure, reliable, effective, and credible nuclear deterrence, including NC3, aligns with the Secretary of Defense's priorities for the Department. If confirmed, I will assess DAF NC3 systems, evaluating their contribution to this deterrence.

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

Answer. I have not yet been fully briefed on this approach. If confirmed, I will review Air Force NC3 modernization programs and their management structures.

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

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the SAOC program, ensuring it delivers the critical capability of a highly survivable command, control, and communications center.

*Question.* Patrols in the missile fields are accomplished using Humvees which are ill-equipped for the long duration patrols, extreme cold and road conditions resulting in accidents and tragic fatalities of missile field Security Forces. The use of Joint Light Tactical Vehicles as a replacement are also ill-suited to this mission, except in certain convoy operations.

Do you support efforts to replace this capability currently underway by the Air Force Global Strike Command with a more commercial solution?

Answer. Yes, I support the efforts of Air Force Global Strike Command to review commercial replacement options. I support continued efforts to determine a suitable commercial replacement for daily site security in missile field operations.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure that the Air Force continues its efforts to improve the training, readiness, morale, welfare, and quality of life of the airmen charged to execute and support the Air Force's nuclear mission?

Answer. If confirmed, my top priorities will be strengthening both mission readiness and family support. To enhance our mission effectiveness, I will focus on fostering a warrior ethos and modernizing training through the integration of cutting-edge technologies. Simultaneously, I am committed to rebuilding vital support systems for military families. This includes expanding access to quality childcare, enhancing spouse employment assistance programs, and streamlining relocation support.

#### CRUISE MISSILE DEFENSE OF THE HOMELAND

*Question.* Former Deputy Secretary of Defense Hicks designated Air Force as the DOD lead for developing a cruise missile defense architecture for the homeland in July 2022.

Where is Air Force on finalizing an architecture?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump's Iron Dome for America Executive Order, also known as the Golden Dome. The comprehensive Golden Dome architecture will include contributions from multiple Services and Agencies, to include the Air and Space Force. The Air Force and Space Force will also contribute to the Golden Dome with sensing, command and control, and interceptor systems to defend the homeland.

*Question.* Has the Unified Command Plan realignment of Space Command as the global integrator for missile defense caused a course correction in this process?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump's Iron Dome for America Executive Order, also known as the Golden Dome. The comprehensive Golden Dome architecture will include contributions from multiple Services and Agencies, to include the Air and Space Force. The Air Force and Space Force will also contribute to the Golden Dome with sensing, command and control, and interceptor systems to defend the Homeland.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps will you take to expedite the completion of a final architecture and develop an acquisition and fielding strategy for the defense system, as well as for the associated domain awareness and missile warning and tracking modernization capabilities?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump's Iron Dome for America Executive Order, also known as the Golden Dome. The comprehensive Golden Dome architecture will include contributions from multiple Services and Agencies, to include the Air and Space Force. The Air Force and Space Force will also contribute to the Golden Dome with sensing, command and control, and interceptor systems to defend the Homeland.

*Question.* In your view, how does this effort align with the President's recent "Iron Dome for America" executive order to develop a national integrated air and missile defense architecture?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to implementing President Trump's Iron Dome for America Executive Order, also known as the Golden Dome. The comprehensive Golden Dome architecture will include contributions from multiple Services and Agencies, to include the Air and Space Force. The Air Force and Space Force will also contribute to the Golden Dome with sensing, command and control, and interceptor systems to defend the Homeland.

#### SPECTRUM

*Question.* Electromagnetic spectrum plays a critical role in many DOD missions. In what ways do the Air Force and Space Force rely on spectrum to support warfighter requirements? In your view, which warfighter spectrum requirements will be essential to competing with Russia and China on a future battlefield?

Answer. The Air and Space Forces rely heavily on the electromagnetic spectrum for all warfighting functions, from communication and navigation to intelligence gathering and weapons systems. The ability to maintain assured access to and control of the electromagnetic spectrum will be essential for competing with sophisticated adversaries like Russia and China. To compete effectively with these nations, future warfighters will require resilient communication systems, effective air-and land-based radars, spectrum-agile weapons systems, advanced electronic warfare ca-

pabilities, and dynamic spectrum access tools for contested environments. Effective coordination and collaboration across services and with international allies will be vital for achieving spectrum dominance and maintaining a competitive edge.

*Question.* In March 2023 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, former Secretary of Defense Austin stated that, with respect to losing “S-band” spectrum, “it [would] be devastating, . . . it would take us somewhere north of 20 years to try to recover from—from the loss of that—that spectrum. Parts of that spectrum are vital to our national defense and the protection of the homeland. And—and, you know, in order to describe exactly—well, you know what the—what the specific platforms are, but we would have to go to a classified session to speak in detail about this. But I would tell you that this is not something you can fix overnight once you break it. It’ll take 20 years plus to recover from that.”

In addition, with respect to the Secretary’s statement, General Alvin stated when he was nominated to be Chief of Staff of the Air Force, “I agree with previous testimony that has been provided by Secretary Austin that this would take decades.”

Do you agree with the former Secretary of Defense and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force?

Answer. To my knowledge, the S-band contains spectrum that is foundational to a wide range of critical Air and Space Force missions, including missile warning, satellite control, air defense radar operations, space tracking, counter-UAS, and testing against adversary threats. My understanding is that losing access to this band would severely degrade our ability to execute national security functions in both peacetime and conflict.

It is also my understanding that recovery from such a loss would not be quick or easy. The risks to mission assurance and national defense in the interim would be profound.

If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to preserve and modernize the Department’s access to the electromagnetic spectrum, especially in bands like S-band that are essential to our strategic advantage. I will also work to ensure the Department of the Air Force remains an active partner in national spectrum policy discussions, balancing national security requirements with broader spectrum demands.

*Question.* Were DOD required to “vacate” or leave the “Mid-Band” spectrum instead of sharing, what are the potential operational and dollar costs to the Air Force and Space Force, in your view? How long would a move to a different area of the spectrum take, in your view?

Answer. If the DOD were required to vacate the mid-band spectrum instead of sharing it, estimating the potential operational and dollar costs to the Air Force and Space Force is impossible without first identifying available alternative spectrum and rigorously studying its suitability through scientific processes. Given that the physics of the mid-band cannot be replicated in other parts of the spectrum, finding a suitable alternative presents a significant technical challenge, with potentially significant implications for national security. This analysis is crucial to ensure the desired operational effects are maintained.

Similarly, the time required for a transition to a different spectrum is dependent on the specific band chosen, industry’s ability to manufacture components that operate in this range, and the complexity of migrating existing systems, and therefore the cost cannot be estimated until a suitable alternative frequency is identified and studied.

*Question.* In your view, how would direction to DOD to vacate additional portions of spectrum affect the implementation of the President’s “Iron Dome for America” executive order whose missile defense radars operate primarily in the S-band?

Answer. Vacating any part of the S-band spectrum, especially frequencies crucial for missile defense radars, could severely hamper President Trump’s “Golden Dome for America” initiative. Any decision regarding S-band reallocation must carefully weigh the benefits against the potential risks to missile defense capabilities. If confirmed, I will review the latest analysis and work with DOD CIO, Combatant Commanders, and the Congress to find the right balance to secure America’s vital national security interests.

#### SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION

*Question.* In your view, how have the Air Force and Space Force prioritized limited research and development funding across its technology focus areas? Specifically, where are the Air Force and Space Force either increasing or decreasing focus and funding?

Answer. The Air Force and Space Force R&D communities have incredible opportunities to provide both new technologies to improve legacy platforms while providing leap-ahead capabilities in the near-and mid-term. Today’s investment in R&D

will ultimately determine who has the technological advantage in tomorrow's conflicts. If confirmed, I look forward to gaining additional insight into the Department's R&D portfolio to ensure investments in those areas are fully aligned with delivering the most lethal and impactful capabilities to the warfighter for both deterrence and armed conflict.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you improve efforts the Air Force and Space Force are making to identify new technologies developed commercially by the private sector and apply them to military and national security purposes?

Answer. It is critical that the Air Force leverage those commercially developed technologies for military applications—where possible and with the proper safeguards in place—and utilize USAF investments for military unique technology development. There is untapped expertise throughout the commercial market—in the traditional Primes, the non-traditional companies, and the immense small business community. In a resource-constrained environment, the Department of the Air Force needs to pull every lever and turn every knob available to tap into the multi-billion-dollar market out there that is eager to contribute to protect America's equities and way of life. If confirmed, I plan to prioritize this and ensure the Air Force is leveraging every innovation possible.

*Question.* How would you work to increase investments in research infrastructure through Air Force MILCON investments to match growing investments in China in research infrastructure in domains such as quantum science, hypersonics, and advanced materials?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the authorities granted by Congress under Title 10 will be utilized to their maximum extent, to include innovative uses of minor MILCON authorities to combat the rising costs of maintaining aging facilities and targeted modernization projects while working to increase the prioritization of major laboratory and test center facility requirements for MILCON funding for strategic investments by the USAF.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure that the limited Air Force science and technology budget is used for genuine science and technology technical challenges, and not to support more mature prototyping and development activities more appropriately addressed with other Air Force RDTE resources?

Answer. Science and Technology (S&T) investments are focused on Basic Research, Applied Research, and Advanced Technology Development areas that need to be informed by and aligned to operational requirements and capability needs. If confirmed I look forward to reviewing how the current Air Force structure supports S&T prioritization and will work to ensure Air Force optimizes S&T resourcing, infrastructure, and expertise.

*Question.* In your view, would the Air Force benefit from authorities that enable it to make use of expert foreign national talent in appropriate capacities and in appropriate settings to support modernization priorities and better compete with peer adversaries?

Answer. I believe the Air Force, and indeed the broader national security enterprise, would benefit from carefully managed authorities that allow us to leverage the expertise of foreign nationals in appropriate capacities and settings. This talent pool can offer unique skills and perspectives crucial for advancing modernization priorities and maintaining a competitive edge against peer adversaries, particularly in critical technology areas. However, any such initiative must prioritize robust security protocols and rigorous vetting processes to safeguard sensitive information and protect national security interests. A balanced approach that leverages talent while mitigating risk is essential.

*Question.* What incentives should the Air Force provide to universities and researchers to develop domestic technical talent and counter opportunities for researchers in critical fields being offered by peer adversaries, including China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will carefully consider the need for incentives to encourage universities and researchers to develop domestic technical talent, particularly in critical fields where competition with peer adversaries is intense. This includes reviewing existing programs and exploring potential new approaches to ensure we can attract and retain the best and brightest minds to support the Air Force's mission.

#### OPERATIONAL ENERGY

*Question.* The Department defines operational energy as the energy required for training, moving, and sustaining military forces and weapons platforms for military operations, including the energy used by tactical power systems, generators, and weapons platforms. Longer operating distances, remote and austere geography, and anti-access/area denial threats are challenging DOD's ability to assure the delivery

of fuel. As the ability to deliver energy is placed at risk, so too is the Department's ability to deploy and sustain expeditionary Air Force units around the globe.

What are your ideas for future capabilities that would enable an expeditionary Air Force through the assured delivery of energy to the warfighter?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the DAF to pursue revolutionary future capabilities that deliver energy assurance and maximize combat capability in contested domains. To my knowledge, the DAF is using a public-private partnership to maximize return on investment for a Blended Wing Body (BWB) aircraft that will increase efficiency by 30 percent and offer solutions to multiple capability needs. I will also explore potential hybrid-electric aircraft and space solar power technologies that enable agile combat employment concepts for expeditionary forces. I will strengthen the linkages between DAF offices and industry to promote innovative future capabilities that assure the delivery of energy to the warfighter.

*Question.* What are your ideas for reducing the risk associated with the Air Force's dependence on vulnerable supply lines?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure appropriate emphasis is placed upon energy supportability, specifically by ensuring holistic analysis of campaign-level energy consumption and addressing expected supply chain risks. I will optimize fuel use by exploring the viability of alternative propulsion systems for legacy aircraft, increased performance through better mission planning and execution software, improved aerodynamics through drag reduction technologies, and engine sustainment technologies that maximize lethality per gallon.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES

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

If confirmed, what steps would you take to streamline this process and how long would it take you to resume entering into contracts of this sort for the benefit of Air Force installations?

Answer. If confirmed as Under Secretary, I will leverage all authorities, including third-party contracts, to bolster infrastructure and energy security. I will collaborate with OSD and DOE to streamline processes and expedite solutions.

#### AIR FORCE-RELATED DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE

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

Answer. A strong Air Force requires understanding and managing defense industrial base risk. If confirmed, I will advance tools and processes to proactively identify supply chain risks and capacity bottlenecks, addressing them before crises arise.

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

Answer. Industry relies on clear and consistent demand signal to determine where return on investment can be found. If confirmed, I will work within the Air Force and with Congress to incentivize capital investment in the industrial base.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will collaborate with Service Acquisition Executives to ensure acquisition strategies consider industrial base impacts, promoting competition, lowering barriers to entry, and incentivizing strategic investment and R&D.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Service Acquisition Executives to connect the Air Force with all supply chain tiers, including crucial small businesses. I will engage industry associations, state/local governments, and trade organizations to understand industrial base risks and constraints.

*Question.* If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you pursue in systems and processes to ensure that risk in the Air Force-relevant sectors of the defense industrial base is adequately managed to enable the development, production, and

sustainment of technically superior, reliable, and affordable weapons systems and munitions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Service Acquisition Executives to proactively identify and address industrial base risks and bottlenecks. I will also ensure acquisition strategies promote competition, leverage Modular Open Systems Architectures, and prioritize producibility.

#### MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM (MHS) REFORM

*Question.* Do you support the implementation of the MHS reforms mandated by the NDAA for fiscal years 2017, 2019, and 2020?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the DHA as directed by Congress. The DAF remains a steadfast partner, providing leadership and project management to transfer programs and resources lawfully. Despite service-specific challenges, I will ensure DAF dedication to the Defense Health Agency and Military Treatment Facilities supporting Air Force and Space Force missions and community healthcare.

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

Answer. I champion the MHS mission for a medically ready force and ready medical force—anytime, anywhere. Our servicemembers and families deserve the best care, and our medical personnel are key. If confirmed, I will review personnel strategy to ensure we recruit, access, and retain the right talent for this complex mission.

#### MILITARY COMPENSATION

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

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to a detailed review of military compensation, including the junior enlisted pay increase Congress enacted last year, to better understand which, if any, areas may need revision to allow for a more targeted approach to the overall compensation package.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will review DAF personnel costs, drivers of growth, and potential savings while maintaining our ability to attract and retain talent.

#### NON-DEPLOYABLE SERVICEMEMBERS

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

Answer. Readiness is paramount. If confirmed, I will align non-deployment policies with Air Force priorities, prioritizing readiness and mission needs. Individual circumstances will be considered, but operational strength and deployability are key. I will ensure our forces remain ready.

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

Answer. I lack sufficient information to speculate. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to understand the current approach and consider Air Force mission and readiness requirements.

#### SUICIDE PREVENTION

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to prevent suicides in the Active Air Force, the Air Force Reserve, and the Air National Guard, and in the families of airmen across all components?

Answer. The Air Force must promote mental well-being, eliminate barriers to care, and destigmatize seeking help. This enhances lethality, readiness, and warrior ethos. If confirmed, I will support the Brandon Act and evidence-based programs improving mental health access.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS

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

Answer. As a private citizen who previously served in leadership roles in the Air and Space Forces, I see significant emphasis on ending sexual violence in our Serv-

ices. Sexual assault harms our airmen and guardians and has a direct impact on readiness, demanding our attention. If confirmed, I will review related policies, programs, resources, and training for effectiveness, including retaliation protection for reporters.

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

*Answer.* Restricted and unrestricted reporting offer victims confidential help or official reporting. These options allow the DAF to tailor support to individual needs.

#### SPACE FORCE PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ACT

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

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

*Answer.* I have been informed that the Space Force Personnel Management Act (PMA) directs the Space Force to design and implement an alternative military personnel management system without components. This unified service will offer guardians the ability to serve in both full-time and part-time work roles and transition between them based on individual preferences and the needs of the Space Force. This authority benefits the Space Force by providing unique talent management opportunities extending the continuum of service without service interruption, attracting and retaining talent, and ultimately enhancing military readiness and lethality.

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

*Answer.* My understanding is that the Space Force is working closely with the AFR and ANG on a phased implementation plan to transfer space aligned missions, billets, resources, and personnel. The PMA ensures that guardians serving in full-time and part-time work roles are treated the same as similarly situated members of regular and Reserve components, respectfully. If confirmed, I will review the implementation plan and work to ensure that members of the ARC and ANG are not disadvantaged in any way by volunteering to the Space Force.

*Question.* The Committee understands that personnel information technology systems are the main obstacle preventing the Space Force from implementing the Space Force Personnel Management Act expeditiously.

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

*Answer.* The Space Force Personnel Management Act provides the authority the Space Force needs to develop and implement a modern military personnel system. It is my understanding that integration with the legacy DAF and OSD personnel IT systems is one of the most challenging lines of effort for implementing the PMA. If confirmed, I will review the Space Force's resourcing and technology requirements unhindered throughout the multi-year implementation process to ensure that they meet congressional intent and take care of our guardians.

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

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with Space Force, Air Force, and National Guard leadership to develop a comprehensive plan for transferring covered space functions and personnel who choose to transfer from the Air National Guard to the Space Force within the transition timeline established by Congress.

#### AIR FORCE INTEGRATED PAY AND PERSONNEL SYSTEM (AFIPPS)

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

What is your view of the importance of AFIPPS?

*Answer.* I understand AFIPPS modernizes DAF personnel and pay. If confirmed, I will seek a detailed program briefing and, if needed, collaborate with DAF leadership on a finalization strategy.

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

*Answer.* Caring for our people is paramount. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to understand this program's status and future needs.

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE

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

*Answer.* Civilians are vital to military readiness. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department prioritizes hiring top talent for warfighting-critical positions. I will also review the work environment and employee engagement, adjusting as needed.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to understand workforce management challenges. I will maximize congressional hiring and compensation flexibilities, fostering a meritocratic, innovative culture. I will commit to reviewing personnel processes for civilian workforce management efficiencies.

*Question.* In your view, do Air Force and Space Force supervisors have adequate authorities to address and remediate employee misconduct and poor duty performance, and ultimately to divest of a civilian employee who fails to meet requisite standards of conduct and performance?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I am committed to hiring and retaining the have the best people. If I am confirmed, I will review the effectiveness of the numerous personnel management authorities and systems and explore greater efficiencies. The Department must make every effort to create a future-ready, agile and adaptive workforce able to meet the rapidly evolving challenges of the 21st century.

*Question.* If so, are both civilian and military supervisors adequately trained to exercise such authorities? If not, what additional authorities or training do Air Force and Space Force supervisors require?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I am committed to making sure the Department continues to have the best people and that supervisors are properly trained. If I am confirmed, I will review the effectiveness of the numerous personnel management authorities and systems and explore greater efficiencies. The Department must make every effort to create a future-ready, agile and adaptive workforce able to meet the rapidly evolving challenges of the 21st century.

#### SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

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

*Answer.* The Senior Executive Service is vital and if confirmed, I will prioritize candidates with proven competence, strong character and a commitment to a more efficient and effective Department.

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

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will focus on ensuring the Senior Executive Service is held accountable for achieving results. This involves supporting SES leaders in fostering a culture of excellence within their organizations. My leadership will emphasize clear expectations, measurable outcomes, and consistent performance evaluations. High achievers will be recognized, and underperformance will be addressed.

*Question.* Are you satisfied with the subject matter and rigor of SES professional development programs currently available across DOD and in the Air Force and Space Force? If not, what changes would you make to these programs, if confirmed?

*Answer.* Professional development for our Senior Executive Service (SES) cadre is critical to ensuring we have the strategic leadership required for the complex challenges facing the Air and Space Forces. If confirmed, I will review the DAF SES professional development programs to ensure alignment with the DOD and DAF priorities.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE IN MILITARY FAMILIES

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

Answer. I take the health and well-being of the force and our military families extremely seriously. I recognize that domestic violence and child abuse are serious issues that have no place, but do exist. Domestic violence is a serious problem that impacts readiness in the Department of the Air Force. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring these issues are receiving the attention they deserve and the necessary resources to support effective prevention and response.

#### MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

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

Answer. MWR programs are a necessity and go a long way toward improving quality of life for military members and their families, especially when stationed far from home. Fostering resilient and ready families directly impacts readiness, recruitment, and retention of military members. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to understand which programs are high in demand, and where new programs may need to be introduced based on community needs.

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

Answer. MWR and quality of life are critical factors in readiness and enable recruitment and retention. If confirmed, I will work with senior leaders to conduct a review of existing MWR and quality of life programs to assess the effectiveness of these programs in supporting readiness.

#### MILITARY FAMILY READINESS AND SUPPORT

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

Answer. We recruit airmen and guardians but retain families. Press reports suggest compensation, spousal employment, childcare, and food insecurity challenge families. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to identify key challenges, assess existing support, and develop enhanced strategies, advocating for necessary resources.

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

Answer. Military readiness requires affordable, quality childcare. If confirmed, I will collaborate with DAF leaders to evaluate current initiatives and explore opportunities to expand childcare options—traditional, non-traditional, and community-based—for our airmen and guardians.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

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

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer 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. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. Yes, if confirmed, I will work with Congress, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of the Air Force Office of Small Business Programs (SAF/SB), and interagency partners such as SBA on improving, preserving, and strengthening Section 8(a) contracting and other Small Business Programs whenever using them would be in the best interest of the Department of the Air Force. I understand that the Section 8(a) Program and other Small Business Programs have served as valuable tools for supporting the warfighters and strengthening the defense industrial base while streamlining and expediting defense acquisitions.

2. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. Yes, I understand that the Section 8(a) Program and other Small Business Programs have served as valuable tools for supporting the warfighters and strengthening the defense industrial base while streamlining and expediting defense acquisitions. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department of the Air Force Office of Small Business Programs (SAF/SB) on promoting the use of flexible and efficient contracting methods that Congress established for Small Business Programs.

3. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, rapid response capabilities are essential to enable our warfighters to win on the battlefield. At the same time, our defense contractors must rapidly respond to the needs of our military to make the U.S. Military more lethal. Flexible and efficient contracting through the SBA 8(a) program is one trusted way to do this. Please explain how you will ensure that proven, dependable, and cost-effective 8(a) programs remain in place and supported by the Department of Defense.

Mr. LOHMEIER. By law and guidance, the Under Secretary of the Air Force directly supervises the Director, Department of the Air Force Office of Small Business Programs (SAF/SB). If confirmed, I will ask the Director, SAF/SB, to recommend actions that I can take as the Under Secretary to ensure that Small Business Programs such as the Section 8(a) Program remain available to Department of the Air Force for supporting warfighters and strengthening the defense industrial base while streamlining and expediting defense acquisitions.

I will further work with Congress, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of the Air Force Office of Small Business Programs (SAF/SB), and inter-agency partners such as SBA on improving, preserving, and strengthening Section 8(a) contracting and other Small Business Programs whenever using them would be in the best interest of the Department of the Air Force.

## ALASKA

4. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. If confirmed, I will work with Congress and other stakeholders to identify and support projects that enhance the energy security of our installations in Alaska and everywhere the Department operates.[PD1]

5. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, Eielson Air Force Base (AFB) which in addition to being home to F-35 squadrons, F-16 interceptors, and KC-135s along with hosting many nations each year for Red Flag events, still needs many more "warm" facilities to house KC-135 airframes. It can only fit two right now. Additionally, other infrastructure is very outdated, and facilities are not keeping pace with Wainwright Army base. Will you work with me to acquire the infrastructure necessary to hold the tankers?

Mr. LOHMEIER. If confirmed, I will ensure infrastructure requirements at Eielson AFB are properly assessed and prioritized to support the critical missions being conducted from the installation.

6. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, my State holds the highest concentration of combat-coded fifth generation aircraft anywhere else in the country (over 100). Any conflict in the Indo-Pacific region will undoubtedly call upon Alaskan warfighters and our military assets. For the last decade I've pressed every Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Secretary of the Air Force, and Chief of Staff of the Air Force on the need for more aerial refueling assets in Alaska to support the increasing training requirements and intercept missions.

Last year, I wrote a letter to your predecessor, Secretary Kendall, pressing him to fulfill the Air Force's commitments on this issue and Kendall replied with a signed memorandum finally codifying the movement of 4x KC-135s to Eielson AFB in so called "active association". This MUST NOT be delayed any longer.

Can I get your commitment that, if confirmed, you will see the completion of that KC-135 basing through to the end?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to addressing previous basing decisions at Eielson AFB. The tanker fleet is an essential component of U.S. power projection, Homeland Defense, strategic deterrence, global strike, rapid global mobility, and coordinated Joint Force and coalition efforts. The Air Force will work closely with theater MAJCOMs to ensure we source the three remaining KC-135 for Eielson in a deliberate, efficient, and timely manner and commit to providing you updates.

7. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, can I also get your commitment to work expedite the delivery time and increase the readiness rates of the KC-46?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I understand that the KC-46 is replacing a large portion of the Air Force's tanker fleet and that it is progressing toward full operational capability. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Service Acquisition Executive and Boeing to resolve issues and get us on the shortest path to delivering aircraft that fully meet warfighter requirements.

8. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, in our discussion in my office we spoke about the need for additional hangar and infrastructure capability at Deadhorse (near Prudhoe Bay) to help extend the Air Force's reach in the Arctic. The U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) Commander, General Gregory Guillot, as well as the U.S. Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Commander, General Kevin Schneider, have both expressed interest in this location. Will you work with me, if confirmed, to get the military construction approved to support operations out of Deadhorse?

Mr. LOHMEIER. The Arctic is critical to our ability to defend the homeland and project power internationally. If confirmed, I commit to continuing to evaluate our posture in Alaska, and I will work with Congress to ensure the Department has sufficient infrastructure to support its missions and operations.

9. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, the 18th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS) at Eielson AFB is responsible for interception of Russian and Chinese strategic bombers and fighters that cross into the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Oftentimes, however, the 18th FIS is short of either pilots or mechanics to accomplish their mission. They always do accomplish the mission, but often at great extra cost in manpower and time (especially as intercepts have increased in the last year). Will you commit to looking at the task organization and real-life manning of this unit and its sustainers and ensure that they are manned 100 percent to finish their mission?

Mr. LOHMEIER. As the Air Force works to align with OSD on optimal organizations toward the overall mission of warfighting, I am committed to looking at all task organizations and real-life manning of all fighter units and their sustainers to ensure they are effectively manned to accomplish their mission.

10. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, as you are aware I've been fighting to get the KC-135 Active Association complete at Eielson AFB for nearly a decade and your predecessor signed off on it. I appreciate your commitment during your hearing to see this through to completion. I've ran into a number of issues with the Air Force Site Activation Task Force (SATF) which has visited Eielson nearly six times to conduct housing surveys. It appears they are using housing data from 2023 to make decisions regarding the amount of available housing at Eielson. Will you commit to work with me to ensure that SATF is using the most current housing data to inform its decisions about housing at Eielson and to relook the Air Force's housing requirements as soon as possible to ensure we are meeting mission need at the base?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes if, confirmed, I will review the housing data being used by the DAF to inform housing requirements and ensure we are using the most current data.

11. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, as part of President Trump's Golden Dome program, there will almost certainly be a need to ensure that our advanced early warning radar systems like the E-7 are capable of detecting incoming aircraft and missile threats both at home and if necessary, forward deployed. We have had a number of issues in Alaska with E-3 AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System] readiness rates due to aging airframes and parts. Will you commit to reviewing the E-7 program to make sure we are properly resourcing it and work with me to ensure that we have that capability on hand when required in Alaska?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I understand that enhanced airborne Battle Management Command and Control (BMC2) and Airborne Moving Target Indicator (AMTI) capabilities are essential to countering advanced and emerging adversary air threats. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the program and working with the Service Acquisition Executive and the warfighter to ensure we can deliver this generational advancement in radar technology to replace the increasingly unreliable and unsustainable E-3G.

12. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Lohmeier, one of the results of President Biden's energy policies and the "lock up" of my State through his executive orders is an energy

emergency affecting our national security that is unfolding on some Alaska bases. I spoke to Secretary Peter Hegseth recently about this issue and explained to him that there have been a number of instances where commanders of bases like Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) in Anchorage had to tell servicemembers and their families to turn down their heat, unplug personal property, and turn-off certain critical systems that sustain the base. This was done to preserve electricity and avoid brownouts in the region. Would U.S. national security be enhanced if there was a reliable source of clean-burning Alaskan natural gas available to supply the energy needs of these bases?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Expanding our access to available, but underutilized, sources of energy, such as natural gas is important to power our installations and achieve national energy dominance. If confirmed, I will work with OSD, the Department of Energy, the Department of Interior, and other stakeholders, such as our utility partners, to identify potential solutions to ensure our installations have the power they need to meet critical mission requirements.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

##### CHARACTER AND FITNESS TO SERVE

13. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Lohmeier, your public record raises serious concerns about your judgment, professionalism, and ability to maintain an apolitical, unified military. Given your track record of promoting partisan conspiracy theories, why should this Committee believe you are suddenly willing—or even able—to separate your personal politics from your official duties?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I am very proud of my military service which ended with an honorable discharge. During my time in Service and for every day after as a private citizen, I have been a champion for an apolitical military and will continue to be. If confirmed, I commit to dedicating myself to preserving a non-partisan Department of the Air Force. I believe very strongly that protecting the institution from partisanship is fundamental to our system of government.

14. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Lohmeier, you have publicly suggested that addressing racism, sexism, and extremism in the ranks is somehow more dangerous than the extremism itself. How do you expect to build trust—particularly among LGBTQ+ servicemembers, servicemembers of color, and women—when your own statements dismiss the very real barriers they face?

Mr. LOHMEIER. My record shows an unblemished career of working with airmen and guardians from all walks of life. Some of the best guardians under my command in the Space Force were members of the LGBTQ+ community and I have publicly stated that for the record when testifying before Congress in 2024. Unity is our strength, and I firmly believe my record reflects a leadership style focused on that unity—not division. If confirmed, I will continue to lead that way in the Department of the Air Force.

##### APOLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

15. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Lohmeier, civil-military relations are foundational to the legitimacy of our Armed Forces. In this leadership position, how would you enforce the Department of Defense's strict prohibitions on political activity among Air Force and Space Force personnel, including under title 10 authorities, to preserve an apolitical military chain of command?

Mr. LOHMEIER. It is well understood that servicemembers' political activities are regulated, both in their official and personal capacities. The First Amendment protects freedom of speech and permits the expression of ideas for all Americans; however, servicemembers, owing to their critical role in our national security, have accepted limits on their freedom of expression. Strict regulations on political activities among servicemembers ensure that personal political beliefs do not interfere with mission readiness or decisionmaking. Those safeguards protect the armed forces from external political pressures, ensuring their primary focus remains on national security and defense. I expect all DAF servicemembers to prudently exercise their individual liberties consistent with these obligations of military service. Those servicemembers who fail to abide by these regulations will be addressed as appropriate, including through potential administrative or disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

## ACQUISITIONS AND SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES

16. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Lohmeier, the Under Secretary must oversee major acquisition programs and help safeguard the defense industrial base, including partnerships with small businesses and innovation hubs. Given recent supply chain disruptions and consolidation within the defense industry, what concrete actions would you take to ensure competition, speed, and resilience in Air Force and Space Force acquisitions?

Mr. LOHMEIER. It is important that the Department of Air Force continues to increase efforts to take full advantage of the speed, innovation, and capabilities offered by the commercial sector and the competitive defense industrial base. If confirmed, I will partner with my DOD counterparts and work with Congress to help ensure the Department of the Air Force has the tools and resources to explore flexible acquisitions to add speed, resilience, and increased program execution efficiency while cultivating secure supply chains, addressing workforce readiness, and utilizing economic deterrence as a tool to protect our industrial and innovation base. I will also review current commercial strategy and policy to ensure the Department is empowering collaboration with domestic industry to grow the industrial base and streamline technology maturation to satisfy emerging operational needs.

## BUDGET STEWARDSHIP

17. Senator HIRONO. Mr. Lohmeier, the Under Secretary of the Air Force plays a critical role in the development and execution of the Department's more than \$200 billion annual budget. Can you walk this Committee through your approach to balancing modernization priorities, like Next Generation Air Dominance—against current operational readiness?

Mr. LOHMEIER. The primary challenge the DAF faces today lies in creating the force we need to defeat our future adversaries while not undercutting our ability to fight tonight. The Air Force is the smallest and oldest it has ever been, and it needs to move ahead on modernization to face the growing threat by investing in such capabilities as F-47, Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA), High Value Air Asset (HVAA) protection, Air Base Air Defense (ABAD), and Long-Range Kill Chain (LRKC). The USSF needs to grow in capacity and capability, in mission areas such as Space Based Sensing and Targeting, Counter-C5ISR, Missile Warning, PNT, and SATCOM, with additional lethal and resilient capabilities, including additional guardians to develop, operate, and sustain those systems, to deter and prevail in a complex competition with China.

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 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

## CHARACTERIZATION OF THE EVENTS OF JANUARY 6, 2021

18. Senator KAINE. Mr. Lohmeier, did you author the social media post below?



Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, and at the time of this post I had been out of uniform for several years. I authored this as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. It does not reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force, if confirmed.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

##### ETHICS

19. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. 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.

20. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. 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.

21. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. 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. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

23. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. Not applicable; I was not approached about my loyalty to President Trump.

24. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. Not applicable; I was not approached about my loyalty to President Trump.

25. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

26. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. Not applicable; I was not approached.

27. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

28. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

29. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. I am a nominee of the President of the United States, and in the interview process, the President asked me questions. I'm extremely honored that President Trump had the faith and confidence to nominate me for the position of Under Secretary of the Air Force.

30. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No, not to my knowledge.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Various staffers were present for my interview, including staffers from the Presidential Personnel Office and the Department of Defense. I'm extremely honored that President Trump had the faith and confidence to nominate me for the position of Under Secretary of the Air Force.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. The Ethics Agreement I signed on March 14, 2025, which was previously provided to the Committee, sets forth my ethics commitments, if confirmed.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. The freedom of the press is protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. I firmly believe that a free and open press is an essential element to the functioning of a legitimate democracy.

34. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

35. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. Yes.

36. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Not applicable; I have not requested such agreements, nor has anyone done so on my behalf.

38. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Not applicable.

40. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. The Ethics Agreement I signed on March 14, 2025, which was previously provided to the Committee, sets forth my ethics commitments, if confirmed.

41. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, please provide a list of all your clients at Lohmeier Consulting LLC within the last 5 years.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Lohmeier Consulting LLC is the name of a Single-Member/Sole Proprietorship LLC that I created three and a half years ago at the time I separated from Active Duty in September 2021. I had no standing or permanent clients. My clients consisted of various local event organizers (often volunteer based non-profits) in states across the country (such as Arizona Women of Action, in Arizona) who would reach out asking if I would speak at events they had organized. Sometimes those events included an honorarium and sometimes I spoke at no cost.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Inspectors General promote integrity and accountability throughout the Department by investigating allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse, and misconduct. IGs also serve as a confidential avenue for reporting wrongdoing and protecting whistleblowers. Their oversight helps maintain public trust and ensures the Department operates effectively and ethically. Crucially, they provide impartial recommendations to the Secretary of Defense and Congress based on their findings, driving necessary reforms and improvements within the Department. By identifying systemic issues and holding individuals accountable, the Inspector General system contributes directly to a more efficient, effective, trustworthy, ready, and lethal defense apparatus.

43. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. Yes.

44. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. Yes.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, and I do not believe the President would issue an illegal order.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. I reject the premise of this question. The President would never order me to take an illegal action. If confirmed, I would work with appropriate personnel such as the General Counsel's Office if given a directive that I believed was illegal.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, if permitted under governing laws and regulations.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, if permitted under governing laws and regulations.

52. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. I do not have enough information as I am not familiar with the full extent of current precedent. However, if confirmed, I commit to being responsive to this Committee and this Congress.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. If confirmed, I commit to meeting all legal disclosure requirements.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. In general, I believe enabling access to information rapidly and as broadly as possible is vital to national security. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Secretary as well as my colleagues throughout the Department to ensure data is properly classified.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. I am not familiar with these strategic technologies, but, if confirmed, I commit to receiving a brief on what options may be available to the Department.

#### PROJECT 2025

56. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

57. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

#### FOREIGN INFLUENCE

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. No.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. I have provided relevant information in connection with my background check.

60. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. I have provided relevant information in connection with my background check.

#### IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT

61. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. I fully acknowledge and respect Congress' constitutional role in appropriating funds to be carried out by the executive branch for designated purposes. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the Constitution and the law. 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.

62. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, what is your understanding of the Impoundment Control Act?

Mr. LOHMEIER. My understanding is that Congress passed the Impoundment Control Act in 1974. This 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.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. If confirmed, I commit to following all laws.

64. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. If confirmed, I commit to complying with applicable legal requirements regarding responding to requests from Congress.

65. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. 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 on this matter are informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel's office.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. 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 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. Lohmeier, do you commit to expending the money that Congress appropriates and authorizes?

Mr. LOHMEIER. 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 on this matter are informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel's office.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. If confirmed, I commit to following all laws.

70. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. If confirmed, I commit to following all laws.

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes. By partnering with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded research and development centers, the Federal Government leverages unique analytical, engineering, and research capabilities and cutting-edge facilities that complement our own Federal workforce and laboratory infrastructure. Active partnerships with academia also build the pipeline for future Federal scientists and engineers with the competency to take on the hard technical problems associated with developing military technologies to support our warfighters.

72. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. If confirmed, I will support these strategic partnerships as a force multiplier to our DOD-internal workforce. The scientists, engineers, and researchers in colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded research and development centers possess world-unique expertise and facilities in many areas where the government cannot attract and retain personnel in sufficient depth and numbers. I understand these partnerships are an important enabler to the DOD's enduring technological superiority both domestically and abroad.

#### INFORMATION AIR DOMINANCE CENTER

73. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you support the Air Force creating a new Information Dominance Center?

Mr. LOHMEIER. It is my understanding that the intent of the IDSC is to consolidate and increase Air Force focus on information dominance capabilities, including Command, Control, Communications, and Battle Management (C3BM); Cyber; Electromagnetic[DC2] Warfare (EW); Information Systems; and Enterprise Digital Infrastructure. If confirmed, I look forward to receiving an in-depth briefing on this reorganization effort, reviewing the data and analysis behind it, and making my own assessment.

74. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, what do you see as the role of a new Information Dominance Systems Center in supporting great power competition?

Mr. LOHMEIER. It is my understanding that the intent of the IDSC is to consolidate and increase Air Force focus on information dominance capabilities, including Command, Control, Communications, and Battle Management (C3BM); Cyber; Electromagnetic Warfare (EW); Information Systems; and Enterprise Digital Infrastructure. If confirmed, I look forward to better understanding the role of the IDSC and making my own assessment on how it would support the priorities outlined in the Interim National Security Guidance.

#### PROTECTING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND FEDERAL RECORDS

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. OPSEC is of paramount importance and is everyone's responsibility in the Department of Defense. As a U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force veteran, I have a strong record of practicing OPSEC to protect information [M(3)] and encouraging all members of my organization to do likewise.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. Improper disclosure of classified information could cause irreparable damage to national security, endanger personnel, compromise military operations, weaken national defenses, and point to potential cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Additionally, it can damage international trust and confidence in the U.S., leading to a weakening of alliances and reduced willingness to share sensitive information. And, in line with General Caine's testimony, we should always strive to preserve the element of surprise.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. I would follow National Security protocols to address mishandling of classified information and mitigate risks. When such a disclosure is brought to my attention, I would consult with my security and classification management team and legal counsel and request an investigation be conducted to assess any damage, with the results from the investigation be provided to leadership and the Department for any pending action.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. It is the responsibility of every government official to safeguard government activities and transactions in accordance with the laws and regulations. The DAF implements the Federal Records Act working closely with other Federal agencies such as the National Archives and Records Administration. The Department is actively pursuing a Federal Records Act initiative to modernize strategies as well as improving overall processes via technology, such as implementing tagging for records data, automating record filing, and utilizing eDiscovery processes to retrieve records within records schedules—ensuring compliance and easing the burdens on our airmen and guardians.

79. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, should classified information be shared on unclassified commercial systems?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No.

#### RETALIATION AND PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

80. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. I believe in following all laws, including those protecting whistleblowers. If confirmed, I commit to following all laws.

81. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, 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. LOHMEIER. No.

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

Mr. LOHMEIER. I believe in following all laws, including those protecting whistleblowers. If confirmed, I commit to following all laws.

83. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, if you are confirmed, will you commit to preventing retaliation 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. LOHMEIER. I believe in following all laws, including those protecting whistleblowers. If confirmed, I commit to following all laws.

84. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you consider it to be retaliation to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do not have enough information based on this question to provide an answer. However, I believe in following all laws, including those protecting whistleblowers. If confirmed, I commit to following all laws.

85. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you consider it to be retaliation to encourage another person(s) to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do not have enough information based on this question to provide an answer. However, I believe in following all laws, including those protecting whistleblowers. If confirmed, I commit to following all laws.

86. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you support President Trump's proposal to create a board to review and purge three-and four-star officers?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I am not familiar with any discussions regarding such a board. Under our system of government, the civilian leadership must remain in a higher position hierarchically than the military leadership. As such, I believe that civilian leadership has a right to choose their advisors.

87. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, if you support President Trump's proposal to create a board to review and purge three-and four-star officers, what criteria would you use for any board to review three-and four-star officers to determine whether these officers are fit for leadership and for selecting who will be appointed to be the board?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Not applicable; I am not familiar with any such board or discussions about such a board.

88. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, have you or do you plan to recommend the Trump administration remove specific officers?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No. If confirmed, my focus will be on assisting the Secretary of the Air Force with their Title 10 responsibility to organize, train, and equip the Department of the Air Force.

89. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, what is your justification for their removal, including your assessment of their character and leadership?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Not applicable. If confirmed, my focus will be on assisting the Secretary of the Air Force with their Title 10 responsibility to organize, train, and equip the Department of the Air Force.

90. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, what do you think a servicemember or officer should do if they discover wrongdoing or are asked to follow orders that they believe to be illegal or in violation of the Constitution?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Our oath is to support and defend the Constitution and only follow lawful orders. I have a long record of doing just that. If confirmed, I commit to continuing that record and will encourage all in the Department of the Air Force to do so.

91. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, what should the criteria be for reducing the rank of base commanders?

Mr. LOHMEIER. In general, I believe all commanders should be held accountable and I believe the Nation expects accountability throughout the Department. Adverse administrative actions are already captured under governing regulations, and I have no reason to believe they are not already sufficient. If confirmed, I commit to upholding the core values of Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do.

92. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, what steps will you take to make clear that officers should report orders that they believe are illegal?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Alongside the Secretary, if confirmed, I commit that consistent communication on the importance of adhering to the law will be a hallmark of my tenure.

#### JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL

93. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on August 9, 2024, in a tweet you referred to January 6 as "a gov't led false flag and hoax at the Capitol." Do you still agree with this statement? If not, why did you make it?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I authored this as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. It does not reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

94. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you believe that January 6th was a false flag operation and on what basis?

Mr. LOHMEIER. My statements in the past on this topic were authored as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. They do not reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

95. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, why do you believe that there were "undercover government agents at the Capitol on January 6?"

Mr. LOHMEIER. I read it in a report by the Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General, released on December 11, 2024, which specifically addresses the FBI's handling of confidential human sources (CHSs) on January 6. The report confirms that there were 26 FBI CHSs in Washington, DC, that day. Three of those informants had specific tasks from the FBI. Twenty-three others attended on their own initiative, 3 of whom entered the Capitol and 11 of whom entered restricted areas.

96. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on the evening prior to President Biden's inauguration, you watched a Tucker Carlson Tonight episode focused on the aftermath of January 6th and stated that, "The progressive Left's appalling invective had reached an unbelievably low, mean, and accusatory State. I recognized that kind of speech. It was the ideologically possessed rhetoric of genocide." Do you still stand by that statement and if so, why?

Mr. LOHMEIER. This statement must be understood in the context of the entire book from which it was extracted and not in isolation. The warning of the last chapter of my book *Irresistible Revolution* is that the country is dangerously polarized, and that a country "cannot persist in the hate-filled demonization of entire groups of people based on their race or political affiliation" without it leading eventually to violence. My message in the book was an invitation for our servicemembers to "avoid the anger of partisan politics" and to avoid the demonization of entire groups of people based on their race or political affiliation. I invited uniformed servicemembers to not participate in this divisive rhetoric and to "never use your position of authority to unduly propound partisan political views. To do so is to undermine good order and discipline." (reference chapter 7 of the book in question)

#### CRITICISMS OF THE LEFT

97. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you agree that it is essential for the military to remain an apolitical institution? If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that the military remains apolitical?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, this is a topic I am passionate about. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the military remains an apolitical institution.

98. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, is it appropriate to punish, promote, demote, or take other personnel actions against military personnel for their political views? If you think it is, under what circumstances?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Servicemembers are required to abide by guidance found in DOD Directives governing political activities for members of the armed forces. Violations of those directives should be appropriately addressed. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate that servicemembers abide by these governing DOD regulations.

99. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on January 12, 2024, you stated that "I believe Democrats' obsession with uniformity—and love affair with DEI [diversity, equity, and inclusion]—is the result of a possession of the Communist spirit." Do you still agree with this statement? If not, why did you make it?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I believe that context is important regarding these statements. I made them as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. As a private citizen, I have often criticized and or warned that the military was losing its focus on lethality. However, these statements do not reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

100. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on December 24, 2023, you stated that "Democrats still lynch those who fight against DEI initiatives. They only go as far as is socially permissible, but they are possessed of the same spirit they've always been." What do you mean by this statement and do you still agree with it? If you no longer agree with it, why did you make it?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do not recall ever having made this statement. I have searched but cannot find any online content suggesting I've ever made this statement. Statements like this do not reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

101. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on April 1, 2023, you stated that, "Of all that is good and decent the Left is the real oppressor." Do you still agree with this statement? If not, why did you make it?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I can find no evidence that I ever made such a statement. If I did, I made it as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. These statements do not reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

102. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on March 30, 2023, you stated that, "The left is always pointing fingers at conservatives for inciting violence, but they are the ones guilty of it. It's always someone else's fault. The left is sick." Do you still agree with this statement? If not, why did you make it?

Mr. LOHMEIER. If I made this statement, I made it as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. These statements do not reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

103. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, you wrote in reference to a Tucker Carlson Tonight episode that, “Again, the reason his remarks are relevant is because they reveal the rhetorical demonization of conservatives and whites in the country. It is specifically the kind of rhetoric necessary to justify violence against people.” You also wrote that, “To be perfectly clear, the path we are on as a country leads to fratricidal and genocidal warfare.” Do you stand by these statements and do you believe that our country is on the path to fratricidal and genocidal warfare?

Mr. LOHMEIER. These statements must be understood in the context of the entire book from which they were extracted and not in isolation. The warning of the last chapter of my book *Irresistible Revolution* is that the country is dangerously polarized, and that a country “cannot persist in the hate-filled demonization of entire groups of people based on their race or political affiliation” without it leading eventually to violence. My message in the book was an invitation for our servicemembers to “avoid the anger of partisan politics” and to avoid the demonization of entire groups of people based on their race or political affiliation.

104. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you believe any of the above statements reflect servicemembers who consider themselves to be Democrats or on the Left? If so, which statements do you consider accurate regarding servicemembers?

Mr. LOHMEIER. The statements I have made that are partisan in nature have been made as a private citizen in this country. I always honored and acted true to my obligation to remain apolitical while wearing the uniform of the country. Our uniformed servicemembers are entitled to their own private political views, but their expression of those views and their conduct are strictly governed by law and DOD regulations. Our men and women in uniform set aside their political differences to focus on what unites them in accomplishing a mission in defense of our country.

105. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you think it is appropriate for a leader to disparage those they lead as having “a possession of the Communist spirit” or “the real oppressor,” or lynch[ing] those who fight against DEI initiatives,” or “sick”?

Mr. LOHMEIER. My record shows an unblemished career of working with airmen and guardians from all walks of life. I have had members under my command who did not know my political views, nor I theirs. I believe that is as it should be. I have never disparaged those I have led. Unity is our strength, and I firmly believe my record reflects a leadership style focused on that unity—not division. If confirmed, I will continue to lead that way in the Department of the Air Force.

#### LGBTQ+ SERVICEMEMBERS

106. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on August 26, 2024, you stated, “Wow-Military families are facing terrible decisions about whether to continue serving or to pull their kids out of the DOD education environment to save their children from gender-fluid/queer/trans cults.” Do you stand by this statement? Please explain what you mean by “gender-fluid/queer/trans cults.”

Mr. LOHMEIER. I believe that context is important regarding these statements. I made them as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. They do not necessarily reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

107. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on May 23, 2024, you stated that, “Military leaders cannot pretend to care about solving the problem of sexual assaults in the military while also propagating mental illness and celebrating sexual deviance.” Do you stand by this statement? Please explain what you mean by “mental illness” and “sexual deviance.”

Mr. LOHMEIER. I believe that context is important regarding these statements. I made them as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. They do not necessarily reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

108. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on May 15, 2024, you stated that a May 13, 2024, memorandum “admonishes servicemembers to celebrate and honor the life-

style and contributions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders and queers ... The memorandum 'empowers commanders' to 'organize' activities for their bases. It is a revolutionary campaign that no longer needs to hide its aims. It employs all of the right revolutionary language. It is Marxist-rooted DEI at its best. It is evil. If you are in uniform, now is the time for you to speak up against this as if the life of your country depends on it, because it does ... Feigned kindness in the face of evil is only foolishness. Tolerance of this revolutionary spirit at this critical hour is little short of treasonous. Cowardice is the opposite of faith and love." Do you stand by these statements?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I believe that context is important regarding these statements. I made them as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. They do not necessarily reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

109. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you believe that members of the LGBTQ+ community, including servicemembers and their families, are "evil"?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No, and I never said that.

110. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you believe that members of the LGBTQ+ community, including servicemembers and their families, are "treasonous"?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No, and I never said that.

111. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you believe that those who support the LGBTQ+ community, including servicemembers and their families, are "evil"?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No, and I never said that.

112. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you believe that those who support LGBTQ+ community, including servicemembers and their families, are "treasonous"?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No, and I never said that.

113. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, on July 1, 2023, you stated that a transgender servicemember was "weak, mentally and physically, and needs a different environment to work out [her] problems." Do you believe that transgender people are mentally and physically weak?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No, and I did not make such a generalization.

114. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, in response to a tweet from another user who posted about an openly transgender female fighter, you tweeted, "A mental health epidemic celebrated by the left and forced into the rest." Do you stand by this statement, and do you believe that being transgender means someone is part of a "mental health epidemic"?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I believe that context is important regarding these statements. I made them as a private citizen freely expressing my Constitutional right to free speech. They do not necessarily reflect how I would express myself as a leader of the Department of the Air Force and a representative of that institution, if confirmed.

115. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, how do you think Department of Defense leaders making statements like the above hurts recruitment and morale for servicemembers with LGBTQ+ children?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do not have access to the data that would assist in making a determination as to whether such statements are having a negative effect on recruiting or morale.

116. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, did you ever support "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I support the law. If confirmed, I will continue to uphold the law.

117. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you currently support "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I support the law. If confirmed, I will continue to uphold the law.

118. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you believe that LGBTQ+ servicemembers should be able to openly serve in our military?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I support the Department's policy of allowing all to serve as long as they can meet the standards without accommodation.

119. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, do you expect to meet recruiting goals and attract the most effective future leaders if you continue to insult and denigrate servicemembers who are part of the LGBTQ+ community?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I reject the premise of this question. I do not desire to insult or denigrate any servicemembers.

#### INVESTIGATIONS

120. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, did you receive permission from any component of the Department of Defense to publish your book, *Irresistible Revolution: Marxism's Goal of Conquest & the Unmaking of the American Military*?

Mr. LOHMEIER. No. However, I consulted with and received legal counsel from my base judge advocate general and consulted with and received advice from DOD public affairs before publication. My purpose in consulting with them was to understand my legal obligations as well as DOD policy and I acted consistent with their advice and counsel.

121. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, were you advised by public affairs personnel or any other individuals that the pre-publication review of your book was unnecessary? Please provide a copy of any correspondence or documentation that confirms this.

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, I was advised by both my base judge advocate general and a DOD public affairs officer that prepublication review was unnecessary given the academic/historical nature of the work. Unfortunately, I do not have written correspondence or documentation confirming this. DOD may still have these files on hand.

122. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, after you were relieved as the commander of the 11th Space Warning Squadron at Buckley Air Force Base but were still an Active Duty servicemember, you went on the Sean Hannity Show and said that communications were sent out to every base to prepare for the Department's "extremism down-days" and that these communications "taught that the country was evil. That it was founded in 1619 not 1776. And that Whites are inherently evil." The Department of Defense provided training videos to Fox News that contradicted your claims. Do you still stand by these statements?

Mr. LOHMEIER. The interview in question was taken in my personal capacity, which was indicated at the beginning of the interview. In the interview, I accurately communicated the guidance that servicemembers had received from the Department, and I advocated for an apolitical military, and said that my standard as a commander was to not tolerate any discrimination based on race or political affiliation. However, what I said has been mischaracterized in the question above. I stand by the comments I made during that interview in their full context, but those comments were made in reference to what was being taught and discussed at my base specifically. The partisan and anti-American rhetoric at my base were the subject of a formal written complaint to the Space Force IG in November 2020, over a half-year before my book was published.

123. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, did the Air Force Inspector General launch an investigation about your conduct relating to the complaint made to the Air Force Inspector General dated May 14, 2021?

Mr. LOHMEIER. To the best of my knowledge, the Air Force Inspector General did launch an investigation into my conduct; however, I am not aware of "the complaint" referenced.

124. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, did the Air Force Inspector General complete any investigation on your conduct?

Mr. LOHMEIER. My present understanding is that completion of the investigation was deemed unnecessary due to my voluntary separation from the Service. However, shortly after I separated, I was informed by phone that the investigation had been "closed," and that neither I nor then-Lt Gen Stephen Whiting had been found guilty of misconduct.

125. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, if the Air Force Inspector General completed any investigation regarding your conduct, please provide the results of this investigation.

Mr. LOHMEIER. I do not have anything in writing indicating the results of that investigation. After I honorably separated from Active Duty in September 2021, I received a phone call from the Air Force IG office who informed me that the investigation had closed, and that neither I nor then-Lt Gen Stephen Whiting had been found guilty of misconduct.

126. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, please provide a copy of the results of the Command Directed Investigation (CDI) initiated by Lieutenant General Stephen Whiting, USSF, to determine whether public comments you had made constituted prohibited partisan political activity.

Mr. LOHMEIER. While [DC5]Lt Gen Whiting did inform me that he had directed an investigation, I was never provided with the results and presume this means that the allegations were appropriately unsubstantiated.

#### NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION

127. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, if the Air Force plans to extend Minuteman III to 2050, would the Air Force and lead contractor Northrop Grumman Corp. benefit from additional time to better plan and manage the Sentinel program?

Mr. LOHMEIER. It is my understanding the Minuteman III will continue to be sustained and operated by the Air Force until replaced by Sentinel. The capabilities and deterrence value of Sentinel capabilities are critical to national defense. If confirmed, I will commit to working with the acquisition enterprise and industry to successfully manage the Sentinel program.

128. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, what is your understanding of the value of an Integrated Master Schedule for managing large and complex programs?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I understand the value of an Integrated Master Schedule (IMS) to be critical to verifying the attainability of contract objectives, evaluating progress toward meeting program objectives and integrating government/contractor program schedule activities. I believe this type of comprehensive roadmap can help improve communication, coordination, and control throughout a program's life.

129. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, under what circumstances should a complex program advance without an Integrated Master Schedule?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I understand that advancing a complex program without an Integrated Master Schedule (IMS) is generally a higher-risk proposition and should be avoided whenever possible.

130. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, what is your understanding of the biggest challenges confronting the Sentinel program?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I understand there to be a variety of challenges confronting the Sentinel programs, including talent acquisition, supply chain deliveries, and construction complexity, to name a few. I know that overcoming these challenges will require strong leadership, effective management, and sustained commitment from the government, industry, and the public. If confirmed, I look forward to getting fully briefed on this program and helping to find solutions to the challenges.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH

##### POLITICIZATION OF THE MILITARY

131. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Lohmeier, you stated in your hearing testimony that you engaged with Members of Congress about your concerns, after your Inspector General (IG) complaint was found with no merit but before you decided to publish your book and publicly speak out. You committed to providing documentation of your correspondence with Members of Congress. Can you please provide records of this correspondence with dates?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes, as I stated in my hearing testimony, I attempted to engage Members of Congress by letter about my concerns over the politicization of the military workplace after I had discussed my concerns with my chain of command and after my IG complaint had been dismissed. I have attached that letter, dated May 14, 2021. The same letter was addressed and sent to various members of both the Senate and House of Representatives.

132. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Lohmeier, if confirmed, do you commit not to retaliate against general officers or military servicemembers for executing lawful policies enacted by a previous Administration?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I commit to following the law.

INSPECTOR GENERAL INVESTIGATION

133. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Lohmeier, as you promised in our call on April 30, 2025, can you please provide documentation of your claim that, after you separated, the Air Force cleared you of any accusations or formal charges of engaging in prohibited partisan political activity or partisan statements?

Mr. LOHMEIER. I honorably separated from Active Duty on September 1, 2021. The honorable discharge status is indicated on my DD214. After I separated from the Air Force, the Air Force IG office called to inform me that they had closed their investigation, and the evidence did not substantiate any allegations against me. I never received any written notification afterward, but the Air Force may have additional documentation.

UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES

134. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Lohmeier, if confirmed, do you commit that your deliberations and decisions will only be communicated through official, secure channels and any decisions properly documented for both oversight and institutional memory?

Mr. LOHMEIER. Yes.

[The nomination reference of Mr. Matthew L. Lohmeier follows:]

**NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT**

**PN22-15**

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:

Matthew Lohmeier, of Arizona, to be Under Secretary of the Air Force, vice Melissa Griffin Dalton, 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. Matthew L. Lohmeier, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

**Bio**  
**Matthew L. Lohmeier**

**Education:**

- Master of Philosophy in Military Strategy, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS), Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama (2019-2020)
- Master of Military Operational Art and Science, Air Command and Staff College (ACSC), Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama (2018-2019)
- Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences, United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), Colorado (2000-2006); Note: there is a two-year gap from 2002-2004 during which time I was serving a proselytizing mission for the LDS Church in Taiwan
- Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape (SERE) School, Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington (2011)
- Exchange student at People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) Academy, Chang Chun, China (2005)
- Foreign language minor/skills: Mandarin Chinese

**Employment Record:**

- STARRS, Inc. (an education-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit)
  - Executive Vice President
  - (July 2024-present)
- STARRS, Inc. (an education-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit)
  - Director of Operations
  - (2022-2023)
- Public Speaker and Author
  - Self-employed
  - (September 2021-July 2024)

Active-Duty Air Force/Space Force Career prior to September 2021

- Space Warning Squadron, Buckley AFB, Colorado, US Space Force
  - Commander
  - (June 2020-May 2021)
- School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
  - Master's Student
  - (June 2019-June 2020)
- Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell, AFB, Alabama
  - Master's Student
  - (June 2018-June 2019)
- Air Force Space Command Commander, Peterson AFB, Colorado
  - Aide-de-Camp
  - (May 2017-June 2018)
- Space-based Missile Warning, Buckley AFB, Colorado
  - Executive Officer
  - Chief of Training, Block 10 Operations
  - Crew Commander
  - (October 2014-May 2017)
- Fighter Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan
  - Executive Officer

- F-15C fighter pilot
  - (December 2012-October 2013)
- Pilot Training, Vance AFB, Oklahoma
  - T-38 Instructor Pilot
  - T-6/T-38 Student Pilot
  - (August 2007-December 2012)
- Fighter Squadron, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona
  - Executive Officer
  - (July 2006-August 2007)

**Honors and Awards:**

- Defender of Freedom Award, America's Future Event, Mar-a-Lago (2025)
- Meritorious Service Medal (2018)
- Air Force Commendation Medal (2012)
- Air Force Achievement Medal (2007)
- *Distinguished Graduate*, Officer Undergraduate Space Training, Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), California (2014)
- *Distinguished Graduate*, F-15C Initial Qualification Training (IQT), Kingsley Field Air National Guard, Oregon (2012)
- *Distinguished Graduate*, Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals (IFF), Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas (2012)
- *Distinguished Graduate*, Squadron Officer School (SOS), Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama (2011)

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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 Mr. Matthew L. Lohmeier 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

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):** Matthew L. Lohmeier
2. **Position to which nominated:** Under Secretary of the Air Force
3. **Date of nomination:** 02/03/2025
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):**  
  - United States Air Force Academy, 2000-2006, Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences; Minor in Mandarin Chinese (granted May 2006); Note: there is a two-year gap from 2002-2004 during which time I was serving a proselytizing mission for the LDS Church in Taiwan
  - Air Command and Staff College, Air University, 2018-2019, Master of Military Operational Art and Science (granted June 2019)
  - School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, 2019-2020, Master of Philosophy in Military Strategy (granted June 2020)
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):

-July 2024-Present: Executive Vice President, STARRS Inc., 501(c)(3) education-based nonprofit (Monument, Colorado)  
 -September 2021-July 2024: Self-employed as guest lecturer/author (Boise, Idaho)

-Separated from active duty (honorably) on September 1, 2021  
 -June 2020-May 2021: Commander, 11th Space Warning Squadron (Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, US Space Force)  
 -June 2019-June 2020: Student, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, US Air Force)  
 -June 2018-June 2019: Student, Air Command and Staff College (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, US Air Force)  
 -May 2017-June 2018: Aide-de-Camp for General John J. Raymond, Air Force Space Command Commander (Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado)  
 -January 2016-May 2017: Executive Officer (Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado)  
 -October 2014-January 2016: Chief of Training, Block 10 Operations, Space-based missile warning (Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado)  
 -Prior to 2014: F-15C fighter pilot and T-38 instructor pilot in the Air Force, and other active-duty Air Force jobs/roles

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):** Executive Vice President, STARRS Inc. (an education-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit)
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):** Not applicable

## 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):

-“The Better Mind of Space” (Wright Flyer Papers, Air University Press, 2019)  
 -*Irresistible Revolution* (self-published through Ingram Spark, 2020)

## 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; However, in January 11, 2024, I testified before the House Oversight's Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs regarding “The Risks of Progressive Ideologies in the US Military,” the transcript for which is located at govinfo.gov

**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

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

SIGNATURE AND DATE

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



This 6 day of February, 20 25

[The nomination of Mr. Matthew L. Lohmeier 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 July 24, 2025.]

[Prepared questions submitted to Mr. Justin P. Overbaugh by Chairman Wicker prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSESDUTIES, QUALIFICATIONS, AND RELATIONSHIPS

*Question.* Section 137a of title 10, U.S. Code, establishes the position of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (DUSD(I&S)) and provides that the DUSD "shall be appointed from among persons who have extensive experience in intelligence matters."

If confirmed as DUSD(I&S), what do you believe would be your most critical duties and responsibilities?

*Answer.* The primary responsibility of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (DUSD(I&S)) is to support the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S)) as well as the Secretary of Defense by executing his intelligence and security responsibilities and authorities, including the authorities that are codified in Title 10 and Title 50 of the United States Code. Conducting this responsibility in support of the warfighter and our national defense will always be on the top of my mind. If confirmed, I will also always want to balance the USD(I&S)'s responsibilities with the protection of privacy and civil liberties, pursuant to section 137(c) of Title 10 United States Code and in accordance with Federal law and the regulations and directives of the Department of Defense.

I understand that the responsibilities of the DUSD(I&S) by statute and policy are contained in DOD Directive 5143.01. I would support the USD(I&S) as the Principal Staff Assistant and advisor regarding intelligence, counterintelligence, security, sensitive activities, and other intelligence-related matters; exercising authority, direction, and control on behalf of the Secretary of Defense over the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), the National Security Agency / Central Security Service (NSA / CSS), the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), and the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA); establishing policy and priorities for, and providing oversight of, the defense intelligence and security enterprises; exercising oversight of personnel policy to ensure that intelligence organizations in the Department of Defense are staffed, organized, trained, and equipped to support the missions of the Department; ensuring that the DOD intelligence components that are also elements of the intelligence community (IC) are responsive to the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) in the execution of the DNI's authorities; ensuring that the combatant commanders, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the civilian leadership of the Department are provided with appropriate intelligence support; ensuring that counterintelligence activities in the Department are conducted and managed efficiently and effectively; ensuring that cer-

tain sensitive activities which the Department conducts or supports are conducted and managed efficiently and effectively; overseeing the implementation of assigned DOD security policies and programs to ensure efficiency and effectiveness; and serving as the Program Executive for the Military Intelligence Program (MIP).

*Question.* What is your understanding of the role of the DUSD(I&S) as “first assistant” to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S))?

Answer. As the principal assistant to the Under Secretary, the DUSD(I&S) assists the USD(I&S) in carrying out the responsibilities, fulfill functions, manage relationships, and exercise authorities as provided for in law and DOD Directive 5143.01, including the exercise of authority, direction, and control on behalf of the Secretary of Defense over the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), the National Security Agency/Central Security Service (NSA/CSS), the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), and the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA). In addition, the DUSD(I&S) assists the USD(I&S) in planning, policy, and strategic oversight for all defense intelligence, counterintelligence and security policy, plans, and programs. Last, the DUSD(I&S) advises on and assists the Under Secretary with all responsibilities in providing staff advice and assistance to the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, as a leader in the Department it is an implied responsibility, when appropriate, beneficial, and lawful, to collaboratively support the intelligence-related needs for the whole-of-government mission to protect our Nation’s security.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the differences between the title 10 and title 50 duties of the USD(I&S)—duties that, in regard to some matters, could be delegated to you if confirmed as the DUSD(I&S)?

Answer. My understanding is that the DUSD(I&S) supports the USD(I&S) and Secretary of Defense in fulfilling all the Secretary’s statutory responsibilities in the areas of intelligence and security, whether codified in Title 10 or Title 50 of the United States Code. Although I am not aware of any specific portfolio assignments or delegations at this time, the duties of the USD(I&S) are further prescribed in DOD Directive (DoDD) 5143.01. This includes providing overall direction and supervision for policy, program planning and execution, and use of resources for DOD activities that are part of the Military Intelligence Program and for personnel security, physical security, industrial security, and the protection of classified information and controlled unclassified information-related activities. Of note, section 137(c) of title 10 also states that it shall be a top priority of the USD(I&S) to protect privacy and civil liberties in accordance with Federal law and the regulations and directives of DOD.

I also understand that the USD(I&S) supports the Secretary of Defense in fulfilling the responsibilities in subsection 3038(a) of Title 50, United States Code, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, to ensure: (1) that the budgets of the intelligence community (IC) elements within the Department of Defense (DoD) are adequately funded to the overall DOD intelligence needs; (2) the implementation of the policies and resource decisions of the Director of National Intelligence by DOD Components within the National Intelligence Program (NIP); (3) that DOD tactical intelligence activities complement and are compatible with intelligence activities funded by the NIP; (4) that the IC elements within DOD are responsive and timely with respect to satisfying the needs of operational military forces; (5) waste and unnecessary duplication among the DOD intelligence activities are eliminated; and (6) that DOD intelligence activities are conducted jointly where appropriate.

*Question.* What leadership and management experience do you possess that you would apply to your service as DUSD(I&S), if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, it would be my privilege to put my nearly 26 years of experience in leadership and management in service as DUSD(I&S). Most recently, I’ve served as the Chief Operations Officer for Strategic Decision Solutions, a boutique strategy and risk consulting firm serving midsize (\$200mil to \$1b) property and casualty insurance companies. Prior to that, I served in the U.S. Army for over 25 years, retiring as a Colonel. I’ve successfully led and managed organizations specializing in Infantry, Intelligence Counterintelligence and Recruiting operations. As part of my duties, I’ve managed relationships with U.S. community leaders, U.S. and foreign intelligence services, and U.S. interagency and foreign military partners.

*Question.* Please provide an example of a situation in which you led and brought to conclusion a management improvement/change initiative in a complex organization.

Answer. As Director of Intelligence for a Special Operations—Joint Task Force at U.S. Special Operations Command, I led a change initiative to establish full-spectrum intelligence support for a new strategic organization tasked with global syn-

chronization of sensitive, national-level capabilities. As part of this effort, I successfully convened seven international partners to collaborate on 148 global operations, enhancing partner-nation interoperability and improving the efficiency and efficacy of operations and intelligence sharing. Additionally, I built a new decision support and analytical team that connected our joint task force with 25 national defense, intelligence, and academic organizations. This initiative culminated in the creation of a comprehensive, global threat picture, which significantly strengthened our ability to respond to emerging threats and made a measurable impact on global security operations.

*Question.* What is your experience across the domain of intelligence matters? Security matters?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to applying my over two decades of intelligence and security related experience to the role of DUSD(I&S). Mostly recently, I served as Director of Intelligence for a Special Operations—Joint Task Force, establishing full-spectrum intelligence support to a new U.S. Special Operations Command organization charged with global synchronization of sensitive, national-level capabilities. In this capacity I worked across the Intelligence Community and Inter-agency along with Foreign Allies and Partners to reorient some of the U.S.'s most exceptional resources toward our most challenging threats. Prior to that role, I served in various intelligence positions of increasing responsibility including Human Intelligence Branch Chief at U.S. Special Operations Command, the Commander of all U.S. Army Strategic Counterintelligence operations in Europe and Africa, Counterintelligence Case Officer, Executive Officer for the U.S. Army's only dedicated Counterintelligence unit charged with supporting Special Operations Forces, Military Source Operations Collector in eastern Afghanistan, the Senior Intelligence Officer for 2d Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, and as a Reconnaissance Platoon Leader in the 101st Airborne Division. Along the way, I earned two graduate degrees (MS in Defense Analysis and MA in National Security and Strategic Studies), co-authored scholarly articles on intelligence and foreign policy, graduated from DIA's Advanced Foreign Counterintelligence Operations Course, earned the U.S. Army Counterintelligence Agent's Badge and Credentials and was recognized with the National Counterintelligence Executive's 2014 Counterintelligence Operations Award.

*Question.* Are there any actions you would take to enhance your ability to perform the duties and exercise the powers of the DUSD(I&S)?

Answer. If confirmed, leveraging the experience and wisdom of the career professionals within the DISE and throughout the Department will be critical to my own and the organization's success. I believe in the value of seeking knowledge in every direction and will do so if confirmed. Furthermore, I would work to ensure an organization climate that encourages the best ideas to flow freely through the organization.

From my understanding of the responsibilities of the OUSD(I&S) and requirements in support of DOD, the broader IC, and the whole-of-government, it is imperative to foster and facilitate a collaborative environment to achieve mission success. If confirmed, I will personally work to maintain strong relationships and seek new opportunities for collaboration with stakeholders.

*Question.* If confirmed, specifically what would you do to ensure that your tenure as DUSD(I&S) epitomizes the fundamental requirement for civilian control of the Armed Forces embedded in the U.S. Constitution and other laws?

Answer. As a proud Veteran, I am fully committed to upholding the fundamental requirement in the U.S. Constitution and other laws for civilian control of the Armed Forces, a key principle of American governance and enabler for our success as a Nation. This includes executing my responsibilities and duties established by law and policy to the President, Secretary of Defense, and to the U.S. Congress, and holding those who I manage and oversee accountable for the same.

*Question.* How do you view the relationship and division of responsibilities between the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (OUSD(I&S)) and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)?

Answer. The partnership between OUSD(I&S) and Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) is essential to the success of the DISE. The OUSD(I&S) works closely with the ODNI to effectively integrate intelligence in support of U.S. national security interests. Through the effective partnership and integration between OUSD(I&S) and ODNI, the Intelligence Community delivers coordinated intelligence to policymakers and warfighters on crucial threats to our national security. If confirmed, I will seek to continue to strengthen the partnership between OUSD(I&S) and the ODNI to maximize effects and return on investment of our combined efforts.

The USD(I&S) himself is dual-hatted as the Director of Defense Intelligence at ODNI and there is a military officer who serves as the DNI's Advisor on Military Affairs (DAMA) to ensure tight coordination between the Department of Defense Intelligence Enterprise (DIE) and the greater IC. The staffs must coordinate to effectively and efficiently ensure quality intelligence is provided in support of our national leadership and warfighters. I believe that USD(I&S) plays a critical role and is effective in ensuring IC support to Warfighters.

Last, as a principal member of the Suitability and Security Clearance Performance Accountability Council (PAC), the USD(I&S) works with the DNI, who is the Security Executive Agent and a principal member of the PAC.

*Question.* How do you view the relationship and division of responsibilities between the OUSD(I&S) and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)), particularly as regards policy and programs for information operations, including military deception and operations security (OPSEC)?

*Answer.* My understanding is that the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) is the Principal Staff Assistant for oversight of Information Operations (IO), and that the USD(I&S) is the Program Management Lead for DOD deception activities and operations security. In coordination with the USD(P), the USD(I&S) develops and oversees implementation of DOD policy, programs, and guidance for military deception and operations security; the coordination and deconfliction of DOD IO and intelligence activities; and develops and oversees the implementation of policy for intelligence support to IO. If confirmed, I will prioritize ensuring the Department has all available tools to effectively compete along the full competition continuum. A strong partnership between OUSD(I&S) and OUSD(P) is critical in the development and effectiveness of DOD activities to counter adversary activities in the "gray zone", which will enable our ability to deter adversaries short of armed conflict and re-establish deterrence.

*Question.* In your view, what would be the optimum relationship between the OUSD(I&S) and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in regard to providing operational intelligence, counterintelligence, and security support to the warfighter?

*Answer.* I understand that the USD(I&S) is responsible for supporting the Secretary of Defense in discharging his intelligence and security responsibilities and authorities under Title 10 and Title 50 of the United States Code. This includes exercising authority, direction, and control on behalf of the Secretary of Defense over certain defense intelligence components of the Department of Defense and working closely with the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, Service Components, and the ODNI to develop effective policy, plans, programs, and priorities. The optimal relationship between OUSD(I&S) and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is mutual support and consultation to ensure the defense intelligence enterprise (DIE) provides the warfighters with the best intelligence possible, to conduct their planning and operations and to provide the Secretary of Defense with the best defense intelligence and military advice.

*Question.* What is your understanding of how the responsibilities for the oversight of the activities and programs of special operations forces are delineated between the OUSD(I&S) and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC))?

*Answer.* I understand that USD(I&S), the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)), and the DOD Senior Intelligence Oversight Official (SIOO) acting together are the primary oversight officials for all U.S. Special Operations Forces intelligence and intelligence-related activities and programs. A strong partnership between OUSD(I&S), ASD(SO/LIC), and their Deputies is critical in the development and effectiveness of many DOD activities in the "gray zone," which will enable DOD's ability to deter adversaries short of armed conflict and reestablish deterrence. If confirmed, we will work closely together with the SIOO, who I understand provides independent oversight within the Department of intelligence and intelligence-related activities. I will continue this close partnership to ensure that the United States is best postured to maximize effects. In doing so, I will ensure defense intelligence activities adhere to appropriate coordination processes within the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

*Question.* How do you view the relationship and division of responsibilities between OUSD(I&S) and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition & Sustainment (OUSD(A&S)) in regard to both unclassified and classified contract efforts?

*Answer.* I understand the relationship between OUSD(I&S) and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition & Sustainment (OUSD(A&S)) is one of cooperation and collaboration. I am aware of existing important efforts between both offices, to include an examination of DOD oversight of classified contracting, getting the National Background Investigation Services program back on track, and

partnering to protect the National Security Innovation Base and Defense Industrial Base from adversary compromise. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about these efforts and making my own assessment of their progress.

Also, if confirmed, a priority of mine will be to better enable intelligence to inform Department investments, effectively matching capabilities with threats, along the entire acquisition life cycle. I will work closely with the USD(A&S) to best integrate intelligence efforts to effectively support decisionmakers amidst a rapidly evolving technological and threat environment.

*Question.* How do you view the relationship and division of responsibilities between the OUSD(I&S) and the DOD Chief Information Officer, particularly with respect to the cybersecurity mission; developing interoperability requirements applicable to information systems architectures for processing intelligence and counterintelligence information; and the certification of intelligence information systems?

*Answer.* I view the relationship between the OUSD(I&S) and the Department of Defense Chief Information Officer (DoD CIO) as one predicated on collaboration and partnership to align, secure, and modernize information security policies and DOD's information system architectures to support our warfighters. I understand that the DOD CIO advises the Secretary of Defense on information technology, including National Security Systems and defense business systems, cybersecurity, and develops DOD strategy and policy for all DOD information technology. Along with the newly established position for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber Policy, the partnership between OUSD(I&S) and DOD CIO is imperative for continuing cybersecurity efforts, such as implementing Zero Trust on all three DOD network fabrics to mitigate nefarious actors including potential insider threats.

If confirmed, I will work with the DOD CIO to advance the department's mission by ensuring an integrated, intelligence, and counterintelligence informed management of IT and network security that addresses the evolving cybersecurity threat.

*Question.* How do you view the relationship between the OUSD(I&S) and the heads of the Intelligence Components of the Military Departments? What factors would you recommend that the USD(I&S) consider and weigh in providing input to the Secretaries of the Military Departments on the duty performance of the heads of their respective Intelligence Components?

*Answer.* My understanding is that the OUSD(I&S) staff works closely with the heads of the intelligence and counterintelligence components of the Military Departments. The USD(I&S) then provides input to the Secretaries of the Military Departments on the performance of the senior intelligence officer within each Military Department.

The USD(I&S) is the Principal Staff Assistant to the Secretary of Defense with authority delegated from the Secretary to establish policy for DOD intelligence, counterintelligence, security, sensitive activities, and other intelligence-related matters. If confirmed as the DUSD(I&S), I will assist the Directors for Defense Intelligence within OUSD(I&S) with their specific programmatic responsibilities and support the USD(I&S) in carrying out his assigned responsibilities and exercising the authorities delegated to the USD(I&S) by the Secretary of Defense.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments exercise authority, direction, and control over all components within their respective Departments. The heads of the intelligence and counterintelligence components within the Military Departments are under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of the Military Department, and subject to the policy oversight of the USD(I&S).

I understand that DOD Directive 5143.01 outlines the responsibilities and functions, relationships, and authorities of the USD(I&S). In accordance with this Directive, OUSD(I&S) assists the USD(I&S) to develop and provide policy guidance, resource advocacy, and oversight for the integration of Reserve Component intelligence elements, and ensures the Department effectively employs and resources Reserve Component intelligence elements to best support the National Defense Strategy. The programmatic role of OUSD(I&S) is the same with respect to the Active and Reserve Components of the Military Services. Like the Active Components, the Reserve Components' intelligence elements are under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of the relevant Military Department in which they are located, and subject to the policy oversight of the OUSD(I&S).

*Question.* What is your understanding of the DUSD(I&S)'s responsibility and authority for the management and oversight of Military Intelligence Program (MIP) and National Intelligence Program (NIP) funding? How do the processes employed by the OUSD(I&S) in the execution of these responsibilities differ from the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process applicable to all other DOD organizations and funding?

*Answer.* My understanding is that USD(I&S) executes the Secretary's statutory responsibilities regarding the budgets of the DOD components that comprise the In-

telligence Community (IC), specifically ensuring the budgets of DOD IC elements are adequate to satisfy the overall intelligence needs of the Department. Further, as the MIP Executive Agent, the USD(I&S) is also responsible for the management and oversight of the Military Intelligence Program (MIP). The USD(I&S) executes the functions for the NIP of the Department, as delegated by the Secretary of Defense, and as the Director of Defense Intelligence for ODNI, has visibility into the NIP through participation in the ODNI PPBE decision forums. Additionally, the DNI and the USD(I&S) then jointly issue intelligence programming guidance to closely synchronize NIP and MIP-funded programs to ensure the Department's priorities are communicated to the IC. If confirmed, I will support the USD(I&S) in his partnership with the ODNI in ensuring DOD intelligence requirements are effectively supported within the NIP budget.

With respect to the DOD PPBE process, it is my understanding that the USD(I&S) is a full participant in the Department's PPBE process and that military intelligence requirements compete with the other DOD requirements.

*Question.* If confirmed, specifically what actions would you take to develop and sustain an open, transparent, and productive relationship between the Senate Armed Services Committee and the OUSD(I&S) and the Defense Agencies under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(I&S)?

*Answer.* I believe that collaborative congressional oversight provides an invaluable perspective on DOD activities that informs better decisions within both branches of government, ultimately making DOD more effective in achieving our common purpose of strengthening our national defense. If confirmed, I intend to maintain a routine, continuous, and transparent dialog with the defense oversight committees to discuss the Department's activities that are subject to their oversight, including defense intelligence, counterintelligence, security, sensitive activities, and other intelligence-related activities. I am committed to maintaining open lines of communication with Congress to ensure accurate and consistent information is shared from the OUSD(I&S) and the defense agencies under USD(I&S) authority. Through this approach, I will seek to facilitate effective oversight and build mutual trust between DOD and Congress, enabling DOD constructive conversations and collaboration on statutory authorities, resource allocation, and oversight.

*Question.* If confirmed, will you commit to ensure that this Committee is provided with the notifications required under law, and that any such notification is accurate, complete, and timely?

*Answer.* I am committed to keeping Congress fully and currently informed for all activities that fall under the USD(I&S)'s responsibility under DOD Directive 5143.01, including fulfilling the notification requirements in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 2723. If confirmed, I will examine how the OUSD(I&S) supports the USD(I&S) with respect to this responsibility and pursue improvements, as needed, to ensure such notifications are accurate, complete, and timely.

#### 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.* I agree to comply with all conflicts of interest disclosure requirements set forth in the Ethics in Government Act and implementing regulations.

*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.* I agree to comply with all recusal requirements under 18 U.S.C. § 208 and implementing regulations.

*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.* I commit to deciding matters on the merits based on the public interest, without regard to any private gain or personal benefit

#### MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

*Question.* What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you would face if confirmed as the DUSD(I&S)?

*Answer.* If confirmed, the most significant challenge I anticipate as DUSD(I&S) will be how to ensure that the DISE is most effectively supporting the Secretary

of Defense's priorities of restoring a warrior ethos, rebuilding our military, and reestablishing deterrence in support of our national defense in a rapidly changing environment.

Effective management of the DISE is essential, and we must align efforts to maximize effects downrange and the return on our investment. This includes ensuring we have the right technology and organizational structure to enable our personnel—some of America's best—to increase their impact in today's operational environment, and to position the Enterprise for the rapidly changing landscape of the future. If confirmed, I would ensure the Enterprise has the culture, business best practices, and processes necessary to be agile, while remaining laser focused on the mission. Adapting the DISE at the speed of relevance will be difficult, but essential. From my perspective, technology advancements in ubiquitous sensing, space control, and unmanned systems at scale are examples of the challenges to which we must adapt.

If confirmed, I will endeavor to better enable intelligence to inform Department investments, effectively matching capabilities with threats. With program costs incredibly high—and the cost of misallocation on the modern battlefield even higher—the premium on intelligence effectively informing the entire acquisition life cycle is at an all-time high. I believe the speed of the technology will require increased focus earlier in the development cycle, requiring an increased focus on scientific & technical intelligence.

We must ensure the Department has all the tools required to most effectively compete along the full continuum of conflict. Our adversaries are increasingly conducting malign activity below a threshold that has traditionally triggered a military response. Enhancing DOD Irregular Warfare capabilities will allow us to provide leaders with risk-informed options to better compete short of armed conflict and reestablish deterrence. Similarly, I believe offensive cyber capabilities and an increased focus on Defense human intelligence are areas for opportunity. Finally, offensive counterintelligence efforts are essential in disrupting our adversaries. These options may often carry additional risk; however, the DISE will strive to provide risk-informed options to the Secretary that support his and the President's national security objectives.

#### EXPANDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*Question.* In 2003, Congress established the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence with the intent to improve coordination of the Department of Defense's intelligence and security efforts in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The roles and responsibilities of the Under Secretary have expanded significantly since the creation of the position, particularly in the areas of security and law enforcement.

What is your understanding of the evolution and growth of the roles and responsibilities of the OUSD(I&S) since its establishment?

*Answer.* I understand that the evolution of the roles and responsibilities of the OUSD(I&S) since its establishment in 2003 have been strategic and responsive to the evolution and growth of requirements to support the Secretary of Defense in executing intelligence and security responsibilities and authorities under Title 10 and Title 50 of the United States Code. The growth is largely attributed to the evolution of important security functions and programs that enable the Department to more effectively compete across the spectrum of conflict, to include implementation and oversight of Trusted Workforce 2.0 and the designation of the Under Secretary as the Principal Staff Assistant for Law Enforcement. I see these and others as necessary to support the Secretary in the successful implementation of the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance.

*Question.* If confirmed, how do you intend to balance the significant and varied responsibilities of the OUSD(I&S)?

*Answer.* I understand that the USD(I&S) is the Principal Staff Assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense with authority delegated from the Secretary of Defense to establish policy and provide oversight for DOD intelligence, counterintelligence, security, sensitive activities, other intelligence-related matters, and law enforcement. If confirmed as the DUSD(I&S), I will support the USD(I&S) in fulfilling all responsibilities in a manner that supports the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance. I will identify and leverage the extraordinary expertise and talent across OUSD(I&S) and Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise to successfully accomplish this objective.

SUPERVISION, AND OVERSIGHT OF THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY  
ENTERPRISE

*Question.* The USD(I&S) is vested with responsibility for the overall direction and supervision of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise in the execution of intelligence, counterintelligence, security, sensitive activities, and other intelligence-related matters across DOD. Subject to USD(I&S) oversight, responsibility for executing policies and programs in these domains vests primarily in the Military Departments and Services, elements of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Defense Agencies.

What is your understanding of the role of the OUSD(I&S) in coordinating the activities of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise?

*Answer.* I see intelligence and security as mutually reinforcing mission areas. The Department must understand the intentions, capabilities, and activities of strategic competitors and adversaries. Similarly, the security apparatus must safeguard our personnel, information, capabilities, and infrastructure against adversaries. I understand that OUSD(I&S) works across the Department with the Military Services and defense agencies to identify requirements and capabilities to meet DOD priorities. They work closely with the ODNI to ensure the national intelligence priorities take all Departmental requirements into account. These efforts ensure Enterprise alignment with all national and Department-level strategies, guidance, direction, and relevant priorities. The USD(I&S) also executes the Military Intelligence Program (MIP) and participates in the ODNI specified National Intelligence Program (NIP) process to ensure resources are aligned against DOD priorities.

NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current strategic environment, including your assessment of the critical and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its allies and partners?

*Answer.* The United States faces one of the most dangerous strategic environments in our Nation's history, characterized by the vulnerability of the U.S. Homeland from years of unsecured borders, increasingly capable air and missile threats, and others; China's unprecedented military buildup and its intent to seize control of the Indo-Pacific; and a range of other persistent threats to the United States and its Allies and partners, including Russia, Iran, North Korea, and terrorists. In addition, growing cooperation between Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea must be monitored to safeguard our interests.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you prioritize the efforts of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise relative to the critical and enduring threats identified above?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure the DISE prioritizes intelligence support and effective security posture, aligned to strategic priorities and the evolving threat environment. I will work across DOD and the Intelligence Community to prioritize capabilities that address critical and enduring threats while identifying and considering capability gaps and shortfalls throughout the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process. In addition, I will partner closely with the DNI to align the MIP and NIP for greatest effect downrange and return on investment.

*Question.* In your view, what role(s) should the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise play in the implementation of the National Defense Strategy?

*Answer.* The DISE plays a vital role in implementation of an NDS promulgated by the Secretary of Defense. In support of the objectives of the next NDS, the DISE must support both warfighters and decisionmakers; provide decision advantage; re-establish deterrence; and safeguard personnel, information, operations, resources, technologies, and facilities against a wide range of threats and challenges. At the same time, the DISE must also maintain its ability to provide strategic warning globally.

*Question.* How would you assess the current readiness and capabilities of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise to execute the NDS?

*Answer.* I believe the DISE is well-postured to support DOD's execution of the Department's strategic priorities. If confirmed, I will conduct my own assessment of the Enterprise's readiness and seek new and innovative ways to improve its ability to execute the Interim NDS and the next NDS promulgated by the Secretary of Defense.

## STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES AND ATTRACTING NEW PARTNERS

*Question.* Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to U.S. success in competition and conflict against a great power.

*Question.* If confirmed as DUSD(I&S), what would be your priorities to strengthen and synchronize existing intelligence and counterintelligence relationships with foreign governments and international organizations as well as to foster new relationships?

*Answer.* My time in Army intelligence leading collection operations and supporting Special Operations Forces taught me the immense value of close partnerships with foreign partners. Strong international relationships and intelligence sharing during my military service resulting in increased mission success and decreased risk to force, while shedding light on the fidelity of strategy, formed the foundation for my appreciation of their value at the national level. U.S. intelligence sharing relationships in many cases provide outstanding return on investment as we each leverage our respective placement, access, and capabilities while economizing resources. Allies and partners can be force multipliers that enable DOD to effectively execute the Secretary's next National Defense Strategy if they approach the relationship as true partners, willing to contribute as able and appropriate, not simply be recipients of our intelligence and information. If confirmed, I commit to strengthening defense intelligence and counterintelligence relationships with Allies and partners, including ensuring we have the intelligence sharing relationships needed to execute the next National Security and National Defense Strategies. I also commit to working with the USD(P) and ODNI to ensure synchronization of existing U.S. partnerships and the appropriate prioritization of outreach to new partners.

*Question.* If confirmed, what factors should be considered in rendering decisions on the disclosure and release of intelligence to foreign governments and international organizations, including in support of combatant commanders' expressed desire for better intelligence and intelligence sharing to counter foreign malign activities?

*Answer.* I understand that the National Disclosure Policy (NDP) sets forth the factors that must be considered prior to the disclosure of classified military information, including military intelligence, to appropriate foreign partners. I also understand that the USD(I&S) is responsible for issuing policy for the sharing of military intelligence. If confirmed, I will support the release of military intelligence and coordinate with the DNI to enable the release of national intelligence to Allies and partners to support combatant command requirements in accordance with the NDP when in support of the National Security and National Defense Strategies and aligned with United States policy.

## OVERSIGHT OF SENSITIVE ACTIVITIES

*Question.* The Department of Defense defines sensitive activities as "operations, actions, activities, or programs that, if compromised, could have enduring adverse effects on U.S. foreign policy, DOD activities, or military operations or cause significant embarrassment to the U.S., its allies, or the DOD."

What is your understanding of the role of the USD(I&S) in providing oversight of DOD sensitive activities?

*Answer.* The USD(I&S) is the Principal Staff Assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense regarding intelligence, counterintelligence, law enforcement, security, sensitive activities, tradecraft, and other intelligence-related matters. The USD(I&S) establishes policy and provides oversight and direction for the coordination, assessment, reporting, and conduct of DOD intelligence and intelligence-related sensitive activities, the Defense Cover Program, special communications, technical collection support to intelligence activities, defense sensitive support, and the clandestine use of technology.

If confirmed, I would work closely with relevant defense and interagency stakeholders to ensure DOD sensitive activities are conducted consistent with law and DOD policy.

*Question.* If confirmed, what factors would you consider in assessing risks associated with proposed DOD sensitive activities?

*Answer.* I believe that if DOD is to provide the Secretary of Defense with all necessary options to effectively compete and deter adversaries short of armed conflict, DOD must be prepared to take greater risks in the conduct of the sensitive activities necessary to reestablish deterrence. However, I strongly believe that these risks must be informed risks. OUSD(I&S) should play a critical role in strengthening the oversight of DOD sensitive activities, providing the Secretary and other decision-makers with a deeper understanding of the intelligence, the threat environment, po-

tential impact assessments, and other critical information available to DOD's inter-agency and international partners. If confirmed, I will work with the team to look at these and other factors and determine the extent to which our current risk assessment methodologies are adequate for the current environment to provide the most valuable risk informed decisions.

*Question.* Do you believe the USD(I&S) has a responsibility to keep the congressional defense committees fully and currently informed of DOD sensitive activities? If so, how would you seek to fulfill that responsibility?

*Answer.* Yes, I believe that the USD(I&S) has this responsibility under law, policy, and precedent. If confirmed as the Deputy USD(I&S), I intend to support the USD(I&S) to maintain a routine, continuous, and transparent dialog with the congressional defense committees on all Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise activities, to include DOD sensitive activities. I believe that collaborative congressional oversight provides an invaluable perspective on DOD activities that informs better decisions within both branches of government, ultimately making DOD more effective in achieving our common purpose of strengthening national defense.

#### DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

*Question.* Since September 11, 2001, collaboration—both analytical and operational—between the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community has grown increasingly close. Seamless collaboration is vital to effective and rapid responses to non-traditional threats and bringing together the strengths of the full spectrum of defense and intelligence capabilities can generate more effective solutions to complex problems. However, absent effective management and oversight, such collaboration risks blurring distinct agency missions, authorities, and funding, as well as creating redundant lines of effort.

In your view, are there aspects of the current relationship between the Department and the Intelligence Community that should be re-examined or modified?

*Answer.* I am aware that the OUSD(I&S) works closely with both ODNI and the Central Intelligence Agency to ensure that the Intelligence Community (IC) is able to deliver both national and military intelligence support to policymakers and warfighters. OUSD(I&S) also enables the rest of the DOD and the IC to coordinate and deconflict to ensure the most effective execution of intelligence and sensitive activities. If confirmed, I will seek to strengthen the relationship between OUSD(I&S) and the IC so that we can continue to work together to enhance IC capabilities and enable DOD operations.

#### ECONOMIC COMPETITION

*Question.* Adversarial economic competition is increasingly an issue that DOD needs to factor into its planning process as it intersects with military and national security challenges. Adversaries like China are using economic competition as a gray zone tactic to out-manuever the U.S. by operating in the interstitial spaces between traditional agencies “lanes in the road” and stove-piped authorities. Increasingly, geographic combatant commands are having to consider in their planning process and theater security cooperation plans how to combat adversarial economic competition techniques.

How is DOD postured from an intelligence perspective to understand and analyze the intersection of economic and national security to better prepare DOD to contribute to economic competition?

*Answer.* Economic security is national security—the U.S. military is only as powerful as the underlying strength of the U.S. industrial base. While the President and the Secretary have made clear the expectation that the Department aligns its resources to support the warfighter, DOD can play a significant role in coordinated operations across the economic and military domains to support national security objectives. I understand that DOD has pockets of excellence that contribute heavily to this mission space, but there is certainly room—and a requirement—for increasing depth in relevant areas of expertise to ensure DOD is optimally postured to leverage commercial, financial, economic, and military tools to reinforce the United States' military advantage. This includes an increased focus on China's efforts to gain an economic advantage against the United States and its Allies and partners as well as how their specific economic tradecraft is affecting our competition in order to inform leadership decisions.

*Question.* What expertise and capabilities does DOD have to support the collection and analytic needs for economic competition?

*Answer.* While I have not been fully briefed on current capabilities, I am generally aware that the Defense Intelligence Enterprise has expertise in several relevant fields, ranging from economics and political science to engineering and biosciences.

If confirmed, I will seek to identify gaps in our expertise and capabilities in order to optimize the Enterprise against the economic competition problem set.

*Question.* How will you prioritize intelligence support for the geographic and functional combatant commands, as well as senior leadership in the Department, with regards to adversarial economic competition needs?

Answer. Given the complex and multidisciplinary nature of economic competition, I believe that it is critical that support provided to the combatant commands aligns with the vision and priorities of DOD senior leadership. The President and the Secretary have made clear the expectation that the Department aligns its resources to support the warfighter. We must ensure we have modern structures that appropriately align to the threat, using obsolete organizational structures and outmoded approaches to address new types of threats will not work. If confirmed, I will work to support the USD(I&S) and work with the Defense Intelligence Enterprise (DIE), the Intelligence Community, and the broader U.S. Government to ensure the DIE's support is appropriately distributed with—and aligned between—these key customers to maximize effects.

JOINT REQUIREMENTS OVERSIGHT COUNCIL (JROC) AND THE JOINT CAPABILITIES  
INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS (JCIDS)

*Question.* Per section 181 of title 10, U.S. Code, the JROC is vested with the responsibility to assess joint military capabilities; establish and approve joint performance requirements that ensure interoperability between military capabilities; and identify new joint military capabilities based on advances in technology and concepts of operation. The JCIDS process was established to address overlap and duplication in Military Services' programs by providing the information the JROC needs to identify the capabilities and associated operational performance requirements needed by the joint warfighter.

What is your understanding of the role of the JROC and JCIDS in identifying and establishing joint warfighter capability requirements in the domains of military intelligence, counterintelligence, and security?

Answer. I understand that military intelligence, counterintelligence, and security requirements generated from DOD Components, including the combatant commands, are accounted for among the other Joint Capability Areas in the Joint Requirements Oversight Council's (JROC) subordinate Functional Capabilities Boards (FCB). These FCBs process "bottom up" deliberate and urgent requirements and provide "top down" portfolio reviews that evaluate specific enterprise capability areas. The Joint Capabilities Integration and Development Systems (JCIDS) process is also informed by a yearly JROC-led Capability Gap Assessment that validates and prioritizes Combatant Command capability gaps expressed in their Integrated Priority Lists.

The USD(I&S), as a statutory advisor to the JROC and its subordinate boards, provides advice that supports JCIDS throughout all stages of requirements generation and validation processes and plays a central role in bridging DOD and IC requirements by directly facilitating the common gatekeeping function between the Joint JCIDS and the Intelligence Community Capability Requirements Process.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the role of the defense intelligence enterprise to provide support and insight in the process of informing requirements for the broader acquisition system, especially related to understanding threat systems and illuminating supply chain issues? Are there sufficient people and resources to support acquisition intelligence for the Department?

Answer. I have real concerns about the ability of the existing DOD acquisition integration structure with the intelligence enterprise to effectively match the speed of the technology cycle, the increasing scope of acquisitions challenges, and the criticality of the defense supply chain resiliency in the face of adversary threats. The DISE is a vital component of the acquisition process, providing intelligence throughout the requirements development and acquisition lifecycle on current and future adversary capabilities and threats to DOD supply chains. Ensuring that intelligence is incorporated throughout the requirements development and acquisition lifecycle is necessary to deliver effective, affordable, and resilient capabilities that are matched to the threat environment and free from adversary compromise. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to improve the incorporation of accurate intelligence into the full acquisition lifecycle, to include more robust integration at the earlier stages of the process, to better inform DOD investments.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the role of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (OUSD(I&S)) in identifying and establishing requirements for rapid or urgent operational needs, or other acquisition capabilities (like middle tier acquisitions) not tied to major acquisition programs?

Answer. I understand that, as part of statutory responsibilities to support JCIDS urgent and emergent operational needs processes, the USD(I&S) assists in validating requirements from an intelligence perspective, and further supports solution analysis by identifying emerging technologies and capabilities in the Defense Intelligence Enterprise or National Intelligence Community. When necessary, the USD(I&S) may also facilitate Military or National Intelligence Program funding to accelerate the fielding of a necessary and promising intelligence capability. The analysis performed by USD(I&S) for urgent needs is not limited to major acquisition programs, but may also include science, technology, research, and development capabilities that are of sufficient Technical Readiness Level to be eligible for consideration as a solution to a requirement. From my current perspective, I am concerned that intelligence inputs into the DOD acquisition process are inordinately focused on major acquisitions versus rapid acquisitions, and even then, intelligence inputs often arrive too late in the cycle to fully inform the first and most critical decisions on which programs to develop and purchase. If DOD leaders are to successfully make these hard choices, OUSD(I&S) must improve how the DISE delivers accurate and relevant intelligence to inform DOD's earliest acquisitions decisions, as well as the entire program lifecycle. If confirmed, I intend to leverage all DOD authorities available to accelerate these processes to act at the speed of operational need.

#### INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO THE WARFIGHTER

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you balance the need for the combat support Defense intelligence agencies to provide intelligence support to the warfighter with the need to provide intelligence support to policymakers?

Answer. Balancing support to the warfighter with intelligence support to policymakers is one of the OUSD(I&S)'s primary responsibilities. In today's environment of global and regional threats, most issues are relevant to both warfighting commands and policymakers. If confirmed, where there remain tactical and operational differences, I would work to ensure the DISE continues to satisfy requirements for operationally relevant intelligence that directly enable warfighter success, and I would work collaboratively across DOD and with interagency partners to inform policy and military decisionmaking by our national leaders.

*Question.* In your view, what opportunities exist across the Intelligence Community to improve intelligence support to the warfighter? If confirmed, what would you do to leverage these opportunities?

Answer. My experience in uniform underpins my belief in the importance of and the continued opportunity to improve collaboration across the intelligence community to better support the warfighter.

If confirmed, I would engage early and often with the combatant commanders to improve my understanding of their needs, and I would frequently engage leaders within the national intelligence community to obtain support to meet those warfighter needs. I am particularly interested in applying greater attention to faster, more agile, and adaptive processing, exploitation, and dissemination of intelligence data to better support the warfighter and others that engage our adversaries at the tactical edge—especially as DOD warfighters increasingly rely on resilient and survivable sensors further removed from the battlefield to inform their tactical decisions.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the geographic combatant commands are adequately assessing and prioritizing their intelligence needs?

Answer. I understand that OUSD(I&S) conducts multiple engagements with the combatant commands to include regular meetings with all combatant command J2s on a variety of issues in order to maintain a current understanding of regional risks and intelligence priorities. If confirmed, I will promptly establish my own relationships with the Combatant Commanders and ensure that they are able to prioritize and receive the intelligence support they require.

*Question.* In your view, what are the shortfalls, if any, in providing the functional combatant commands and combat support agencies adequate intelligence support, and ensuring that their intelligence needs are prioritized?

Answer. As I am not yet in the position, I do not have a completely informed perspective on this matter. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the Secretary's priorities and evaluating intelligence needs of the Combatant Commands, Combat Support Agencies, Defense Agencies, and Services. I would also strengthen relationships with the Joint Staff to assess capability gaps, prioritize needs, and recommend strategic alignment of MIP funding against the highest intelligence needs of the warfighter in a manner that maximizes our return on our investments. Last, I

would support the USD(I&S) to work with the DNI to closely synchronize NIP and MIP investments to ensure synergy in maximizing effects for the warfighter.

*Question.* In your view, how are intelligence operations carried out by special operations forces different from those carried out by the Intelligence Community?

*Answer.* I understand that Special Operations Forces (SOF) intelligence operations are focused on DOD requirements and priorities. These priorities may differ from those of the IC in that they are sometimes more tactical, focused on support to military operations or preparation of military operations. This intelligence enables a commander to make decisions that reduces risk to force and can create opportunities for further collection and exploitation. SOF missions require accurate, detailed, and timely intelligence that only integrated, multi-disciplinary collection and analysis can provide. It is essential that SOF intelligence operations are conducted pursuant to applicable law and policy, and subject to the requisite intelligence oversight rules, consistent with all DOD intelligence activities.

#### INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

*Question.* What role do you see for AI in supporting national and economic security?

*Answer.* I believe national and economic security have a reciprocal relationship. The role of AI for one will generally apply to the other. AI has the potential to enhance the speed and efficiency of how the DISE provides support to national security. In an environment of expanding data sources and a limited workforce, AI could assist in triaging and transforming the tasks requiring human attention. We must carefully consider the biases and vulnerabilities created through the introduction of AI, although it is without question that AI integration is necessary and has the potential to provide improved accuracy and precision in our support.

*Question.* If confirmed, what priority would you assign to ensuring that the Defense intelligence enterprise invests in AI applications, as well as training and business process reengineering to ensure effective use of such applications by the workforce?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure that AI is considered in the modernization of capabilities, infrastructure, processes, and tradecraft within the DISE. We should default to its investment where it can improve our speed, accuracy, and efficiency.

We can learn from AI investment across the government to understand where to leverage its potential in shaping our operating environment and driving future advantages.

*Question.* What role do you envision for AI in bringing greater efficiencies, timeliness, and accuracy to intelligence collection, analysis, dissemination, and military decisionmaking?

*Answer.* I cannot speak highly enough of our intelligence professionals. Their expertise and time are invaluable. I believe that AI can assist in prioritizing the collection that receives their attention and collate that information in a manner that expedites their analysis. AI can also be used to improve the efficiency in disseminating more relevant, accurate, and actionable intelligence into the hands of the warfighter at greater speed and volume, thereby enabling better and faster military decisionmaking. AI can also be used to create new ways of generating and responding to intelligence requirements.

*Question.* Are there other technology areas that you view as promising as they relate to the intelligence and security functions of OUSD(I&S)?

*Answer.* I believe that to accomplish the Secretary's objective of rebuilding our military capabilities, we must be flexible and aggressive in our approach to innovation and adopting commercial solutions. Critical to success will be closer integration between DOD and the commercial sector in order to identify and pilot new capabilities that can be used to maintain an advantage against our adversaries at the speed of relevance.

Additionally, I believe there are a number of promising areas that, if confirmed, I will work with OUSD(I&S) components and DISE to support regaining decision advantage in today's contested environment. Among these areas are: the exploitation of, and our defense against, exquisite intelligence collection technologies, such as ubiquitous sensing and space ISR; expanding virtual domain operations that disrupt adversary intelligence; the use of advanced computing and software to improve the efficiency of intelligence collection management; and survivable cloud compute and data transport to the tactical edge.

*Question.* In your view, does DOD have sufficient numbers and expertise in the intelligence community to monitor and analyze technological advances in industry, academia and our adversaries research establishments that will impact DOD missions and national security?

Answer. As I am not in the position, I am unable to provide a comprehensive assessment to answer this question. However, from my outside perspective, I am concerned that the DOD may lack sufficient quantity and specialization of Science and Technology Intelligence (S&TI) personnel that are necessary to remain competitive with our adversaries. The sheer volume of information in open-source research alone presents challenges for the capability and capacity of human analysts, even when paired with AI tools. Additionally, many emerging technologies require highly specialized expertise that are either in short supply or may not be currently available within the U.S. Government and might require changes to DOD authorities to fully address. Even with improvements, DOD will increasingly be reliant on outside expertise for cutting edge technology, particularly in niche fields such as quantum computing, biotechnology, and advanced materials. I do not believe that we can rely on traditional organizational structures and approaches to solve these new challenges. OUSD(I&S) creatively uses existing programs such as the Intergovernmental Personnel Act and the Applied Research Laboratory for Intelligence & Security to close talent gaps. DOD must also effectively leverage commercial sector innovation to help us close these gaps. If confirmed, I will support the USD(I&S) efforts with the USD(R&E), the ODNI, the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), the private sector, and others to develop options to ensure that the DISE has access to the expertise needed to stay ahead of adversary technological advancements.

*Question.* In your view, what areas of emerging technology should we be prioritizing collection and analysis to better prepare DOD for future conflicts?

Answer. Although I am not yet in the position and have not had the opportunity to be fully briefed at the classified levels, if confirmed, I will conduct a full assessment on which emerging technologies we must improve collection and analysis against. Beyond traditional focuses for collection and analysis, there are emergent technologies that are advancing adversary capabilities. We must understand how adversaries seek to develop and deploy those technologies, along with identifying opportunities for how we can deny adversary employment.

Some specific areas that we should be prioritizing include quantum, space-based technologies and biotechnology.

#### COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND SECURITY

*Question.* What is your assessment of current and anticipated counterintelligence threats to DOD? Which threats do you assess to be the most concerning and why?

Answer. As I am not yet in the position and briefed on classified information, if confirmed, I will seek to understand the counterintelligence threat environment at the classified level in order to develop informed recommendations to counter threats to our intelligence advantage.

I am aware that the advent of ubiquitous sensing, artificial intelligence-powered exploitation of data, and analytics (also referred to as data analytics), may make it increasingly challenging for U.S. intelligence to operate with the same effectiveness and agility against our adversaries without the appropriate modernization of our efforts. Additionally, as DOD increasingly relies on space-based capabilities for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support to warfighters, protecting U.S. space superiority from foreign denial and deception grows more essential.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the OUSD(I&S) to provide strategic direction and oversight of implementation of counterintelligence policy, programs, guidance, and training to ensure they are responsive to validated DOD and national counterintelligence priorities? What changes, if any, in these roles and responsibilities would you recommend, if confirmed?

Answer. I understand the USD(I&S) has broad responsibility for oversight of DOD counterintelligence (CI). Further, although I do not yet have access to classified information, I understand that the Department is implementing its DOD CI Strategy, "Confronting Threats to America's Military Advantage, 2021-2031," and has recently completed a year-long, end-to-end review to identify CI capability requirements, gaps, and solutions to implement that strategy.

I also understand the USD(I&S) along with the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency is a standing member of the National CI and Security Center's National CI Policy Board. In addition, DOD participates with the FBI in the National CI Task Force and local CI Task Forces under a formal memorandum of understanding. Through this and other forums the USD(I&S) provides policy, oversight, advocacy, guidance and direction to DOD CI activities conducted, oftentimes, in cooperation or in partnership with other Departments and Agencies across the U.S. Government.

One of my major priorities, if confirmed, is to support the USD(I&S) to assist the Secretary in reestablishing deterrence by presenting him with risk informed options

to impose costs on our adversaries short of armed conflict. Among these options is a greater focus on counterintelligence, and in particular, offensive counterintelligence, to disrupt foreign intelligence services before they can act with malign intent against the United States.

#### PERSONNEL SECURITY AND INSIDER THREAT

*Question.* The OUSD(I&S) is accountable for managing and overseeing DOD's insider threat, personnel security, security clearance process, and the National Industrial Security programs. DOD has experienced devastating attacks from insider threats—attacks that have led to the death and injury of DOD personnel, as well as to the loss of highly classified information critical to national security. Recent delays have exacerbated backlogs in processing security clearances and reinvestigations for DOD personnel.

Most of these very challenging new and enhanced requirements have been assigned to the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA). What is your current assessment of the ability of DCSA to transform itself to meet these objectives?

*Answer.* I understand that after President Trump transferred the background investigation and security clearance function to DCSA in 2019, DCSA vetting services have proved essential to national-level efforts to modernize personnel vetting and uniformly execute the National Industrial Security Program. DCSA services establish the foundation for execution of various subsequent security requirements and procedures which enable the essential concept of security in-depth. Additionally, in accordance with Section 847 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, DCSA has been charged to prepare to conduct assessments of Foreign Ownership, Control, and Influence (FOCI) not only for cleared defense contractors, but also all DOD contracts over \$5 million—an effort that, if confirmed, I intend to assess closely to determine how best to support the FOCI mission in an effort to protect the Defense Industrial Base from compromise. Ultimately, to effectively and efficiently serve the DOD and other Federal agencies, I believe that DCSA requires cutting-edge technology, adaptable processes, the capacity to operate at scale, and—perhaps most significantly—the best talent available with the skills needed to pursue these objectives.

Although I do not yet have enough information to make a full assessment currently, the criticality of these efforts and the State of our capabilities relative to the timing of these mandates is concerning. If confirmed, I look forward to working with DCSA to fully assess the State of play.

*Question.* There has been a backlog in processing security clearances that has been growing since 2023, after many years of steady progress in improving the security clearance process timelines. What is your understanding of the current issues causing the backlog and the status of efforts within DCSA to reduce that backlog?

*Answer.* I am dismayed at the continuing challenges to delivering timely security clearances, and if confirmed, it would be a top priority to avoid further delay in meeting the requirements of Trusted Workforce 2.0. Our national security depends on recruiting and retaining highly qualified individuals serving in critical positions across the Federal Government and industry, and delays in the security clearance process hinders our ability to fill these roles at the speed of mission requirements. People are our most important asset, but an inefficient and lengthy background investigation and security clearance process prevents the DOD from attracting and competing for top-tier talent. Every day a scientist, engineer, or analyst waits on their clearance to begin Federal work is 1 day closer to taking a job elsewhere—or never even applying to the U.S. Government at all.

If confirmed, I will fully engage with DCSA to understand the factors contributing to timeliness concerns and will hold them accountable for their performance. I commit to modernizing and accelerating the clearance process through rigorous oversight and dedication to business transformation, advanced technology, and data-driven solutions.

*Question.* Specifically, if confirmed, how would you ensure that DCSA is highly responsive to the needs of the USD(A&S) for vetting DOD contractors in responsibility determinations?

*Answer.* I understand that DCSA provides vetting of contractor personnel and companies for eligibility to access classified information in accordance with regulatory requirements for the National Industrial Security Program. This vetting assesses alignment of eligibility decisions with national security interests. This is one piece of a security apparatus that must work in concert with and at the speed of the acquisitions decisionmaking process to enable uncompromised delivery of supplies and technologies to properly equip our warfighters.

If confirmed, I will support the USD(I&S)'s efforts to prioritize collaboration with OUSD(A&S) to optimize security in acquisitions, including vetting people and companies within a certain timeframe and under conditions that allow the Department to acquire critical supplies, services, and technologies at the speed of mission requirements.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the status of development, approval, and implementation of the Trusted Workforce 2.0 initiative?

*Answer.* I recognize that Trusted Workforce (TW) 2.0, originally launched in 2018 under President Trump, is a national-level reform effort aimed at improving overall efficacy of vetting for clearances and suitability. While I understand that TW 2.0 may have demonstrated some relative progress at times over the last few years, there clearly remains unacceptable challenges to full implementation of its objective.

If confirmed, I will support the USD(I&S)'s efforts to collaborate with our ODNI, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and Office of Management and Budget colleagues to evaluate and take appropriate action to ensure that DOD fulfills its TW 2.0 responsibilities. Furthermore, I commit to keeping DOD's interagency and private industry partners fully and regularly informed of DCSA's progress in implementing TW 2.0, and identifying to them—as well as the Congress—any indications of additional delays or cost overruns in meeting the performance and timeliness standards set for the vetting enterprise. Specifically, I will work to ensure Department leaders know the impact of failing to meet these standards, so efforts can be appropriately prioritized in support of Department objectives.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the status of development, approval, and implementation of continuous vetting initiative?

*Answer.* It is my understanding that continuous vetting (CV), including the adjudication of CV information, is a key element of Trusted Workforce 2.0. As DOD further implements CV, I believe its implementation must prioritize advanced technology, capacity, and cost-effectiveness. Without an effective and timely CV architecture, DOD will be unable to optimize its workforce in a secure manner, jeopardizing mission success.

If confirmed, I will push OUSD(I&S) and DCSA to incorporate modern technology, maximize efficiency, and continuously improve the ability to identify and assess risk to our Nation's trusted workforce. Specifically, I will work to ensure Department leaders know the impact of failing to meet these standards set for the vetting enterprise, so efforts can be appropriately prioritized in support of Department objectives.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the remaining challenges in achieving reciprocity of clearances and access to classified information across government components and their contractors?

*Answer.* I am aware of concerns about reciprocity between Federal components, particularly with IC agencies. My understanding is that reciprocity between DOD components has been significantly improved, but the delays in reciprocity that remain are generally related to differences between IC agencies in their individual enhanced eligibility requirements for access to especially sensitive information, such as polygraph requirements.

If confirmed, I will ensure DOD personnel vetting policies and processes are aligned to Trusted Workforce 2.0 initiatives and tracked through a performance management system to ensure effective and efficient transfer of trust and the mobility of the Federal workforce, as well as our contractors and others in private industry who are granted clearances.

*Question.* In your view, how should DCSA posture the Department to deter, detect, and mitigate insider threats before they harm national security?

*Answer.* Over the course of my military service, I learned time and again the importance of empowering leadership and accountability at all mission levels. I understand that USD(I&S) is responsible for policy and oversight of the Department's Insider Threat program, ensuring DOD components have the necessary guidance, resources, and capabilities to empower leaders at all levels to manage insider risk to readiness, resources, and national security information. I understand that DCSA's role in the Insider Threat program is to be a data and system provider, enabling information sharing and decentralized program implementation so DOD commanders at all levels effectively manage their own risks.

If confirmed, I will work with DCSA, the Military Departments, and other DOD components to ensure component and subordinate level insider threat program interoperability with enterprise data and systems.

*Question.* How would you characterize the threat posed by foreign nations to the integrity of the National Security Innovation Base? Which threats do you assess as most concerning, and why?

*Answer.* The threat posed by foreign nations to the integrity of the National Security Innovation Base is persistent and significant. While I am not currently briefed

on classified information, from open-source reporting I appreciate that the National Security Innovation Base is being exploited in sustained attempts to erode U.S. technology superiority critical to maintaining a military advantage over adversaries and the economic well-being of U.S. industry. Threat actors increasingly seek to weaponize the open and collaborative nature of the strong partnerships and relationships DOD has cultivated with U.S. academic institutions. Additionally, foreign threats don't just include outright theft of information through espionage and other illicit means, but also rely on more subtle approaches such as foreign acquisition of critical nodes within the U.S. supply chain.

If confirmed, I look forward to further strengthening DOD efforts to protect the National Security Innovation Base—to include an emphasis on robust intelligence support to Foreign Ownership, Control, and Influence mitigation and support to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States—to thwart our adversaries while continuing to support the vital and enabling aspects of innovation. In addition to FOCI and the Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States (CFIUS) efforts, I believe a key component of this effort will be not only enhancing our defensive posture here at home but taking action to impose costs on adversaries and reestablish deterrence.

*Question.* How would you propose to improve the support provided by the DCSA, the DOD counterintelligence organizations, and the national Intelligence Community to better protect the National Security Innovation Base, and enhance the Department's innovation strategy, especially with respect to technology companies that are non-traditional DOD contractors?

*Answer.* DCSA plays a vital role in safeguarding national security by conducting background investigations and granting security clearances for DOD personnel and contractors. DCSA also oversees the National Industrial Security Program (NISP), which protects classified information within the Defense Industrial Base.

Although the core security principles of the NISP remain valid for all companies and contractors, as I understand from open-source reporting, the NISP's administrative requirements may lack the agility needed to facilitate effective acquisition decisions and ensure supply chain integrity in today's landscape, especially for classified programs. Furthermore, I am concerned that these regulations do not adequately address the needs of the National Security Innovation Base, a significant portion of which operates outside of the traditional NISP framework. It is these non-traditional DOD contractors that increasingly drive national security innovation, presenting DOD with the greatest opportunities for leap-ahead technologies, but meanwhile posing unique vulnerabilities to our adversaries.

*Question.* In your view, is DCSA postured to better leverage artificial intelligence and other automation tools to improve due diligence vetting, as well as security clearance processes and suitability determinations?

*Answer.* I recognize the immense potential of artificial intelligence and machine learning to revolutionize personnel vetting and due diligence. Through automating routine tasks and analyzing vast datasets, I believe we could significantly improve the speed and accuracy of these vetting processes. If confirmed, I will prioritize development and adoption of these technologies across the DOD, working closely with DCSA to ensure responsible and effective implementation and return on investment.

*Question.* According to the "Fork in the Road" memo from the Office of Personnel Management, "Employees will be subject to enhanced standards of suitability and conduct as we move forward," but no further guidance has been issued on what that means. What is your current understanding of the current definition for "suitability" being used by DOD, the process for those suitability determinations, and how that might change?

*Answer.* I understand USD Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) is the Department's lead for suitability based on guidance issued by OPM. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the USD(P&R) to ensure the appropriate intelligence and security inputs are incorporated into their guidance.

#### COLLECTION & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

*Question.* In light of the rapidly evolving nature of the national security environment, to include significant advances by adversarial nations in the development and fielding of capabilities that could challenge DOD tradecraft, technologies, methodologies, and processes, what do you see as the most pressing challenges to DOD's ability to conduct technical and human intelligence collection activities?

*Answer.* Adversary investment in advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and encrypted communications, as well as the dispersion of sophisticated capabilities across the globe, have complicated the information environment and reduced our national security advantage. Additionally, the emer-

gence of ubiquitous sensing and the increasing volume of commercially available data on individuals and their activity pose novel counterintelligence challenges to DOD human intelligence collection activities, operational security, force protection, and many other areas of potential vulnerability.

Meanwhile, our own foundational vulnerabilities such as fragmented infrastructure, limited interoperability, and outdated network architectures amplify the threat from these advanced capabilities. Therefore, we must invest in innovation to stay ahead of these advanced technologies while building a secure, efficient foundation to move our information from sensors to decisionmakers securely and faster than our adversaries.

If confirmed, I will work to smartly allocate and realign resources to close the seams that adversaries exploit, raising the barrier and cost of conducting intelligence against the U.S., and ensuring our intelligence enterprise can securely navigate an era defined by relentless digital exposure and ubiquitous technical surveillance. This will include DISE efforts to address the reality of global ubiquitous sensing, the proliferation of networked, correlated, and automated systems, and the algorithms that can exploit gathered information.

*Question.* If confirmed, how do you intend to approach these challenges to ensure that the DOD intelligence enterprise is postured to operate in an increasingly contested security and intelligence environment?

Answer. DOD operates within an increasingly contested security and intelligence environment. Embracing new technology and investing in innovative solutions is vital to the Department's ability to grasp collection opportunities in the physical and digital domains.

If confirmed, I will lead the continuous review of processes and policies to support warfighters and decisionmakers in this changing environment. This may require changes in how DOD personnel train and use tradecraft, technologies, and methodologies, as well as process adjustments for collection analysis. Aggressive efforts to ensure DOD is leveraging the best commercial technologies will remain essential, as will our ability to rapidly field technologies where required. As we adapt our efforts, we must ensure the DOD's intelligence collection activities are lawful and conducted in accordance with the United States Constitution.

Alignment across mission and technology needs, modernization of planning doctrine in this new landscape, and reducing barrier of entry for DOD elements and personnel to access best-in-class capabilities in a resource efficient manner is essential in 2025 and beyond.

#### INFORMATION OPERATIONS

*Question.* What are your views on the roles, responsibilities, and preparedness of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise to conduct operations in the information environment, as well as deter and defend against such operations by adversaries?

Answer. I believe that for DOD to compete effectively in the information environment, the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise must inform activities that shape the perceptions of specific foreign audiences to gain or maintain a competitive advantage. Our efforts to deter and defend against adversary information operations should be prioritized with appropriate resources and must include more robust coordination and collaboration across the Department, including with the USD(P) as the Secretary of Defense's Principal Information Operations Advisor, as well as the interagency.

*Question.* In your view, how can the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise better support the requirements of the combatant commanders for intelligence to enable their information operations?

Answer. I believe that the DISE should enhance its ability to support Combatant Commanders by focusing on three key areas: understanding adversary goals, enabling maneuver in the information environment, and identifying proxies and influence networks. First, the DISE must improve its intelligence collection and analysis to fully understand adversary goals in the information space—what they seek to achieve, how they measure success, and where vulnerabilities exist. Second, intelligence must be aligned with warfighter requirements to facilitate maneuver in the information environment, ensuring that commanders can shape narratives, counter adversary information operations, and integrate influence activities into broader operational planning to support American objectives. Finally, the DISE should increase its focus on tracking adversary use of proxies and influence mechanisms—whether state-sponsored media, cyber actors, or third-party enablers—to provide a clearer picture of the information battlespace. If confirmed, I look forward to assessing and improving the Enterprise's support to information operations in these areas.

## IMPERATIVE FOR INDEPENDENT INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

*Question.* If confirmed, specifically what would you do to ensure that DOD intelligence analysts, including those seconded to offices that are not part of the defense intelligence structure, are independent and free of pressure from influence from their chain of command to reach a certain conclusion, including a conclusion that fits a particular policy preference?

*Answer.* I am deeply committed to ensuring that all defense intelligence assessments remain unbiased, objective, and free from political interference. An absolute focus on the mission and support of the warfighter demands it. The credibility of intelligence assessments—and the willingness of our leaders to accept and act on those assessments—is predicated on apolitical, non-partisan analytical judgments. We cannot support the warfighter or policymaker without the best thinking from all of our people in support of our national security.

If confirmed, I will support the USD(I&S) efforts to work with the DIE to ensure that all DOD intelligence analysts adhere to Intelligence Community analytic standards promulgated in Intelligence Community Directive 203, which mandates that all-source intelligence analysis must be objective and independent of political considerations.

## THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE WORKFORCE

*Question.* The USD(I&S) exercises policy oversight of the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) to ensure that defense intelligence, counterintelligence, and security components are structured; manned; trained—including joint intelligence training, certification, education, and professional development; and equipped to execute their missions.

In your view, is the DOD civilian intelligence workforce properly sized with the appropriate capabilities, in your view? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* As I am not yet in the position, I have not yet had an opportunity to comprehensively assess the size or capabilities of the DISE workforce. I am aware that the Secretary has directed reductions within the civilian defense workforce to more effectively align with the Administration's national security priorities, and I fully support this critical effort. If confirmed, I will immediately review the work that has been done to date across the DISE workforce and provide recommendations for how to most effectively meet the requirements of the DISE in support of national security.

## SPACE

*Question.* If confirmed, what would be your approach to enhancing the interface and synchronization of space-based capabilities resident in the Intelligence Community with military space organizations?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will support the USD(I&S)'s work with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, the United States Space Force, the ODNI, and defense and intelligence agencies to ensure roles, responsibilities, and requirements amongst the various stakeholder organizations are aligned and mutually support IC and military space-based intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) needs. I would also ensure that DOD and IC ISR space architectures remain integrated to maximize ISR support to the Joint Force to achieve our national security objectives.

*Question.* How would you recommend deconflicting tasking requirements in the space warfighting domain across DOD with tasking requirements from Intelligence Community customers?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would first work to understand the gaps and concerns with existing tasking processes and procedures from the Joint Staff, Combatant Command, and Service perspectives. I will then work alongside the Joint Staff and ODNI to support the development of new processes, tools, and concepts of employment to assure Combatant Commanders and warfighters access to the space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance necessary to support military operational requirements. New architectures must be responsive to the warfighter.

*Question.* The Space Force has been assigned the mission of space-based ISR. To ensure the timely presentation of forces and effects to the combatant commander by the Space Force, Congress enacted into law section 1684 of National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (P.L. 118–31), further amended by section 1654 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (P.L. 118–366) which stated that:

“The Secretary of the Air Force shall be responsible for presenting space-based ground and airborne moving target indication systems to the combatant commands to accomplish missions assigned to such commands under the Unified Command

Plan that—(1) are primarily or fully funded by the Department of Defense; and (2) provide near real-time, direct support to satisfy the operational requirements of such commands.”

If confirmed, will you adhere to this provision of law?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I would ensure that OUSD(I&S) and the Defense Intelligence Enterprise partner with the leads of the MTI Working Group established by the fiscal year 2024 NDAA to identify the most cost-effective delivery mechanisms to improve lethality.

#### UNIDENTIFIED ANOMALOUS PHENOMENA (UAP)

*Question.* What is your understanding of the current congressional concerns regarding transparency and reporting on UAP issues with Congress?

Answer. I am aware of the tremendous public and congressional interest in understanding both historical and contemporary UAP observations. If confirmed, I am committed to enabling the Department of Defense, the Intelligence Community, and National Archives and Records Administration to declassify and share information related to UAP with the American public to the greatest extent possible. It is imperative that we also continue to protect sensitive information regarding sources and methods, to ensure that gaps potentially revealed by declassification of information to the public—and therefore to our adversaries—is a risk-informed decision. When UAP information is unable to be safely and responsibly declassified, I am committed to providing all such information, at all levels of classification, to the appropriate congressional committees of jurisdiction.

*Question.* What do you see as the intelligence communities’ level of effort and focus on the UAP challenge?

Answer. I understand the Department enjoys strong support from the IC and the whole of the DISE for its UAP mission. In line with statute, AARO reports to both DOD and the ODNI and regularly convenes a group of IC partners to share information and expertise. IC partners routinely support AARO in the analysis and resolution of UAP reports. If confirmed, I will ensure this strong partnership is sustained.

*Question.* The All-Domain Anomalous Resolution Office, or AARO, was established to be the central clearinghouse for reporting and analysis of UAP incidents.

Do you believe AARO is adequately staffed and resourced to carry out its mission? What areas do you believe AARO should be focusing on?

Answer. Yes. I understand that AARO is adequately staffed and resourced to meet its mission. I believe that AARO should focus on fully leveraging partnerships and capabilities across the USG to close gaps in domain awareness and minimize technological and intelligence surprise. If confirmed, I will ensure AARO has the support it needs to succeed, and that its efforts—and that of the DISE—are complementary and synchronized with other DOD efforts to address Unmanned Vehicles in an effective manner.

*Question.* How will you improve the integration of intelligence community technical collection assets, such as signals intelligence and measurement and signatures intelligence systems, into UAP reporting?

Answer. I understand that DOD enjoys strong support from the IC in this regard. AARO convenes multiple UAP Communities of Interest that engage IC partners to draw on their expertise, resources, and capabilities. If confirmed, I will ensure continued DOD collaboration with IC partners to expand and improve technical collection for UAP detected in air, sea, or space.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or otherwise become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from an employee of the OUSD(I&S)?

Answer. Every member of the DISE workforce is entitled to work in an environment free of harassment or discrimination of any type. If confirmed, I will ensure that leaders across the DISE are acting to ensure that our workplace is free of harmful sexual or other harassment or discrimination and will take immediate action to correct and hold accountable those responsible for actions counter to law and policy.

#### DETAINEE TREATMENT

*Question.* Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2–22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, The Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated August 19, 2014?

*Answer.* Yes, I support the standards for detainee treatment specified in Army Field Manual 2-22.3, Human Intelligence Collector Operations and DOD Directive 2310.01E, Department of Defense Detainee Program.

*Question.* Section 2441 of title 18, U.S. Code, defines grave breaches of common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, including torture and cruel and inhuman treatment.

In your view, does section 2441 define these terms in a way that provides U.S. detainees in the custody of other nations, as well as foreign detainees in U.S. custody appropriate protections from abusive treatment?

*Answer.* Yes.

#### WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

*Question.* Section 1034 of title 10, U.S. Code, prohibits taking or threatening to take an unfavorable personnel action against a member of the armed forces in retaliation for making a protected communication. Section 2302 of title 5, U.S. Code, provides similar protections to Federal civilian employees. By definition, protected communications include communications to certain individuals and organizations outside of the chain of command, including the Congress.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure that military and civilian members of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise who report fraud, waste, and abuse, or gross mismanagement—including in classified programs—are protected from reprisal and retaliation, including from the very highest levels of DOD and the broader Intelligence Community?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I commit to ensuring protections are afforded to DISE employees who report fraud, waste, and abuse, or gross mismanagement, in a manner consistent with law, regulation, and policy. Additionally, I will ensure that personnel who pursue retaliatory actions upon protected personnel are addressed appropriately, as established by law, regulation, and policy.

*Question.* If confirmed, what role would you play in ensuring consistency in the application and interpretation of whistleblower protections across the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I commit to ensuring DOD policy implementing such protections is applied consistently and uniformly in accordance with law.

#### 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 requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

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

*Answer.* Yes.

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

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this Committee and its subcommittees with records and other information

within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

RESOURCING INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES

1. Senator WICKER. Mr. Overbaugh, I note in your opening statement, you stated: "I believe that we do not have the resources to cover all threats simultaneously, therefore we must be deliberate and discerning about the capabilities we pursue . . ." Do you agree that we face the most complex and dangerous security environment since World War II?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I agree that we face a very complex, dynamic, and constantly changing security environment. Under President Trump's leadership, the Department is focused on achieving Peace through Strength and will continue to enhance, advance, and invest in capabilities to defend against the emerging threats facing our Nation and against U.S. interests abroad. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security to ensure that defense and national intelligence resources and capabilities are aligned to defend against these emerging threats and security challenges.

2. Senator WICKER. Mr. Overbaugh, do you agree that we should be growing our intelligence capabilities to deal with the growing threats our Nation faces instead of reducing our footprint in key theaters like Europe and the Middle East?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I agree it is necessary to enhance our intelligence capabilities in line with the President's and Department of Defense priorities to enable the achievement of Peace through Strength, defend the homeland, and deter emerging threats facing our Nation. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary of Defense and Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security in ensuring the alignment of defense and national intelligence resources to address these emerging security challenges.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

8(A) CONTRACTS

3. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. Mr. Overbaugh—I fully support merit-based efforts to increase U.S. companies' participation in the marketplace, particularly in enriching our Defense Industrial Base. I do not support any efforts that award public moneys based on the immutable characteristics of the applicants. I appreciate the unique value that Alaska Native corporations, Community Development Corporations, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations bring to the DOD through the 8(a) pro-

gram. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and others in Congress to preserve and strengthen 8(a) contracting, ensuring that such contracts meet stringent security requirements while leveraging their proven efficiency.

4. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. Mr. Overbaugh—I understand that the 8(a) program offers valuable flexibility and efficiency in contracting, delivering cost-effective, mission-critical solutions that bolster national security and warfighter readiness. If confirmed, I will work to ensure OUSD(I&S) supports initiatives like the 8(a) program as long as they continue to show benefit to the Warfighter and American Taxpayer.

5. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Overbaugh, rapid response capabilities are essential to enable our warfighters to win on the battlefield. At the same time, our defense contractors must rapidly respond to the needs of our military to make the U.S. Military more lethal. Flexible and efficient contracting through the SBA 8(a) program is one trusted way to do this. Please explain how you will ensure that proven, dependable, and cost-effective 8(a) programs remain in place and supported by the Department of Defense.

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Mr. Overbaugh—I recognize that rapid response capabilities are critical for warfighters, and the 8(a) program offers a valuable avenue for achieving this through flexible, secure, and efficient contracting.

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

6. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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 Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Rheinmetall, 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. OVERBAUGH. The increasing threat of foreign espionage and sabotage, particularly from adversaries like China and Russia, demands our urgent and coordinated attention. Concerning incidents in Europe, such as those targeting ammunition and logistics facilities, underscore the vulnerabilities within our defense industrial base and a shift toward more aggressive tactics. If confirmed, I commit to a thorough review of our security posture throughout the U.S. defense industrial base, prioritizing protection against espionage and sabotage. I will work closely with DOD leadership and Congress to ensure we have the necessary resources, policies, and partnerships to safeguard this critical asset, maintaining our national security and competitive edge.

#### COLLABORATION WITH ISRAEL

7. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Overbaugh, for more than 4 decades, Iran has served as the primary source of instability and chaos in the Middle East. Hamas would not have been able to carry out the attacks of October 7 without Iran’s support. In Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and beyond, Iran has, and continues to, work against American interests. Iran today could produce weapons-grade uranium for one nuclear weapon in just a week and multiple bombs in under a month. Iranian petroleum exports remain at or near levels not seen in more than 6 years, providing funding for their terrorist activity. Do you agree Iran must be prevented from obtaining a nuclear weapon?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Mr. Overbaugh: The President said that Iran must be stopped from getting a nuclear weapon due to its destabilizing role in the Middle East, funding of proxies, and rapid uranium enrichment capacity. The United States should

smartly leverage all aspects of National power to counter Iran's stalling and prevent its nuclearization.

8. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Overbaugh, in your view, what more should the United States be doing to stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Mr. Overbaugh: The United States could leverage multilateral sanctions, cyber operations, and regional alliances to pressure Iran, while signaling military readiness and engaging in tough diplomacy to prevent nuclear weapon development. Direct military action should only be used as a last resort and only when clear we can reasonably expect to achieve our limited military objectives. To counter Iran's stalling tactics in ongoing nuclear talks, the United States similarly could consider tightening sanctions and the escalation of cyber operations thus bolstering regional deterrence in coordination with allies to pressure Tehran into a verifiable deal before the 2025 sanctions deadline.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACK REED

##### ALLIES AND PARTNERS

9. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, our network of allies and partners remains our greatest asymmetric advantage in strategic competition with China, Russia, and others. Do you agree that robust intelligence sharing with allies and partners is critical for our national security?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I agree that robust intelligence sharing relationships with allies and partners contributes to our national security. Through these relationships, we are able to share the burdens of intelligence and security activities undertaken against global actors that negatively impact our national security, and we are able to inform and influence foreign policymakers' decision calculus as they determine what is best for their countries.

10. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, do you believe that in order to maintain robust intelligence sharing that our foreign partners must have trust that we will protect the information they share with us?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Trust is the cornerstone for developing and maintaining robust intelligence sharing with our foreign partners. Our allies and partners must trust us, and we must trust them when it comes to information and having that trust is based on durable relationships.

11. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, when there are public reports that senior U.S. officials have been sharing classified and sensitive information in unclassified channels, do you agree that foreign partners are less likely to share their information with us?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Our foreign relationships are based on trust and mutual benefit to our national security, which we will never violate. For countries with whom we have intelligence sharing arrangements, we commit to protecting information received from the partner. If intelligence they provide to us begins to be treated arbitrarily, I believe we could see a decrease in what they might be willing to share with the United States.

12. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, if confirmed as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (DUSD(I&S)), what specific actions would you recommend to strengthen existing intelligence and counterintelligence relationships with foreign governments and international organizations?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. If confirmed, I will validate the State of existing intelligence sharing arrangements with our allies and partners and ensure efforts support U.S. national security objectives and the burden of the associated intelligence activities is shared appropriately. I will also take action to ensure the Defense Intelligence Enterprise is pursuing cooperation, intelligence sharing, and interoperability to the fullest practicable extent. By pursuing such collaborative efforts, the United States and like-minded partners can optimize resources in fiscally restrained environments to deepen coordination, strengthen deterrence, preserve our warfighting advantage, and increase the resilience of our force.

##### CIVILIAN WORKFORCE CUTS AND VULNERABILITIES

13. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, former intelligence officials have expressed concern that the Trump administration's indiscriminate cuts to the civilian workforce—including across the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Intelligence Com-

munity—could create a significant counterintelligence vulnerability. In your view, does sudden professional and financial instability make a person more of a counterintelligence risk?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. A top priority for the Department must be educating our workforce, both current and former, on the threats posed by foreign intelligence entities. If confirmed, I will assess the effectiveness of our counterintelligence awareness and reporting programs, ensuring we equip individuals to recognize and report targeting by foreign adversaries. Critically, our awareness efforts must also highlight support structures for personal challenges like mental health or financial difficulties. While these challenges do not cause betrayal, ensuring access to support can mitigate vulnerabilities and strengthen our overall security posture.

#### STRATEGIC DECLASSIFICATION OF INTELLIGENCE

14. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, in the lead up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Biden administration was successful in deliberately releasing information derived from intelligence in an effort to expose Russia's true plans and intentions and shape the views of the international community. Previous Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director William Burns published an article last year where he emphasized the importance of "strategic declassification" or "the intentional public disclosure of certain secrets to undercut rivals and rally allies." For years, the geographic combatant commands have been pushing for more widespread use of strategic declassification in support of information operations. What are your views on the importance of strategic declassification of intelligence in support of information operations?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I recognize the strategic value of the carefully considered declassification of intelligence. If confirmed, I will approach declassification in support of information operations with a focus on both maximizing its strategic benefit in the information environment while upholding the principles of transparency and public trust with respect to intelligence and other national security information.

15. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, do you believe strategic declassification could be used more widely while still protecting sensitive sources and methods and what are the challenges from an intelligence community perspective?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I believe there is benefit to the selective declassification or sanitization of information in support of foreign policy objectives when it is done in a manner that takes into consideration the overall effect on sources and methods. Usually, it is not the one-time declassification of information that affects our sources and methods, but a compilation of declassification activities that can then cause harm.

#### DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY ENTERPRISE

16. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S)) is vested with responsibility for the overall direction and supervision of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise. What is your understanding of the role of the Office of USD(I&S) in the oversight of the activities of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. The USD(I&S) is responsible for planning, policy, and strategic oversight for all defense intelligence, counterintelligence and security policy, plans, and programs. Additionally, the USD(I&S) exercises authority, direction, and control over the Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, and the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) on behalf of the Secretary of Defense.

17. Senator REED. Mr. Overbaugh, if confirmed, how would you seek to coordinate such activities across the broader Intelligence Community?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I take seriously the USD(I&S) oversight responsibility of the activities of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise. If confirmed, I commit to taking an active oversight role in the Enterprise to coordinate with the broader IC and will support the USD(I&S)'s role as the DNI's Director for Defense Intelligence. In doing so, I will ensure robust engagement with ODNI to advocate for IC investments, capabilities, and activities that address DOD requirements.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

## ANOMALOUS HEALTH INCIDENTS

18. Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Overbaugh, I've long been concerned about directed energy attacks on our servicemembers, diplomats, and Intelligence Community abroad. In 2021, Congress passed the HAVANA Act and secured \$10 million to help Anomalous Health Incident (AHI) victims pay for their care. In the fall of 2024, DOD published its interim rule that unlocked the ability to provide payments to victims.

Mr. OVERBAUGH. However, these payments have still not gone out and I am hearing that victims are continuing to pay for care out of their own pockets. My office has been in contact with former Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) officials who are going into debt to cover their medical bills.

Brave men and women who have put their lives on the line for our country are going into medical debt because they cannot access funds meant for them is frustrating, to say the least. If confirmed, will you commit to getting HAVANA Act payments out to the AHI victims as soon as possible?

I share your concern regarding those who may have been affected by Anomalous Health Incidents (AHI). I have not yet been briefed on the status of HAVANA Act payments. However, I commit to you that I will take actions necessary to expedite these payments if they have not been made, as required.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

## ETHICS

19. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law as well as the terms of my Ethics Agreement. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors and 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.

20. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law as well as the terms of my Ethics Agreement. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors and 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.

21. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law as well as the terms of my Ethics Agreement. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors and 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. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No, I was not approached.

23. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No, I was not approached.

24. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No, I was not approached.

25. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

26. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No. I have never met with or spoken with Mr. Epshteyn.

27. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

28. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No. I have never met with or spoken to Mr. Musk.

29. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

30. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I met with various staffers from the Administration before I was nominated, but the President nominate me.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I will comply with all provisions of the Ethics Agreement.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. The role of a free press is to inform the public, hold power to account, and support democratic society by ensuring transparency, fostering debate, and protecting individual rights.

34. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

35. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

36. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Not Applicable.

38. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Not Applicable.

40. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I will abide by the extensive post-government employment ethics rules required by Federal law as well as the terms of my Ethics Agreement. These provisions set forth comprehensive restrictions relating to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors and 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.

41. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, please provide a list of all your clients at Strategic Decision Solutions, Arcuri Group LLC, and Resilient National within the last 5 years.

Mr. OVERBAUGH. My Resilient National clients were Strategic Decision Solutions and Keystone Bible Church. I do not have, and cannot gain, access to Strategic Decision Solutions or Arcuri Group LLC for the past 5 years. congressional Oversight and Transparency

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. The Department of Defense Inspector General (DoD IG) and the service Inspectors General (Army, Navy, Air Force, etc.) play critical oversight roles within the U.S. military and defense establishment. Their primary purpose is to ensure integrity, efficiency, and accountability in defense operations and personnel conduct.

43. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

44. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. If confirmed, I will work to comply with Inspector General requests in a timely manner. I would defer to the Office of the Inspector General to update members of the Committee regarding the progress of the Inspector General's ongoing reviews.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. If confirmed, I will follow the U.S. Constitution and other laws of the United States.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I reject the premise of this question. The President would never give me an illegal order. If confirmed, I would work with appropriate officials if given an order that I believed was illegal.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

52. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting all legal disclosure requirements.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I believe there is a widespread perception that the Federal Government struggles with overclassification. I have not had direct access to classified information in my current role to cite specific examples, but I understand the concern that excessive classification can hinder transparency, impede informed public discourse, and stifle innovation. If confirmed, I commit to working diligently to review classification procedures to ensure that information is classified only when truly necessary to protect national security and that declassification processes are efficient and effective.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes.

#### PROJECT 2025

56. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

57. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No. As far as I am aware, I do not know anyone in the Heritage Foundation. I am, however, committed to hearing from and engaging with a wide range of perspectives, those that I agree with, those that I disagree with, and everyone in between. In addition, I will always be transparent about my interactions and honest about how those perspectives shape my understanding.

#### FOREIGN INFLUENCE

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. No, I have not.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes. Through my work as a Military Intelligence Officer, I have engaged with numerous FVEY, NATO, and other allies and partners in the last 5 years. I have not engaged with any foreign government or entity outside of my military requirements.

60. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I have had no communications or payments as described.

#### IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT

61. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I have not considered this issue before. If confronted with this hypothetical, I would work with officials from the Office of the General Counsel.

62. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, what is your understanding of the Impoundment Control Act?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. My understanding is that Congress enacted the Impoundment Control Act in 1974. This 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 U.S. Constitution and other laws 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.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the U.S. Constitution and other laws 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.

64. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the U.S. Constitution and other laws 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.

65. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the U.S. Constitution and other laws 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.

66. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the U.S. Constitution and other laws, including appropriations legislation. 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. Overbaugh, what is your understanding of the requirements for DOD to obligate funding that Congress authorizes and appropriates, in accordance with the time period that Congress deems it to do so?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the U.S. Constitution and other laws, including authorization and appropriations legislation. 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. Overbaugh, do you commit to expending the money that Congress appropriates and authorizes?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. If confirmed, I commit to expending resources in accordance with congressional appropriations and authorizations for those programs within my authority. 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.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I commit, if confirmed, to executing my responsibilities consistent with the U.S. Constitution and other laws, including the National Defense Authorization Act. 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. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. If confirmed, were I to become aware of any violation of the Antideficiency Act, Impoundment Control Act, or other appropriations laws, I would abide by the Department's procedures to report such violations to the appropriate authorities. I would further ensure that my actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense regarding any such violations are informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel's office.

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, I strongly believe the Federal Government benefits significantly from engaging with certain colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs). I understand that OUSD(I&S) sponsors a university affiliated research center (UARC) to foster innovation and assist in developing the next generation of talent in critical intelligence and security career fields. I understand UARCs and FFRDCs are key to addressing 21st century technology challenges by engaging academia, government, and industry to provide objective, trusted advice on critical national security issues.

72. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, under your leadership, will your agencies continue to work with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded re-

search and development centers to research and address our toughest national security challenges?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. If confirmed, I commit to continuing to engage with FFRDCs, UARCs, and other institutions of higher learning to develop new and transformative technology and analysis for the warfighter consistent with the Administration's mission and priorities.

#### PROTECTING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND FEDERAL RECORDS

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I understand that protecting operations security (OPSEC) is critical to safeguarding our national security. OPSEC requires the identification and protection of critical information from exploitation by adversaries. A strong OPSEC posture, built on awareness and vigilance, is essential at all levels. If confirmed, I will prioritize OPSEC, coupled with information security, to protect and enable all our operations and decisions.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Improper disclosure of classified information poses significant risks to our national security. It can compromise intelligence sources and methods, putting lives at risk and hindering our ability to gather critical intelligence. It can reveal sensitive military plans and capabilities, giving adversaries an advantage on the battlefield. It can undermine diplomatic efforts, damage relationships with allies and partners, and erode trust in the United States. Furthermore, it can harm our economic competitiveness by revealing proprietary information and technological advantages. In short, the improper disclosure of classified information can have far-reaching and devastating consequences for our national security, and I take this matter with the utmost seriousness.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. If I learned that an official had improperly disclosed classified information, I would take immediate and decisive action to ensure the incident is reported to the appropriate authorities for investigation, contain the damage, assess the scope of the disclosure, and work to mitigate any harm to national security. I would also address any vulnerabilities in our security posture that contributed to the disclosure. The protection of controlled and classified information is paramount, and I would treat any breach with the seriousness it deserves.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. 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, and I will hold the personnel of the Defense Intelligence and Security Enterprise accountable for the same.

77. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, should classified information be shared on unclassified commercial systems?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. No.

#### RETALIATION AND PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

78. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. Yes, I do.

79. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, 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. OVERBAUGH. No.

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

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to protecting whistleblowers in accordance with applicable law. I will foster a culture where the organization understands that doing so supports the mission.

81. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, if you are confirmed, will you commit to preventing retaliation 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. OVERBAUGH. Yes, I do.

82. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, do you consider it to be retaliation to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, each of those actions could amount to an act of retaliation, depending on the circumstances.

83. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, do you consider it to be retaliation to encourage another person(s) to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, each of those actions could amount to an act of retaliation, depending on the circumstances.

#### POLITICIZATION OF THE MILITARY

84. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, if confirmed, do you commit not to retaliate against general officers or military servicemembers for executing lawful policies enacted by a previous Administration?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Yes, I do.

#### UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES

85. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, what is the normal process after the Department becomes aware of indications that classified or sensitive defense or intelligence information has been found in the public sphere?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. I understand that DOD takes immediate action whenever there is credible information that classified or sensitive defense information has been found in the public sphere. This could involve initiating an inquiry or investigation to assess the scope of the potential compromise, secure any compromised information to the extent possible, and identify the source of the unauthorized disclosure. If circumstances warrant, DOD then pursues appropriate administrative, legal, or other remedial actions based on the findings of the inquiry or investigation.

86. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, if confirmed, do you commit to holding senior officials who violate protections of sensitive information to the same standard as junior soldiers and civilians?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. All DOD personnel with access to classified information are responsible for protecting such information. If confirmed, I understand my responsibilities will include directing, administering, and overseeing the DOD Information Security Program, on behalf of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary. I will advocate for a culture of accountability at all levels, backed up by clear, modernized, and standardized guidance, to ensure that all DOD personnel support this shared and sacred obligation.

87. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, if confirmed, do you commit to providing documented justifications to this Committee for any actions taken to remove or re-detail individuals as a result of the memo entitled "Efforts to Combat Unauthorized Disclosures," dated 21 March 2025?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. Although I am familiar with the publicly released memorandum, I am not familiar with actions or activities it may have initiated. If I am confirmed, I would certainly anticipate being brought up to speed on any such actions and will commit to working with Congress, without impeding any investigative matters.

88. Senator WARREN. Mr. Overbaugh, if confirmed, do you commit that your deliberations and decisions will only be communicated through official, secure channels and any decisions properly documented for both oversight and institutional memory?

Mr. OVERBAUGH. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that all deliberations and decisions are communicated through official, secure channels. Furthermore, I will ensure that all decisions are properly documented to facilitate effective oversight and maintain institutional memory. Recognizing the need for speed and security, I will also work closely with the DOD CIO to ensure we have modernized communication tools that enable secure decisionmaking at mission speeds. This is critical for maintaining security, accountability, transparency, and operational effectiveness within the organization.

[The nomination reference of Mr. Justin P. Overbaugh follows:]

#### NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT

**PN22-20**

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:

Justin Overbaugh, of Florida, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, vice Milancy Danielle Harris, 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. Justin P. Overbaugh, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

**Justin P. Overbaugh****Education:**

- U.S. Naval War College
  - 2019 - 2020
  - MA, National Security and Strategic Studies
- Naval Postgraduate School
  - 2009 - 2010
  - MS, Defense Analysis (Irregular Warfare)
- North Carolina State University
  - 1996 - 1999
  - BA, Sociology

**Employment Record:**

- Strategic Decision Solutions / Tampa FL
  - Chief Operations Officer
  - July 2024 – Present
- US Army / US Special Operations Command / Tampa FL
  - Director of Intelligence / Special Operations - Joint Task Force
  - May 2021 – June 2024
- US Army / US Special Operations Command / Tampa FL
  - Human Intelligence Branch Chief
  - Aug 2020 – April 2021
- US Army / US Army Recruiting Command / Tampa FL
  - Battalion Commander
  - May 2017 – May 2019
- US Army / Foreign Counterintelligence Activity / Stuttgart Germany
  - Detachment Commander

- April 2014 – April 2017
- US Army / Foreign Counterintelligence Activity / Fort Meade MD
  - Counterintelligence Case Officer
  - September 2012 – March 2014
- US Army / 902d Military Intelligence Group / Fort Meade MD
  - Executive Officer/Operations Officer
  - June 2006 – August 2012
- US Army / 1st Special Forces Group / Fort Lewis WA
  - Battalion Intelligence Officer/Military Intelligence Detachment Commander
  - April 2004 – May 2006
- US Army / Military Intelligence Officer Training / Fort Huachuca AZ
  - Student
  - April 2003 - March 2004
- US Army / 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) / Fort Campbell KY
  - Rifle and Reconnaissance Platoon Leader
  - August 2000 – March 2003
- US Army / Infantry Officer Training / Fort Moore, GA
  - Student
  - May 1999 – July 2000

**Honors and Awards:**

- Military Awards
  - Legion Of Merit
  - 2x Bronze Stars (w/ Valor)
  - Bronze Star

- o 5x Meritorious Service Medal
- o 3x Army Commendation Medal
- o National Defense Service Medal
- o Afghanistan Campaign Medal w/ 3 Campaign Stars
- o Iraq Campaign Medal w/ Campaign Star
- o Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal w/ Arrowhead
- o Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- o Army Service Ribbon
- o Overseas Service Ribbon
- o Combat Infantryman Badge
- o Expert Infantryman Badge
- o Silver Basic Recruiter Badge
- o Ranger Tab
- o Pathfinder Badge
- o Parachutist Badge
- o Air Assault Badge
- o 2014 National Counterintelligence Executive CI Operations Award

- Academic Awards

- o Naval Postgraduate School: Graduated with Distinction - top 10% of all Master's Candidates
- o ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate - top 20% of ROTC Cadets

**Publications:**

- *Why America Fell Out Of Love With Its Army*, Responsible Statecraft, 2024

- *Distinguishing Principled Beliefs From Causal Beliefs In American Foreign Policy*, Journal of Strategic Studies, 2023
- *Are We Assuming the Worst About Assumptions? Induction, Deduction, and Military Intelligence in Counterinsurgency*, Inteligencia and Seguridad, 2013
- *Looking for Intel?...Or Looking For Answers? Reforming Military Intelligence For A Counterinsurgency Environment*, Intelligence and National Security, 2012

**Certifications:**

- National Resistance Course, Joint Special Operations University, 2023
- SOF Design and Innovation Course, Joint Special Operations University, 2021
- Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Ethics, U.S. Naval War College, 2020
- Advanced Foreign Counterintelligence Operations Course, Defense Intelligence Agency, 2013

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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 Mr. Justin P. Overbaugh in connection with his nomination follows:]

119<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, 2025 -- 2026  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
ROOM SR228  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 205106050  
(202) 2243871

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE  
INFORMATION REQUESTED OF CIVILIAN NOMINEES

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):  
-Justin Paul Overbaugh
2. Position to which nominated:  
-Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security
3. Date of nomination:  
-3 February, 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):  
-MA, National Security and Strategic Studies, Naval War College 2020  
Attended 2019-2020  
-MS, Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School 2010  
Attended 2009-2010  
-BA, Sociology, North Carolina State University 1999

Attended 1997-1999

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):  
  
-2024 to Present, Chief Operations Officer, Strategic Decision Solutions, Tampa, FL (Remote)  
  
-2021 to 2024, Director of Intelligence, US Special Operations Command Task Force, Tampa, FL  
  
-2020 to 2021, Human Intelligence Branch Chief, US Special Operations Command, Tampa, FL  
  
-2017 to 2019, US Army Recruiting Battalion Commander, US Army Recruiting Command, Tampa, FL  
  
-2014 to 2017, Commander, Detachment 15, US Army Foreign Counterintelligence Activity, Stuttgart, Germany
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):  
  
-N/A
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):  
  
-Non-Resident Fellow, Defense Priorities  
-Corporate Trainer, Arcuri Group

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):

-2020 to 2023, Deacon of Events, Keystone Bible Church

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):

-N/A

- b. List all memberships and offices held in, and services rendered to, all political parties or election committees during the last 5 years:

-47 Transition, 2024 to Present

- 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:

-N/A

11. Honors and awards (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognition received for outstanding service or achievements):

-N/A

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):

-*Why America Fell Out Of Love With Its Army*, Responsible Statecraft, 2024

*-Distinguishing Principled Beliefs From Causal Beliefs in American Foreign Policy*, Journal of Strategic Studies, 2023

*-Are We Assuming The Worst About Assumptions? Induction, Deduction, And Military Intelligence In Counterinsurgency*, Inteligencia and Seguridad, 2013

*-Looking For Intel?...Or Looking for Answers? Reforming Military Intelligence For A Counterinsurgency Environment*, Intelligence and National Security, 2012

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).

-N/A

#### 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

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

SIGNATURE AND DATE

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



This 10th day of February, 2025

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[The nomination of Mr. Justin P. Overbaugh 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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[Prepared questions submitted to Mr. Daniel Zimmerman by Chairman Wicker prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

*Question.* The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD(ISA)) is the principal advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Secretary of Defense on international security strategy and policy on issues of Defense Department interest that relate to the nations and international organizations of Europe (including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Russia), the Middle East, Africa, and their governments and defense establishments.

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the ASD(ISA) under current regulations and practices?

*Answer.* My understanding of the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD(ISA)) are based on U.S. code and applicable DOD guidance (see DOD Directive 5111.07). Statutorily and by guidance the ASD(ISA), under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)), is the principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the USD(P) on all matters relating to international security strategy and policy issues related to nations and international organizations in Europe, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union; Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia; the Middle East; and Africa. To fulfill the National Defense Strategy, the ASD(ISA) conducts defense relations in this assigned area of responsibility, develops country-specific and regional security strategy and policy, and issues guidance to translate and incorporate national and DOD policy into these approaches.

*Question.* If confirmed, what additional duties and functions would you expect the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to prescribe for you?

*Answer.* I am not aware of any additional duties and responsibilities that would be prescribed by the Secretary, but I would be prepared to assume additional ones that are compatible with effectively meeting the core responsibilities and duties of the position.

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

*Answer.* I have enjoyed the tremendous privilege to serve my country for nearly two decades in a variety of leadership and national security roles through my career

at the Central Intelligence Agency. My duties have involved many of the most pressing issues confronting our national security, including matters related directly to portfolio of the ASD(ISA), as I understand it.

As a briefer for the President's Daily Brief, I presented our government's most sensitive national security insights to senior policymakers on a daily basis, discussing issues ranging from China and advanced weapons to Iran and terrorism. I was a senior member of the White House team that developed the Abraham Accords and participated in diplomatic engagements throughout the Middle East. I have managed the interagency process at both the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council (NSC), and I have led analytic teams on cyber threats, energy security, and global trade. I have worked on sensitive projects in the Eurasia theater and served alongside special operations forces in the warzone. I have experience working closely with foreign liaison partners worldwide to advance U.S. and shared interests. My Senate fellowship in Senator Hagerty's office has equipped me with an understanding and deep respect for the role of Congress in national security policy. My academic background includes studies in international diplomacy, military and economic statecraft, financial mathematics, and history.

#### 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.* I agree to comply with all conflicts of interest disclosure requirements set forth in the Ethics in Government Act and implementing regulations.

*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.* I agree to comply with all recusal requirements under 18 U.S.C. § 208 and implementing regulations.

*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.* I commit to deciding matters on the merits based on the public interest, without regard to any private gain or personal benefit.

#### MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

*Question.* If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish?

*Answer.* I support the President's America First, peace through strength agenda. I agree with Secretary Hegseth that China and securing the homeland constitute our country's top security challenges and are the right priorities for defense policy.

If confirmed, I would work under Under Secretary Colby to further the Department's policy objectives. As I understand them with respect to the ASD(ISA) area of responsibility, these should include among others pursuing a durable peace in Ukraine, spurring urgent defense investments and greater responsibility from NATO allies, addressing threats presented by Russia, partnering with key ally Israel, denying Iran a nuclear weapon, countering terrorist threats to the homeland, and preventing China from geostrategic advances in these theaters.

In addition to such policy aims, if confirmed, I would also strive to provide diligent, accountable, and humble leadership in the position.

*Question.* In your view, what are the major challenges, if any, you would confront if confirmed as ASD(ISA)?

*Answer.* In my understanding, the major challenge of the ASD(ISA) portfolio will be to help optimize the allocation of defense resources. I agree with Secretary Hegseth that China and securing the homeland must take precedence, and that re-viving the defense industrial base and enhancing readiness are fundamental to that. In my view, the ASD(ISA) must be ready to help position the Department to focus on these priorities while resolutely addressing persistent threats facing the United States stemming from Russia, Iran, terrorism, and China's expanding influence in the Middle East and Africa. I see effective partner engagements that enable and drive greater burden sharing as vital for this end.

If confirmed, I would also anticipate the organizational challenge of quickly mastering Department processes and ensuring my advice, leadership, and decision-making are timely, informed, and effective toward furthering U.S. national security interests and Department policy.

*Question.* If confirmed, what management actions and timelines would you establish to address each of these challenges?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would take a number of actions to address these challenges, starting with understanding existing Departmental guidance and requesting briefings on all the core elements of the ASD(ISA) portfolio to ensure I am prepared to provide optimal advice and support to Under Secretary Colby and Secretary Hegseth in advancing the President's defense priorities. Based on previous inter-agency management experience, I would plan to swiftly establish clear communication and workflow practices, and to develop productive relationships with my colleagues at DOD as well as with counterparts across the NSC, State Department, Intelligence Community, and all relevant departments. I would focus closely on upcoming allied engagements to promote the Administration's clear message encouraging allies and partners to take greater ownership of their security needs. I would pursue excellent communication with Congress to ensure the Department receives appropriate congressional input on matters related to the ASD(ISA) portfolio.

#### DETAINEE TREATMENT AND NAVAL STATION GUANTANAMO BAY

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

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. My understanding is that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity conflict conducts oversight of detainee treatment.

*Question.* What are your views on the continued use of the detention facility at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. My understanding is that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity conflict conducts oversight of Guantanamo Bay operational policy.

*Question.* Executive Order 13567 established the Periodic Review Board (PRB) Periodic Review of Individuals Detained at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station Pursuant to the Authorization for Use of Military Force process.

If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to address the cases of detainees already recommended by a PRB for transfer from Guantanamo to another nation?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

*Question.* In your view, what standard of care should govern the physical and mental health services provided to detainees at Guantanamo, whether they are migrants or law of war detainees?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the authorities that are available to the Department of Defense to transfer migrants and hold them at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

*Question.* What are your views on the objectives and outcomes of the Department's Military Commission process?

*Answer.* My understanding is that the Military Commissions process provides standards and processes for trials of alien unprivileged enemy belligerents for violations of the law of war and other offenses triable by military commission. If confirmed, I would not anticipate being directly involved in policy decisions regarding the Office of Military Commissions and Military Commissions proceedings. However, I support ensuring that policy is not an impediment to thorough and speedy justice for those responsible for the 9/11 attacks and other terrorist attacks.

*Question.* Section 2441 of title 18, U.S. Code, defines grave breaches of common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, including torture and cruel and inhuman treatment.

In your view, does section 2441 define these terms in a way that provides U.S. detainees in the custody of other nations, as well as foreign detainees in U.S. custody appropriate protections from abusive treatment?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

#### U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND/DEFENSE SUPPORT TO CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES

*Question.* Civil authorities may request DOD support for domestic disasters and certain counter-drug operations as well as in managing the consequences of a terrorist event employing a weapon of mass destruction.

In your view, are the procedures by which other Federal, State, and Local agencies request DOD support efficient and effective?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. My understanding is that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs oversees defense support of civil authorities policy, authorities, and processes.

*Question.* In your view, are DOD procedures for evaluating and approving the provision of support requested by a civil authority efficient, effective, and timely?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the factors that are considered in determining whether DOD will provide support to a civil authority?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

*Question.* What types of assistance in this context are inappropriate, in your view?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

*Question.* What role do you believe that DOD should play in addressing security at the southwest border? What aspects of the current DOD role at the southwest border, if any, could be improved?

Answer. My understanding is that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs oversees defense support of civil authorities policy, authorities, and processes.

#### U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND

*Question.* If confirmed, what recommendations would you make to the President to deter Russian and Chinese influence in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. My understanding is that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities have responsibility for DOD strategy and policy in the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) and the Western Hemisphere and advise on USSOUTHCOM posture and activities.

*Question.* Do you believe these influences threaten hemispheric security and prosperity?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

#### COUNTERNARCOTICS ACTIVITIES (SO/LIC)

*Question.* DOD serves as lead agency for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime foreign shipments of drugs flowing toward the United States. On an annual basis, DOD expends nearly \$1 billion to build the counternarcotics capacity of U.S. Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies and certain foreign governments.

What changes, if any, should be made to DOD's counternarcotics strategy and supporting activities?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. I believe the narcotics threat facing our country is a true menace and deserves an all-of-government response. My understanding is that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict oversees the DOD counternarcotics program.

*Question.* Corruption and the absence of the rule of law enable the transnational criminal organizations' narcotics trade that contributes to the flow of illegal drugs into the United States.

In your view, what should be DOD's role in countering the flow of narcotics to nations other than the United States?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

*Question.* To what extent do you view our allies and partners in the region as partners in countering counternarcotics and other illicit activities?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

*Question.* How, if at all, should U.S. security assistance be scoped to address factors at the root of counternarcotics trafficking, in your opinion?

Answer. I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question.

#### APPROACHES TO STRATEGIC COMPETITION

*Question.* The Department of Defense published Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance (INDSG) on March 13, 2025. The INDSG supersedes the Biden Administration's 2022 National Defense Strategy. The INDSG prioritizes defense of the homeland and deterrence of China over all other threats. The underlying premise of the strategy assumes that limited resources should serve to constrain America's

strategic appetite—indeed the INDSG indicates a preference for limited defense spending and a reduced focus on Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

In your view, what are the distinctions between the military capabilities and capacities the United States needs to prevail in day-to-day strategic competition with Russia and the capabilities and capacities it needs to deter Russia's use of military force to achieve political objectives and, if necessary, prevail in a military conflict with the Russia?

Answer. In my understanding, the Department and the Administration judges that U.S. military strategy needs to focus our resources on defending the homeland and deterring China. For regions such as Europe and the Middle East that still hold key U.S. interests, it will be critical to maintain a network of allies and partners that the United States can count on to field capabilities necessary to defend themselves effectively, with more focused U.S. support. This applies across the spectrum from competition to armed conflict and will require many of our allies and partners, especially in Europe, to accelerate investments in their militaries, societal resilience, and defense industrial capacity. Fortunately, from public reporting, it seems that our allies have heard this call and are stepping up to take greater ownership of their defense needs. If confirmed, critical to my role will be clearly and persuasively aligning our allies' defense goals with those of the President.

*Question.* In your view, what are the enduring advantages that enable the United States to prevail in strategic competition with Russia and with China? If confirmed, what policies and approaches would you implement to sustain and strengthen those advantages?

Answer. The United States must possess the world's most lethal fighting force. If confirmed, I would work to sustain and strengthen this advantage.

*Question.* In your assessment, what new capabilities are needed for the Joint Force to compete below the threshold of armed conflict?

Answer. In my understanding, the United States is well positioned to operate below the threshold of armed conflict to defend the Homeland and deter China in the Indo-Pacific in alignment with the INDSG. If confirmed, I commit to working with our Combatant Command and Departmental leaders to understand and advocate for resourcing any additional and novel capabilities in this space.

*Question.* If confirmed, what policies would you propose to counter Russia's efforts to compete strategically below the threshold of armed conflict in regions within the ASD(ISA)'s responsibility?

Answer. I would like to study this issue more closely and receive the relevant briefings before offering a well-informed view. For allies to contribute effectively to these strategies, they must surge defense spending and swiftly strengthen security capabilities, as President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have urged them to do. If confirmed as ASD(ISA), securing greater allied burden sharing and accountability will be one of my top priorities.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the military threat posed by the People's Republic of China in the regions within the ASD(ISA)'s responsibility?

Answer. The military threat posed by China is the most serious and pressing for the United States. The 2025 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community states that China presents the most comprehensive and robust military threat to U.S. national security. The heightened risk of simultaneous aggression against the United States and its allies is a significant and growing challenge. European nations stepping up and leading on conventional defense and deterrence of Russia in Europe will be vital to mitigate the threat of simultaneous aggression against the United States and its allies. The presence of China in the Middle East threatens a key geographic area which could become critical in the event of a Pacific contingency. In Africa, China has deepened engagement to bolster relationships with African countries and their militaries. China has looked to gain African countries' support for establishing maritime points of presence to advance its goal of developing the People's Liberation Army into a global expeditionary force that can project power well beyond the Indo-Pacific.

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

Answer. Russia's nuclear, missile, and other asymmetric capabilities enable Russia to pose a direct military threat to the United States, the rest of NATO, and other allies. Russia's battle-hardened military poses a serious threat to Eastern Europe, including NATO members.

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

Answer. I am deeply concerned that China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea have increasingly collaborated with each other in recent years, presenting heightened security challenges to the United States and our allies. The United States must take such coordination seriously, since too many of our allies are inadequately prepared

to assume greater security burdens, and the United States itself would be hard pressed to adequately fight multiple major wars. This is a key challenge I would focus on addressing if confirmed as ASD(ISA).

*Question.* In your view, should the Defense Department's force sizing construct be based on the need to conduct simultaneous conflicts in Asia and Europe?

*Answer.* In my view, a strategy that prioritizes defending the homeland and deterring China while fostering increased burden-sharing from allies and partners, especially in Europe, is the best force planning construct. This can position the United States and our allies to deter—or if necessary fight and win—simultaneous conflicts in the Indo-Pacific and Europe.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would you do if you determine that the DOD cannot meet the demands placed on it by the President's defense strategy?

*Answer.* The Department must be responsive to the President. If confirmed, I would work under the guidance of the Secretary and USD(P) to ensure we prioritize the Department's activities and resources to achieve the President's intent.

*Question.* How do you view issues of economic competition as part of the border strategic competition environment? What role, if any, should DOD have in assessing, influencing or impacting economic competition as part of its broader strategy?

*Answer.* I strongly support Secretary Hegseth's goal of rebuilding the military by reviving our defense industrial base, reforming our acquisition process, passing a financial audit, and rapidly fielding emerging technologies. I see the combination of these initiatives being the foundation of DOD's role in supporting a broader U.S. Government strategy for economic competition.

#### U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND (EUCOM)

*Question.* Do you believe the deterrent posture in Europe is sufficient to deter further Russian aggression in Europe?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. I understand the Department of Defense has begun conducting a global force posture review to assess the effectiveness of existing missions and forces assigned to USEUCOM. If confirmed, I would actively engage in this effort, including addressing this question.

*Question.* In your assessment, are there capability and/or capacity shortfalls in current U.S. posture that affect the U.S. ability to carry out the EUCOM Theater Campaign Plan?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. I understand the Department of Defense has begun conducting a global force posture review to assess the effectiveness of existing missions and forces assigned to USEUCOM. If confirmed, I would actively contribute to this effort, including addressing this question.

*Question.* In your assessment, does the United States have sufficient air and missile defense capability and capacity to defend critical infrastructure in EUCOM? If not, what are the areas of highest risk?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. I understand the Department of Defense has begun conducting a global force posture review to assess the effectiveness of existing missions and forces assigned to USEUCOM. If confirmed, I would actively contribute to this effort, including addressing this question.

*Question.* If confirmed, what specific changes would you make to U.S. capabilities or force posture in Europe to execute the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance more effectively?

*Answer.* I am not in a position to give an informed answer to this question. I understand the Department of Defense has begun conducting a global force posture review to assess the effectiveness of existing missions and forces assigned to USEUCOM using the INDSG to guide the process. If confirmed, I would actively contribute to this effort, including addressing this question.

*Question.* Defender Europe 2025 and other exercises the United States conducts with European Allies and partners illustrate our collective ability to mobilize large forces rapidly to respond to a crisis.

Do you support DOD maintaining the large scale and frequent exercises it has conducted in Europe in recent years?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would review the resource requirements necessary to achieve our national security objectives in Europe in light of our global strategic and defense priorities as indicated by President Trump and Secretary Hegseth.

*European Deterrence Initiative (EDI)*

*Question.* Since establishment of the EDI in 2014, the NDAA has authorized billions of dollars each year for EDI investments to support stability and security, and to deter Russian aggression.

In your view, has EDI improved U.S. and allied capability and capacity to deter Russian aggression in the European theater?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would review and provide my best advice to my leadership on the allocation of resources across the different theaters and recommend investments that best protect U.S. interests, deter conflict, and leverage the investments of our allies to provide for their own defense.

*Question.* Do you believe continued, robust funding for programs, activities, and investments under EDI's five lines of effort is required to support implementation of EUCOM's mission to deter and defend against aggression?

*Answer.* It is my understanding that the EDI's lines of effort—increased presence, exercises and training, enhanced prepositioning, improved infrastructure, and building partner capacity—have contributed to the capabilities and readiness of U.S. forces in USEUCOM, of NATO allies, and of regional partners. If confirmed, I would review the resource requirements necessary to achieve our national security objectives in Europe in light of our global strategic and defense priorities as indicated by President Trump and Secretary Hegseth.

*NATO Alliance*

*Question.* In your view, how important to U.S. strategic interests is the U.S. commitment to its obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty, especially Article 5?

*Answer.* I believe NATO holds far-reaching importance for the United States and that our commitments to the alliance are grave and serious. My understanding is that the President has said the United States remains committed to NATO. The United States remains the only country that has invoked Article 5 commitments, which gives that provision special significance. President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have been clear that Article 3 is also important, and I agree with the Administration's vision for all members to contribute to a NATO that is more lethal, ready, and relevant. The alliance must adapt, and if confirmed it will be my particular responsibility to ensure that European and Canadian NATO allies do their part.

*Question.* What do you view as the essential strategic objectives of the NATO Alliance and what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges in meeting those objectives?

*Answer.* My understanding is that NATO's strategic objectives are to deter conflict in Europe and defeat threats to treaty Allies should deterrence fail. NATO is, and should refocus on being, a military alliance to defend the member states in the Euro-Atlantic area. A great challenge to those objectives is that Russia now has a battle-hardened military while Europe's development of combat-credible forces and its defense industrial base has lagged. Meanwhile, China poses a grave and near-term threat to U.S. interest in the Indo-Pacific. A sense of urgency among our allies is needed to achieve a NATO that is more lethal, ready, and relevant.

*Question.* NATO has long held the position that, "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance." In your view, do you believe this principle requires the United States to continue to deploy nuclear weapons in NATO countries?

*Answer.* I support this principle, and my understanding is that the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe has proven to be a key tenant of the alliance and played a fundamental role deterring conflict and aggression.

*Question.* Do you believe that NATO should expand the nuclear sharing role to additional alliance members?

*Answer.* I understand this has been a topic of ongoing debate in think tank channels, but I would like to study this question more closely and receive briefings on the topic before offering a view. I do not have sufficient information at this time to give an informed answer.

*Question.* What do you see as the benefits, or negative consequences, of NATO countries individually pursuing their own nuclear weapons?

*Answer.* I would like to study this question more closely and have an opportunity to engage our NATO allies on their views of NATO's nuclear deterrence posture before offering my own perspective. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to assess and engage on this issue in light of our global defense requirements in this critical area.

*Question.* The dual-hatted position of the Commander of EUCOM as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) allows U.S. and Allied forces to be highly integrated in Europe. Similar dual-hat responsibilities have been integrated

to other senior U.S. Commanders, including Commander of U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa as Commander NATO Allied Air Command (AIRCOM) and Commander U.S. Army Europe and Africa as NATO Allied Land Command Commander.

What is your assessment of the benefits of these dual-hatted structures to allied cohesion and integration?

Answer. I am not currently in a position to make a fully informed analysis of the pros and cons of the dual-hatted structures.

*Question.* Do you share current EUCOM Commander General Cavoli's view that the dual-hatted role for the EUCOM Commander as SACEUR is important and, as he testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee, that not having an American in the role of SACEUR "would bring some challenges in terms of nuclear command and control"?

Answer. The SACEUR is an important position and I am not aware of any Department plans to relinquish it. If confirmed, I would consult with my leadership as well as military colleagues in the Joint Staff and USEUCOM prior to making recommendations.

#### *Russia*

*Question.* In your view, does Russia pose a threat to the United States, its allies, or its interests in the AOR and globally? If so, please describe how you perceive that threat.

Answer. Yes. Despite facing international sanctions since 2014, which were further strengthened during the first Trump Administration, Russia has maintained a capable military, developed its strategic capabilities, and increased production of crucial military equipment. Of particular concern is Russia's expansion of its nuclear arsenal, posing a threat to the U.S. homeland, as well as its tactical nuclear weapons, which threaten its European and Asian neighbors. Russia also presents challenges in cyberspace, undersea, space, and the Arctic.

*Question.* In your view, which EUCOM and NATO activities most effectively deter Russia and mitigate the Russian threat to NATO Allies?

Answer. I do not believe I am not in a position at this time to give the informed answer this question deserves. I understand the Department of Defense has begun conducting a global force posture review to assess the effectiveness of existing missions and forces assigned to USEUCOM. If confirmed, I would actively support USD(P) in this effort, including addressing this question.

*Question.* What aspects of U.S. and NATO force posture do you assess as having the most significant deterrent effect on Russia?

Answer. I do not believe I am not in a position at this time to give the informed answer this question deserves. I understand the Department of Defense has begun conducting a global force posture review to assess the effectiveness of existing missions and forces assigned to USEUCOM. If confirmed, I would actively support USD(P) in this effort, including addressing this question.

*Question.* In your view, what more should DOD do to counter Russian malign influence in Europe?

Answer. While I have worked on this issue extensively from within the Intelligence Community, I do not believe I am not in a position at this time to give the informed answer this question deserves from a DOD perspective. I understand the Department of Defense has begun conducting a global force posture review to assess the effectiveness of existing missions and forces assigned to USEUCOM. If confirmed, I would actively support USD(P) in this effort, including addressing this question.

#### *Ukraine*

*Question.* In February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale, unprovoked, and illegal invasion in Ukraine.

What do you believe to be Russia's military objectives in Ukraine?

Answer. I do not believe I have all the relevant information at my disposal, including classified information, to fully assess this question.

*Question.* What do you believe would be the implications for United States national security interests if Russia were able to achieve its goals in Ukraine?

Answer. Russia remains a serious military threat to U.S. and European security, and thus credible deterrence remains a strategic imperative. As President Trump has repeatedly emphasized, it is vitally important that our European allies lead from the front in providing security assistance to Ukraine and deterring further Russian aggression, including by rapidly increasing their own defense spending and production.

*Question.* Do you believe it is important for the United States to continue support, including security assistance to help Ukraine deter and defeat Russian aggression? If not, why not?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would support the Administration's goal to forge a durable peace in Ukraine. I believe it is important for Ukraine to be well-armed to support its self-defense, even after the war is concluded. My understanding is that the United States has already contributed a very great deal to Ukraine's defense and must weigh future assistance against urgent security needs elsewhere, including protecting U.S. territorial integrity and deterring threats from China. The President has rightly emphasized Europe should lead from the front in securing Ukraine's future. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to advance this overall approach.

#### U.S. AFRICA COMMAND (AFRICOM)

*Question.* AFRICOM has minimal assigned forces and, as a result, is required to compete for the vast majority of its U.S. forces in the global force management process.

What is your assessment of the availability and predictability of forces and associated capabilities to support the AFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan, the NDS, and other emergency requirements?

*Answer.* It is my understanding that USAFRICOM has no assigned forces and fewer allocated forces than most other Combatant Commands. I also understand that it competes for capabilities when it faces an emerging requirement. If confirmed, I would carefully review all requirements to provide the best advice on whether existing missions and forces allocated to USAFRICOM are sufficient to support DOD's priorities given the competitive geostrategic environment.

*Question.* Are there any changes you would recommend to the allocation or assignment of forces to AFRICOM, if confirmed?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would carefully review all requirements to provide the best advice on whether existing missions and forces assigned to USAFRICOM are sufficient to support DOD's priorities given the competitive geostrategic environment.

*Question.* What should be the primary objectives of the DOD specifically, and the United States more broadly, in the AFRICOM AOR?

*Answer.* In my understanding, the Department's two key objectives in the USAFRICOM AOR are to degrade terrorist groups' ability to strike the U.S. homeland or overseas equities and to counter China's attempts to project military power.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the strategic objectives of Russia and China in Africa? In what areas, if any, do these oppose U.S. and partner objectives?

*Answer.* With 53 countries in USAFRICOM's AOR it is hard to generalize, yet my understanding is that China and Russia both actively seek deeper engagement and influence across the continent. China has sought to bolster relationships with African countries and their militaries and to use investment to create dependencies, while gaining African countries' support for its global policy objectives. China looks to Africa as a launchpad for expanding military power beyond the Pacific. Meanwhile, Russia uses extractive and destabilizing means to assert influence in Africa, including paramilitary deployments, seeking to create dependencies on Russian military assets. These activities are too often at the expense of African countries and opposed to U.S. and partners' shared objectives for stability and security.

#### U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND (CENTCOM)

*Question.* In your opinion, what are the key U.S. national security interests in the Middle East? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* In my view, key U.S. national security interests in the Middle East include countering terrorist threats to the homeland, denying Iran a nuclear weapon and intercontinental ballistic missiles, promoting the security of model ally Israel, supporting the free flow of goods and trade, and generally acting increasingly as a security enabler and integrator for our regional partners.

Counterterrorism remains a key national security priority in the USCENTCOM AOR. Several terrorist groups aspire to possess either the intent or capability to strike the U.S. homeland or U.S. personnel.

The Middle East also remains at risk of nuclear proliferation by Iran. If confirmed, I will help ensure that the Department of Defense stands ready to support the President's National Security Presidential Memorandum on Iran, which among other provisions specifically says it is the policy of the United States to deny Iran a nuclear weapon.

The United States has strong partners in the Middle East with whom we have overlapping interests, long-standing cooperation, and substantial economic and technological trade ties.

*Question.* In your opinion, to what extent does achieving U.S. national security interests in the Middle East require a continuous U.S. military presence, and in your view is the current U.S. force presence appropriately sized? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* I understand the Department is currently reviewing global force posture to ensure the optimal level of forces are assigned to USCENTCOM to achieve regional and global defense strategy goals. If confirmed, I would support this review and advise the Secretary and USD(P) on the force posture necessary to achieve the President's national security objectives. It is my understanding that the Department of Defense strives to maintain the capability to surge forces anywhere in the world to respond to regional threats and emerging crises.

*Question.* What opportunities exist for increasing burden-sharing with U.S. partners to counter threats emanating from and affecting the CENTCOM AOR?

*Answer.* My understanding is that the United States collaborates effectively with multiple partners in the region to counter threats emanating from and affecting the USCENTCOM AOR. I believe our partners can and must take greater ownership of their own defense. This is both in their interest and ours. If confirmed, I would seek increased opportunities to enable regional partners to counter terrorist groups, defend their sovereign territories, and cooperate on countering Iran and its threat network.

*Question.* What threat does Chinese and Russian involvement in the Middle East pose to U.S. operations and interests and to what extent does a continuous U.S. presence counter their involvement? In your view, what other policy tools might be useful in this regard?

*Answer.* Given its size, energy resources, location, and other factors, the Middle East is relevant to great power competition with China and Russia. The United States can counter Chinese and Russian involvement in the region through strong relationships with partners who are enabled and empowered across a full spectrum of activities.

#### *Iran*

*Question.* What is your understanding of the objectives of the U.S. national security interests with respect to Iran? What is the role of the U.S. military in this strategy?

*Answer.* I fully support the President's National Security Presidential Memorandum on Iran, which establishes that: 1) Iran should be denied a nuclear weapon and intercontinental ballistic missiles; 2) Iran's terrorist network should be neutralized; and 3) Iran's aggressive development of missiles, as well as other asymmetric and conventional weapons capabilities, should be countered. The U.S. military, alongside other elements of national power and allied capabilities, plays a critical role in this strategy.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current military threat posed by Iran? What is your assessment of the threat posed by Iranian proxy groups? In your opinion, what is the most effective way to defeat Iranian proxy groups?

*Answer.* Iran poses a significant threat to the security of the United States and its allies and partners. Last year, Iran launched two unprecedented major missile and drone barrages against Israel from Iranian territory. In addition to its conventional military, Iran also leverages proxy forces to launch kinetic attacks and advance Tehran's aims across the Middle East. These forces have been significantly weakened but still threaten U.S. forces and our partners. Iran also continues to further its ability to gain a nuclear weapons capability, which the President has rightly said cannot happen.

*Question.* In your view, what would be the security implications for U.S. and regional security interests should Iran acquire a nuclear weapons capability?

*Answer.* The President has said clearly that the United States will not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon, and I support that position. The President has also clearly expressed his preference to negotiate an agreement that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. I support the President's policy approach to produce a far better agreement than the shortsighted Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. For its part, the Department's role is to ensure that the President is armed with the best possible military options to deny Iran a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I would regard it as my responsibility to ensure that the Secretary and the President have the best possible military options for this purpose.

*Question.* In your opinion, can Iran be sufficiently deterred through military force alone? Please explain your answer.

Answer. I support the President's stated intent to address Iran's malign activity through non-military tools if possible, including economic pressure and diplomacy. At the same time, it is the Department of Defense's role to ensure the President is armed with the best possible military options. If confirmed, I would ensure the President has these.

#### *Israel*

*Question.* In your opinion, what are U.S. national security objectives with regards to Israel?

Answer. I believe that the U.S.-Israel alliance is of great importance to the United States and that enabling Israel's security and ability to defend itself is a key U.S. national security objective. Israel is a model ally for the United States in its self-reliance, independence, and grit. My understanding is that the Department of Defense supports Israel's security by helping facilitate security assistance to Israel, extensive military cooperation through USCENTCOM channels, and through coordination with the Israelis to help secure the release of all hostages held by Hamas, including American citizens.

*Question.* In your opinion, what should DOD's role be in supporting Israeli efforts to degrade and defeat Hamas?

Answer. If confirmed, I would fully back U.S. support for Israel's security and its ability to defend itself. Hamas started this war on October 7, 2023 by launching a horrific and unprovoked terrorist attack on Israel. Hamas killed more than 1,200 innocent people, including 46 Americans, and took some 250 hostages. The United States should provide the security assistance that Israel needs to defeat Hamas and prevent future attacks. I support measures by the Trump Administration to bolster support to Israel, including through the release of the shipment of 2,000 lb. bombs previously paused.

*Question.* Should U.S. policy toward Israel include work toward a two-State solution?

Answer. From a Department of Defense standpoint, U.S. policy toward Israel should support U.S. interests, which includes close partnership with our model ally Israel and the re-establishment of deterrence and stability in the region. If confirmed, I would support the President's vision for peace in the Middle East.

#### *Syria and Iraq*

*Question.* What is your understanding of current U.S. strategy and objectives in Syria? How have those objectives changed, if at all, in light of the fall of the Assad regime?

Answer. My understanding is that the Department is closely watching developments in Syria with a primary objective of maintaining pressure on ISIS and responding to any other terrorist threats to the United States that arise, while, as President Trump has indicated, limiting the U.S. presence there. If confirmed, I would work to continue to review our objectives in light of the fall of the Assad regime.

*Question.* From a DOD perspective, what must be done to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS? What non-military efforts are needed for the enduring defeat of ISIS?

Answer. I understand that the U.S. military supports the enduring defeat of ISIS through counterterrorism operations and by enabling key ally and partner militaries to assume the burden for addressing terrorist threats within their own countries. More broadly, the enduring defeat of ISIS will require a whole-of-government effort, to include intelligence and law enforcement.

*Question.* What do you perceive to be the role of the Syrian Democratic Forces and Iraqi Security Forces in countering ISIS and al Qaeda?

Answer. My understanding is that these partners have played a critical role in our efforts to counter ISIS and al Qaeda. If confirmed, I would seek the appropriate briefings on the current role of these forces to ensure a full-picture assessment and determination on the future of U.S. counterterrorism policy in the region.

*Question.* In your view, should U.S. troop levels in Syria be tied to the achievement of certain conditions on the ground? If so, what conditions would you factor into your recommendation to the President on future troop levels in Syria?

Answer. My understanding is that the Secretary as of mid-April has directed a consolidation of U.S. forces in Syria, reflecting the significant achievements we have made toward degrading ISIS that go back to President Trump's first term. Moving forward, the deployment of U.S. troops in any foreign country should always be tied to specific objectives and conditions. If confirmed, I would review this issue closely and shape my recommendations to the USD(P) by this principle.

*Question.* In September 2024, the U.S.-Iraq Higher Military Commission announced the transition of the global coalition to defeat ISIS to a bilateral security

relationship with the Government of Iraq. However, many of the details of such a transition are still being negotiated with the Iraqi Government.

In your view, what should the guiding principles for DOD's presence in Iraq moving forward?

Answer. The deployment of U.S. troops in any foreign country should be assessed continually based on changing objectives and conditions on the ground. If confirmed, I would seek a thorough analysis along these lines prior to making a recommendation.

*Question.* Do you assess that U.S. forces should remain in Iraq beyond next September? Why or why not?

Answer. My understanding is that the United States and Iraq agreed in September 2024 to wind down Operation INHERENT RESOLVE inside Iraq by September 2025, and to continue counter-ISIS operations in Syria from Iraq until at least September 2026. If confirmed, I would study the security implications of this matter closely and ensure that they are considered in the global force posture review.

#### *Middle East Regional Partners*

*Question.* In your view, what support should DOD provide the Lebanese Armed Forces?

Answer. My understanding is that the Department's current objectives are to strengthen Lebanon's sovereignty by building the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces to counter internal and terrorist threats and combat corruption. I understand that the aim of these capacity building efforts is to reduce regional tensions, improve Israel's security along its northern border, and further degrade Iran's influence in Lebanon. If confirmed, I would look at whether these efforts are performing against their objectives and generally be open to DOD support that advances the Administration's security assistance priorities in the Middle East and beyond.

*Question.* In your view, what support should DOD provide to the Jordanian Armed Forces?

Answer. If confirmed, I would look at this question closely and generally be open to DOD support that advances the Administration's security assistance priorities in the Middle East and beyond. Jordan has proven itself an important U.S. partner for promoting regional stability. My understanding is that the Department already works with Jordan to enhance the capabilities of the Jordanian Armed Forces to defeat threats posed by terrorist organizations, including ISIS, to counter the smuggling of narcotics and illicit weapons across Jordan's borders, and to detect and intercept unmanned aerial systems and missile threats that continue to violate Jordanian sovereignty and endanger U.S. and partner forces in the region.

#### *Defense Security Cooperation*

*Question.* In your view, what are the necessary and appropriate strategic objectives that should underpin the Defense Department's approach to building the capabilities of a partner nation's security forces?

Answer. The Department's approach to building the capabilities of foreign partners should advance U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives and must be planned and resourced accordingly. If confirmed, I would conduct and manage defense relations within the ASD(ISA) portfolio to further the Administration's objectives of increased readiness, complementary alliances, and greater burden sharing.

*Question.* In the competition with near-peer rivals, what steps would you recommend, if confirmed, to ensure that the United States is taking a strategic approach to its security cooperation with allies and partners?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the specific steps needed to ensure that security cooperation is appropriately aligned with the Administration's strategic objectives. In a resource-constrained environment, the Department's security cooperation activities must be carefully tailored toward the highest-priority threats facing the United States.

*Question.* Do you have any recommendations for how to improve coordination of international armaments cooperation activities, including FMS, across the various stakeholders in Policy, A&S, and R&E?

Answer. I believe it is vital to bring efficiency to the foreign military sales (FMS) process. If confirmed, I will review existing rules and regulations involved in the development, execution, and monitoring of foreign defense sales, look for opportunities to increase government-industry collaboration, and advance our competitiveness abroad.

*Question.* Do you have views on how DOD might be able to streamline and improve that parts of the FMS process under its control to improve coordination and timeliness?

*Answer.* The United States must maintain the strongest and most technologically advanced military in the world, along with a robust network of capable partners and allies. In my understanding, the FMS process is a vital part of encouraging our allies to strengthen their defense capabilities and increase burden sharing. I believe the FMS process should be agile, able to adapt to demands and respond to current and emerging security concerns. If confirmed, I will review existing processes and collaborate with the relevant stakeholders in the FMS process to further the Administration's goals of improving accountability and transparency in the FMS system, and to ensure predictable and reliable delivery of capabilities to our allies and partners.

#### CYBER

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

What do you perceive to be the role of the ASD(ISA) in accomplishing these objectives, and how will you deconflict with the roles and responsibilities of the newly established ASD(Cyber Policy)?

*Answer.* The ASD for Cyber Policy (CP) is the senior official responsible for overall supervision of DOD policy for cyber issues and is the Principal Cyber Advisor to the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I will work with the ASD(CP) to ensure the Department is best positioned to deter adversaries and non-State entities from seeking to threaten the political, military, or economic preeminence of the United States. In that vein, I will support ASD(CP)'s role by reflecting the President's and Secretary's objective of increasing DOD's effectiveness in the cyber domain in my own bilateral and multilateral engagements, including through coordination and deconfliction of cyber activities and operations with highly capable allies and partners.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you plan to strengthen the role between your office and other DOD organizations that contribute to these objectives, such as United States Cyber Command and the ASD for Cyber Policy?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work in close collaboration with the ASD(CP) and the Commander of USCYBERCOM to ensure the Department's cyber policies are consistent with the Administration's priorities, as they relate to alliances and partnerships falling under the ASD(ISA) portfolio.

*Question.* What role do you see ASD(ISA) having in integrating cyber into broader defense strategies for deterrence or force employment?

*Answer.* ASD(ISA) is responsible for managing the Department's relationships with key allies and partners, many of which are highly capable in the cyber domain. I believe ASD(ISA) should play a role in integrating our military cyberspace capabilities with other tools of national power, such as intelligence, diplomacy, and economic sanctions to advance U.S. national security objectives. If confirmed, I will work closely with ASD(CP) and other key stakeholders in the Department such as USCYBERCOM and other Combatant Commands to integrate the strengths of our most advanced cyber partnerships into our broader deterrence and defense planning, force employment planning, and strategy formulation.

*Question.* What role do you see for ASD(ISA) in international cyber engagement activities, including the potential of cyber tools and equipment for consideration in the FMS process?

*Answer.* President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have been clear that in order to restore peace through strength, the Department must defend the homeland, deter China, and increase burden-sharing with allies and partners to address all threats. If confirmed as ASD(ISA), I will work closely with ASD(CP) to ensure that the cyber tools and equipment we share with international partners in my portfolio enable them to reinforce the security of Department of Defense networks, U.S. Government critical infrastructure, and the American people. In my own engagements with international partners, I will reinforce the imperative of protecting sensitive U.S. information from existing and future cyber threats.

#### 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 requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

##### AXIS OF AGGRESSORS

1. Senator WICKER. Mr. Zimmerman, prioritizing our responses to threats is sound policy, but we do not get to ignore threats just because they are a lower priority. Russia, North Korea, and Iran are nuclear armed, or aspiring, adversaries that maintain large conventional armies. Most of our allies do not have nuclear weapons. Allied defense spending is rapidly increasing, thanks to President Trump, but still won't lead to sufficient capability to replace the United States in the near- to mid-term. What role should the United States play in deterring and defending against these threats?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. This is among the most pressing questions facing U.S. defense policy. The United States and our allies face multiple, serious threats requiring responsible and resolute approaches. In my understanding, there is broad consensus that an urgent need exists for our allies and partners to step up defense investments and take greater ownership of their security needs—and that doing so would advance both our interest and theirs. It is encouraging to see some allies and partners moving in this direction, and a key role the United States can play is to accelerate this trend and get more allies on board. If confirmed, I would make this a priority from day one, using ASD(ISA)'s role in managing defense relations to spur and steer allies toward security investments that strengthen our alliances and enable them to lead from the front.

In Europe, our NATO allies are in some cases expanding defense investments, and it seems to me that the United States should encourage their increased ability to field combat-credible forces and weapons systems that enable them to be primary on conventional deterrence, while the United States continues to provide critical and focused support, including an extended nuclear deterrent.

My understanding is that a similar arrangement can and should be pursued with respect to threats our East Asian allies face from Pyongyang. I have worked in previous roles with our South Korean allies on security issues, and I can testify to their capabilities.

Meanwhile, Iran continues to threaten U.S. interests and our allies in the Middle East. The National Security Presidential Memorandum on Iran signed on 4 February cogently outlines these threats, and I fully support its maximum pressure directives. We have shared security interests with allies and partners in the Middle East, and the United States can play an effective integrating and enabling role in protecting them—especially against threats emanating from Iran and terrorist groups. The Abraham Accords afford a model of how the United States can foster cooperation among allies and partners that helps advance shared security interests.

These threats are grave and cannot be wished away. Sound U.S. defense policy will always deal with the world the way it is, not the way we wish it would be. I believe that with an appropriate sense of urgency, the approaches briefly outlined here can be pursued in a way that makes our alliances stronger and spurs much needed investments in both U.S. and our allies' security.

#### 8(A) CONTRACTS

2. Senator WICKER. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. This is an area where I would like to become more familiar, and if confirmed would commit to work with the Department, your office, and Congress to strengthen the 8(a) program to the extent to which it falls within the ASD(ISA) portfolio. I appreciate the unique value brought to the DOD through programs like 8(a) that are known for efficiency and high CPARS marks.

3. Senator WICKER. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I appreciate the flexibility and efficiency which I understand are offered through the 8(a) program. If confirmed, I will work to ensure such programs continue to deliver cost-effective solutions to the extent that they fall within the ASD(ISA) portfolio.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

4. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Zimmerman, rapid response capabilities are essential to enable our warfighters to win on the battlefield. At the same time, our defense contractors must rapidly respond to the needs of our military to make the U.S. Military more lethal. Flexible and efficient contracting through the SBA 8(a) program is one trusted way to do this. Please explain how you will ensure that proven, dependable, and cost-effective 8(a) programs remain in place and supported by the Department of Defense.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Rapid response capabilities are critical for our warfighters, and if confirmed I would work to ensure the 8(a) program continues to offer a valuable avenue for achieving this through flexible, secure, and efficient contracting, to the extent it falls within the ASD(ISA) portfolio.

## ALASKA

5. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. As someone who has studied energy security and particularly LNG for much of my career, I understand that energy security is vital to national security and appreciate your longstanding commitment to Alaskan LNG. If confirmed, I commit to working with my colleagues across the Department of Defense and you to explore this project's opportunities for the DOD and nation.

## COLLABORATION WITH ISRAEL

6. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Zimmerman, it is U.S. policy to maintain and enhance Israel's qualitative military edge (QME)—effectively, Israel's ability to defend itself, by itself, against any threat or potential combination of threats. Given the continuing instability among Israel's neighbors and the region overall, this U.S. commitment is of utmost importance. Unfortunately, in the past year, some U.S. arms sales and deliveries to Israel were delayed or withheld. If confirmed, will you make ensuring Israel's QME is maintained a priority?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I will support the Administration's priority to maintain Israel's QME. The Trump Administration, as I understand, has already taken steps to lift all holds on U.S. arms sales and deliveries to Israel that were held up during the Biden Administration. Through bold action to take ownership of and responsibility for its security, Israel has modeled behavior I think is widely appropriate for our allies.

7. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Zimmerman, for more than 4 decades, Iran has served as the primary source of instability and chaos in the Middle East. Hamas would not have been able to carry out the attacks of October 7 without Iran's support. In Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and beyond, Iran has, and continues to, work against American interests. Iran today could produce weapons-grade uranium for one nuclear weapon in just a week and multiple bombs in under a month. Iranian petroleum exports remain at or near levels not seen in more than 6 years, providing funding for their terrorist activity. Do you agree Iran must be prevented from obtaining a nuclear weapon?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I agree with the President's stated policy, outlined in the 4 February 2025 National Security Presidential Memorandum, that Iran can never be allowed to have nuclear weapons.

8. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Zimmerman, in your view, what more should the United States be doing to stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I understand that negotiations with Iran are underway, and I trust the Administration to pursue an agreement that secures U.S. interests and those of our allies, which the JCPOA never did. In the meantime, I support the Administration's approach of maximum pressure and willingness to keep all tools available to counter Iranian aspirations to acquire nuclear weapons and other malign behavior. It is the Department of Defense's role to ensure the President is armed with the best possible military options, and if confirmed I would work to ensure the President has these.

## U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND

9. Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Zimmerman, soft power is a critical tool in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) area of responsibility not only because it fills host nation investment needs that might otherwise be filled by China, but also because it reinforces critical infrastructure and deepens ties that would be critical in any future conflict in the region. If confirmed, will you commit to reviewing cuts to

many of these programs and supporting beneficial development projects in the Indo-Pacific?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. My understanding is that the Department continues to prioritize competition with China as our pacing threat, and that the fiscal year 2026 budget request reflects this by investing in cutting-edge, combat-credible capabilities designed to deter China and maintain our competitive edge in the Indo-Pacific, consistent with the Administration's peace-through-strength policy. Regarding information about specific programs and strategy in the Indo-Pacific, I would defer to the Department's office of Indo-Pacific Security Affairs.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED BUDD

##### FOREIGN MILITARY SALES

10. Senator BUDD. Mr. Zimmerman, if confirmed, you will be charged with oversight of security cooperation programs and foreign military sales (FMS) programs across the Middle East, Europe and Africa. Where do you see the biggest bottlenecks in the FMS process and, if confirmed, will you commit to working with my office and the Department of State to eliminate red tape from this process?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I commit wholeheartedly to working with the Department, your office, Congress, and the State Department to do all possible from the ASD(ISA) position to enhance the transparency and alacrity of the FMS process. As a nominee, I do not yet have complete knowledge of the bottlenecks, but if confirmed would make a priority of meeting with the relevant stakeholders within DOD, State, and Congress to pursue a foreign defense sales system that enables more effective and rapid cooperation between the United States and our partners, consistent with the Administration's objectives.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACK REED

##### ANTI-HOUSHI OPERATIONS

11. Senator REED. Mr. Zimmerman, in your opening statement you assert that the regions included in the International Security Affairs role "must be addressed judiciously and in ways that fully support the Department's primary goals of securing the Homeland and deterring China."

How does waging a military campaign against the Houthis, which has required repositioning assets from U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) and includes more than 1,000 strikes to date with no public articulation of the measures of effectiveness, fit into the Administration's primary goals of securing the Homeland and deterring China?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I do not have complete insight into the recent U.S. campaign targeting the Houthis, but my understanding is that it was intended to ensure U.S. freedom of navigation at one of the world's key maritime chokepoints, the Bab al-Mandeb, including the U.S. Navy's ability to move forces between strategic theaters such as U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and USINDOPACOM. I support the President's position that the Houthis' attacks were unacceptable and had to end.

12. Senator REED. Mr. Zimmerman, you have spent your career in the intelligence field with a significant portion focused on the Middle East. In your opinion, are the Houthis rational actors that can be deterred?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. While I do not have full details regarding the recent agreement, the Houthis' acceptance of U.S. demands and commitment to stop attacking U.S. ships seem to suggest a strategic calculus responsive to U.S. and partner force projection.

##### ALLIES AND PARTNERS

13. Senator REED. Mr. Zimmerman, in our office call you spoke about your role, if confirmed, in managing partner and ally relations and the importance of trust in those relations. I am heartened to hear this will be a priority and I share your view on the absolutely criticality of strong alliances built on trust, respect, and predictability. In your assessment, would a trade war with our allies that stifles economic growth, increases costs, and drives countries away from purchasing U.S. defense articles help or hurt your efforts to build trust and strengthen alliances?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. In my view, the President has been unequivocal in maintaining that strong, reciprocal relationships that foster mutual economic vitality are in both our interests and those of our allies. On the very day of my writing this answer,

the White House announced a major trade deal with the UK, exemplifying the kind of mutually beneficial economic arrangements that, in my understanding, the Administration aims to forge with any ally or partner willing to pursue them. I anticipate that future such arrangements will serve to deepen trust and help facilitate appropriate defense sales to key allies and partners.

14. Senator REED. Mr. Zimmerman, do you believe that such economic barriers would have a negative impact NATO allies' capacity to invest more in their national defense—a goal we all agree is important, and which you described as urgent in your answers to the Committee's advance policy questions?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. There is an urgent need for our NATO allies to invest more in defense and take greater ownership of their security needs. My understanding is that this objective involves at least two major challenges: first, a lack of will among some allies to adequately increase defense spending; and second, a lack of defense industrial capacity, which limits what new capabilities and weapons our allies can acquire. I applaud President Trump for even in his first term identifying how important it would be for our NATO allies to boost defense spending, which it seems some have begun to do with more conviction. If confirmed, I would work diligently to encourage even greater defense investment and responsibility from our allies.

#### FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

15. Senator REED. Mr. Zimmerman, American security is advanced by the development of stable nations that are making progress on social development, economic growth, and good governance. Conversely, American security is undermined by frail and failing nations where conditions foster radicalism, produce refugees, spark insurgency, and provide safe havens for terrorists, criminal gangs, and human traffickers. It is clear that strategic development assistance is not charity—it is an essential, modern tool of U.S. national security.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. This Administration's nearly blanket freeze on foreign aid and dismantling of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will directly result in regional instability and is fundamentally harming to our standing with allies and partners across the globe. Our national defense strategy correctly identifies the important asymmetric advantage our allies and partners provide us to deter Chinese aggression and maintain global stability. Do you agree that freezing foreign aid funding and cutting personnel endangers our global strategic interests?

I have not had the appropriate briefings to equip me to provide the informed answer this question deserves regarding how best to reform U.S. foreign assistance. I support the Administration's efforts to review and where necessary realign foreign assistance to promote the interests of the American people and to ensure such programs further our country's freedom and flourishing.

16. Senator REED. Mr. Zimmerman, China is eager to fill the void we are leaving. Do we risk ceding U.S. influence, including our position as "partner of choice", by abandoning our allies and foreign aid commitments?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. In my view, one of the most important duties of the ASD(ISA) position is to counter China's attempts to expand its influence, especially in Africa and the Middle East. If confirmed, I would support Department efforts to review our international engagements to ensure they are aligned with America's interests and our strategic national security focus on countering China. This will afford us opportunities to address China's attempts to undermine U.S. interests on a revamped, durable basis. I would anticipate using my role in managing defense relations to warn countries about the pitfalls of partnering with China.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

##### U.S. FORCE POSTURE IN SYRIA

17. Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Zimmerman, I am deeply concerned about our lack of engagement in Syria—the Administration has already cut essential assistance for chemical weapons monitoring, repatriation of Al-Hol residents, and basic needs in the fragile country. Now, the Administration is withdrawing our troops that have been critical to the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

ISIS, Russia, and Iran are all trying to establish themselves in Syria right now—they would benefit from our force reductions at this critical moment. How will the United States ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS without a force presence in Syria?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. While my knowledge of the situation on the ground is limited given that I am not in the position, my understanding is that the Combined Joint Task Force Operation INHERENT RESOLVE is undertaking a deliberate and conditions-based consolidation of forces in Syria, not a withdrawal. This consolidation has been enabled by success in suppressing remnants of ISIS in Syria, primarily through our vetted Syrian partners the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Syrian Free Army, both of which I understand continue to maintain strong counter-terrorism pressure on ISIS. I also understand that the consolidation does not remove our ability to support these partners and, if needed, project power and strike ISIS and other Violent Extremist Organizations.

I agree chemical weapons monitoring is a serious issue. I understand that Syria's interim authorities are cooperating with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. I also understand that the fall of the Assad regime has created a pathway for thousands of civilians to return to their communities from the Al-Hol camp, or to be repatriated to countries such as Iraq through coordination between the SDF, the interim authorities, and various humanitarian organizations. Iran's influence in Syria has suffered from Assad's fall, and the interim authorities do not appear willing for Iran to regain a foothold.

18. Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Zimmerman, if confirmed, what is your plan to deal with the ISIS fighter population detained by the Syrian Democratic Forces?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. My understanding is that the Department of Defense retains authorities and capabilities to support detention operations in Syria and assist in repatriations from northeast Syria. If confirmed, I would anticipate helping the Department of Defense support Department of State diplomatic efforts to persuade other countries to repatriate their detained citizens from Syria, to include as appropriate using the Counter Terrorism Train and Equip Fund to provide limited support to repatriation operations. With the increased rate of Iraqi repatriations from Syria—which represent a large portion of the detainees—it will be important to ensure this population is not exploited by ISIS. I understand that the SDF is also in negotiations with the Syrian interim authorities for long-term plans on how to handle both Syrian detainees in a future justice system as well as the detention of any remaining international detainees that cannot be repatriated.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

##### ETHICS

19. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I will abide by all laws and ethics rules regarding post-government employment, which include restrictions related to acceptance of compensation from defense contractors and communicating back to the Federal Government on behalf of future employers and clients.

20. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. See response to Question 19, above.

21. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. See response to Question 19, above.

22. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I fielded appropriate questions about my policy views, but I was not approached about loyalty.

23. Senator WARREN. Mr. Lohmeier, Mr. Overbaugh, and Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. Not applicable, see response to question #22.

24. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. Not applicable, see response to question #22.

25. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

26. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

27. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

28. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

29. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

30. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Throughout my interviews, I interacted with various people from the Presidential Personnel Office and the DOD Landing Team.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I will abide by the Ethics Agreement I signed on April 8, 2025, which has been provided to the Committee.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. A free press is critical to a free country, as enshrined in the First Amendment.

34. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

35. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. Yes.

36. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Not applicable.

38. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Not applicable.

40. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I will abide by the Ethics Agreement I signed on April 8, 2025, which has been provided to the Committee.

41. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, please provide a list of all your clients at Tractor Air LLC within the last 5 years.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. This LLC has been inactive for the past 5 years with zero clients.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. My understanding is that the DOD Inspector General acts as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense to combat waste, fraud, and abuse at the Department, including by conducting audits and investigations and communicating with Congress. My understanding is that the services' Inspectors General perform similar duties for the services.

43. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I would ensure both compliance with Office of the Inspector General deadlines and protection of witnesses against retaliation for testimony.

44. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I would work with the Office of the Inspector General to comply with requests in a timely manner. I would defer to that office to keep Congress updated regarding its reviews.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I do not believe that the President or Secretary would issue an unlawful order. If confirmed, I would consistently follow the Constitution and laws of the United States.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I do not believe that the President or Secretary would issue an unlawful order. If confirmed, I would not carry out an unlawful order.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit voluntarily to respond to congressional requests with an appropriate deposition.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit voluntarily to respond to congressional requests with appropriate testimony.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit to respond to subpoenas with the appropriate testimony or deposition.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit voluntarily to respond to congressional requests with the appropriate information or documents.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit to respond to subpoenas with the appropriate information or documents.

52. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I commit to being responsive to all such requests and inquiries, including from minority.

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

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

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Classified information is essential for national security, yet I do believe overclassification presents a real problem. Information that does not meet the standards for classification should not be classified. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting the Secretary in ensuring proper classification and, as needed, would work with my intelligence community counterparts to ensure requirements and timeframes for safeguarding national security information are appropriate and not excessive.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I would support using technological solutions to increase the speed, accuracy, and consistency of declassification reviews.

#### PROJECT 2025

56. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

57. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

#### FOREIGN INFLUENCE

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. No.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, as part of my official duties as a fellow in the Senate and previously in the Intelligence Community.

60. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I have received no payment from a representative of or entity controlled by a foreign government. Regarding communication, I have had multiple engagements with representatives of foreign governments (Ambassadors, embassy personnel, etc.) as part of my official duties as a fellow in the Senate and previously in the Intelligence Community.

#### IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT

61. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I believe the Secretary and every member of the executive branch must follow the Constitution and the law related to disbursing funds appropriated by Congress.

62. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, what is your understanding of the Impoundment Control Act?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. My understanding of the 1974 Impoundment Control Act is that it provides a framework for handling circumstances in which the President seeks to defer or cancel execution of appropriated funds. I commit, if confirmed, to execute my responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the law. My actions and advice on this matter would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit, if confirmed, to execute my responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the law. My actions and advice on this matter would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

64. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I commit, if confirmed, to execute my responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the law. My actions and advice on this matter would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

65. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I commit, if confirmed, to execute my responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the law. My actions and advice on this matter would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

66. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I commit, if confirmed, to execute my responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the law. My actions and advice on this matter would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit, if confirmed, to execute my responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the law. My actions and advice on this matter would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit, if confirmed, to execute my responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the law. My actions and advice on this matter would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I commit, if confirmed, to execute my responsibilities in a manner consistent with the Constitution and the law, including the National Defense Authorization Act. My actions and advice to the Secretary of Defense on this matter would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

70. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, I would abide by the Department's procedures to report such violations to the appropriate authorities. My actions and advice to the Secretary regarding any such violations would be informed by the Administration's legal positions and advice from the Department's General Counsel.

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. The Federal Government can benefit from such partnerships that are well-defined and cost-effective. The Federal Government has collaborated with colleges, universities, nonprofits, and federally funded research centers to use their advanced analytical, engineering, and research capabilities and state-of-the-art facilities, enhancing our Federal workforce and labs. In the context of the Department of Defense, such collaborations can nurture the next generation of scientists and engineers, equipping them with the skills to tackle tough technical challenges and deliver advanced military technologies to our warfighters.

72. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. If confirmed, to the extent they are applicable to the ASD(ISA) portfolio, I will support partnerships that bring enhancement to our warfighters and defense capabilities.

#### PROTECTING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND FEDERAL RECORDS

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Practicing proper OPSEC is critical to mission success and force protection. OPSEC denies adversaries an opportunity to gain advantage over U.S. forces.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. The improper or unauthorized disclosure of classified information risks causing identifiable or describable damage to national security. The scope and likelihood 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.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I would follow the security protocols governing that disclosure. If confirmed, I commit to adhering to the information and security policies of the Department and will ensure all of those who work for me do the same.

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

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

77. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, should classified information be shared on unclassified commercial systems?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. As per the DOD's Information Security Program, only computers and IT systems approved and accredited for Classified National Security Information may be used for classified communications.

#### RETALIATION AND PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

78. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. I believe that all whistleblowers should be protected consistent with the law.

79. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, 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. ZIMMERMAN. No.

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

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to protecting whistleblowers in accordance with applicable laws. As appropriate, I would work with the General Counsel of the Department to ensure compliance with these laws throughout the process.

81. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, if you are confirmed, will you commit to preventing retaliation 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. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to protecting whistleblowers in accordance with applicable laws.

82. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, do you consider it to be retaliation to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. My understanding is that each of those actions could amount to an act of retaliation, depending on the circumstances.

83. Senator WARREN. Mr. Zimmerman, do you consider it to be retaliation to encourage another person(s) to demote an individual, prevent the promotion or advancement of an individual, remove an individual from the military or their role, or take other adverse actions related to personnel decisions for an individual, in response to that individual engaging in protected activity?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. My understanding is that each of those actions could amount to an act of retaliation, depending on the circumstances.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH

POLITICIZATION OF THE MILITARY

84. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Zimmerman, if confirmed, do you commit not to retaliate against general officers or military servicemembers for executing lawful policies enacted by a previous Administration?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Yes.

STRATEGIC ROLE OF FOREIGN AID

85. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Zimmerman, what is the role and value of foreign aid in supporting military operations and regional stability, particularly in Africa, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I have not had the briefings or access to provide an informed assessment on the Administration's reform of foreign aid. I believe that in some circumstances foreign aid can help reduce risk, and I support efforts to ensure that such aid is tied to advancing American interests, takes into account our highest-priority threats, and aligns with our national security strategy.

86. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Zimmerman, how will you navigate security cooperation with countries that may now turn to China for critical aid due to cuts to U.S. foreign assistance, especially in Africa?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. In my view, one of the most important duties of the ASD(ISA) position is to counter China's attempts to expand its influence, especially in Africa and the Middle East. If confirmed, I would support Department efforts to review our international engagements to ensure they are aligned with America's interests and our strategic national security focus on countering China. This will afford us opportunities to address China's attempts to undermine U.S. interests on a revamped, durable basis. I would anticipate using my role in managing defense relations to warn countries about the pitfalls of partnering with China and motivate them toward mutually beneficial collaboration with the United States.

MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE

87. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Zimmerman, press reports indicate that the Trump administration is considering plans to combine U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) under U.S. European Command (EUCOM). If confirmed, do you commit to consulting with this committee before recommending any change to these two commands?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I am not aware of a DOD plan to combine these commands. If asked to weigh in on any such discussion, I would carefully review all requirements, consult relevant stakeholders, and engage with SASC as part of the process. My recommendations would be guided by the Administration's America first, peace through strength agenda.

88. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Zimmerman, do you have any concerns about how this might impact U.S. strategic focus in Africa?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I am not aware of a DOD plan to combine these commands. I am not currently in a position to make a fully informed analysis of the pros and cons of doing so.

89. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Zimmerman, press reports indicate that the Trump administration is considering relinquishing the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) position. If confirmed, do you commit to consulting with this committee before recommending any change to this construct?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. It is my understanding that the Department of Defense is not considering relinquishing the SACEUR position at this time. President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have both made clear that the United States is not abandoning our European allies. I understand that the Secretary is currently performing a review of U.S. global force posture. If confirmed, I commit to provide my best advice to that review and to engage in all appropriate consultation with SASC.

## UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES

90. Senator DUCKWORTH. Mr. Zimmerman, if confirmed, do you commit that your deliberations and decisions will only be communicated through official, secure channels and any decisions properly documented for both oversight and institutional memory?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. Yes.

[The nomination reference of Mr. Daniel L. Zimmerman follows:]

## NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT

**PN26-50**

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:

Daniel Zimmerman, of North Carolina, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Celeste Ann Wallander, 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. Daniel L. Zimmerman, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

**Bio**  
**Daniel L. Zimmerman**

**Education:**

- Asbury University
  - 2002-2006
  - BA Financial Mathematics, BA History
- Oxford University
  - Fall 2004
  - Foreign exchange focused on military history and ancient languages
- Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, University of Kentucky
  - 2006-2007
  - MA Diplomacy and International Commerce

**Employment Record:**

List all jobs held since college including title or description of job, name of employer, location of work, and dates of employment.

- Office of Senator Bill Hagerty, U.S. Senate
  - Congressional Executive Fellowship
  - January 2024 - present
- Center for Cyber Intelligence (CCI), CIA
  - Manager in CCI Asia
  - January 2022 – December 2023
- Europe and Eurasia Mission Center, CIA
  - Senior Program Manager
  - January 2020 – December 2021
- White House / National Security Council (NSC)
  - Senior Program Manager for International Negotiations
  - September 2018 – December 2019
- President's Daily Brief (PDB), CIA
  - PDB Briefer to the Senior Advisor to the President and the Director National Economic Council; Air Force One travel briefer
  - June 2017 – August 2018
- Global Issues Mission Center, CIA
  - Analysis Chief for Global Trade
  - July 2015 – May 2017
- Global Issues Mission Center, CIA
  - All-Source Intelligence Analyst
  - January 2013 – June 2015
- Middle East and North Africa, CIA
  - All-Source Intelligence Analyst
  - March 2008 – December 2012

**Honors and Awards:**

- N/A

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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 Mr. Daniel L. Zimmerman 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):**

Daniel Zimmerman

2. **Position to which nominated:**

Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

3. **Date of nomination:**

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):**

Asbury University, 2002-2006, BA Financial Mathematics, BA History (granted May 2006)

Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, University of Kentucky, 2006-2007, MA Diplomacy and International Commerce (granted Dec 2007)

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):**

Central Intelligence Agency, Analyst/Briefer/Manager, McLean, Virginia, 2008-present

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):**

Fairfax Presbyterian Church

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:

\$600 to Spirit of Virginia, 12 October 2023

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

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[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.

Daniel Zimmerman

This 21<sup>st</sup> day of March, 20 25

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[The nomination of Mr. Daniel L. Zimmerman 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 June 24, 2025.]

