

Advance Questions for Ms. Anita K. Blair
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

1. Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the combatant commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the Military Departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the combatant commanders.

- **Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions?**

After twenty years, and especially after 9/11 and its aftermath, it is only prudent to review our basic assumptions about how best to organize and operate in the context of today's national security mission.

- **If so, what areas do you believe might be appropriate to address in these modifications?**

The Goldwater-Nichols Act has proven immensely valuable to the Department of Defense, especially in establishing the conditions for success of joint military operations. National security needs today demand close cooperation and coordination between military and civilian operations. The Goldwater-Nichols Act provides a successful model for improving military-civilian jointness, both within the Department of Defense and involving interagency, intergovernmental, nongovernmental, and contractor activities. Similarly, to sustain the success of the All Volunteer Force, I believe it is worthwhile to review the way we manage our military personnel, including compensation, assignment, development and force integration policies.

2. Duties

Section 8016 of Title 10, United States Code, provides that the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs shall have the principal duty of "overall supervision of manpower and reserve component affairs of the Department of the Air Force."

- **Assuming you are confirmed, what duties do you expect that Secretary Wynne will assign to you?**

If confirmed, I look forward to being part of Secretary Wynne's management team, and I expect that he will assign me duties consistent with the Title 10 requirements for this position.

3. Relationships

If confirmed, what will be your relationship with:

- **The Secretary of the Air Force**
- **The Under Secretary of the Air Force**
- **The General Counsel of the Air Force**

The Secretary is the head of the Department of the Air Force. Along with the Under Secretary, the General Counsel and other Assistant Secretaries, I will, if confirmed, report to the Secretary and perform duties as he assigns.

- **The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness**
- **The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness**
- **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs**
- **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs**

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is the representative of the Secretary of Defense for matters concerning those areas. The Principal Deputy and the Assistant Secretaries for Reserve Affairs and Health Affairs report to the Under Secretary. If confirmed, I will collaborate and cooperate with these officials and their staffs.

- **The Chief of Staff of the Air Force**
- **The Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force for Personnel**
- **The Surgeon General of the Air Force**

The Chief of Staff presides over the Air Force Staff, delivers plans and recommendations of the Air Staff to the Secretary, and upon the Secretary's approval, acts as his agent for carrying them into effect. He is assisted by deputies, including the Surgeon General, who is the chief for Air Force medical matters. If confirmed, I will work on behalf of the Secretary to coordinate policies and proposals with the appropriate members of the Air Staff. The Air Force Chief of Staff is also a member of the Joint Chiefs and has other operational duties, including keeping the Secretary fully informed of significant operations affecting the Secretary's duties and responsibilities.

- **The Chief, National Guard Bureau**
- **The Chief, Air National Guard**
- **The Chief, Air Force Reserve**

The Chief, National Guard Bureau is the principal adviser to the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff, and to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force

Chief of Staff, on matters relating to the National Guard, the Army National Guard of the United States, and the Air National Guard of the United States. The Chief, Air National Guard heads the air portion of the National Guard. The Chief, Air Force Reserve is the head of the reserve component of the Air Force. If confirmed, I will work closely with these officials to provide good policies and effective oversight of the Guard and Reserve on manpower and personnel matters.

- **Airmen and their families**

Airmen and their families are the reason why there is an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs – an official dedicated to ensuring that the people who serve and make sacrifices on behalf of their country are properly treated and cared for. If confirmed, I will strive to be their most vigilant guardian and humble servant.

4. Qualifications

- **What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you for this position?**

I am humbled and honored to be considered for the position of Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. My most relevant background and experience is the past five years I have served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Military Personnel Policy, responsible for policy and oversight relating to manpower and personnel matters affecting Navy and Marine Corps active-duty service members and their families. Major issues have included recruiting and retention; training and education; active duty strength and compensation; character, leadership development and diversity/equal opportunity; health affairs; counterdrug programs; family support; and morale, welfare and recreation. In February 2005, I accepted additional duties as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Total Force Transformation, leading efforts to modernize the management of the Department's total force of active duty, Reserve, civilian, and contractor personnel. Since August 2001, I have also had the opportunity to observe and learn from both civilian and military leadership, not only in the realm of manpower and reserve affairs, but across a range of Department of Defense activities.

Before joining the Department of Defense in 2001, I practiced law for about twenty years, initially concentrating in corporate law and litigation and later, as a nonprofit organization leader, focusing on constitutional equal protection and individual rights issues. In prior public service, I served on the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) Board of Visitors from 1995 to 2001, and chaired the Board's committee overseeing the successful assimilation of women at VMI. In 1998-1999, I was chairman of the Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues, which was established in the aftermath of a string of scandals in the mid-1990s involving sexual misconduct in the military.

- **Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?**

If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the Air Force, its mission and its people so that I can improve my ability to perform my duties.

5. Major Challenges and Problems

- **In your view, what are the major challenges and problems confronting the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?**

People are our most valuable asset. Even if we have the most advanced technology and hardware in the world, if we do not have good people, we cannot accomplish our mission. The enduring challenge is to attract, retain and manage people in such a way that both they and the institution can succeed and thrive.

- **Assuming you are confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?**

If confirmed, I look forward to working with others – in the Air Force, in DOD, Congress and beyond – to apply the best knowledge and experience toward solving and overcoming these challenges.

6. Air Force Active-Duty End Strength Reductions

Following recommendations made in the QDR, the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2007 begins the process of reducing Air Force manpower by 40,000 full-time equivalents across the total force. The Air Force plans to take a reduction of over 23,000 airmen by September 30, 2007.

- **What is your understanding of how the Air Force intends to achieve these planned active-duty force reductions within the officer and enlisted ranks in a single fiscal year, and they will affect readiness and recruiting?**

I understand that the Air Force plans to reduce its end-strength in the near future. The Navy has faced similar challenges in the past few years. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **If the Air Force is unable to implement planned retirement of aircraft, such as the F-117, U-2, B-52, and C-21, what is your understanding of how this would affect the Air Force’s ability to achieve planned reductions?**

I understand that planned reductions may be affected by the number and types of platforms in use in the Air Force. As a platform-based service, the Navy has had to deal with comparable issues. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **To what extent does the Air Force plan to rely on military-to-civilian conversions to achieve reductions in end strength while continuing to perform its missions, and have any studies been performed that address military-to-civilian conversions, availability of funding for civilian salaries, and the amount of time needed to achieve significant reductions using this means?**

I am not familiar with the Air Force’s plans as they may relate to military-to-civilian conversions. The Navy and Marine Corps have also planned and executed such conversions; both have “lessons learned” to share. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

7. Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve End Strength Reductions

Under the QDR, the Air Force plans to cut over 14,000 part-time end strength positions from the Air National Guard and about 7,700 part-time positions from Air Force Reserve over the next five years.

- **What is your understanding of how the Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve will absorb these reductions in end strength over the FYDP given the missions they have been assigned worldwide?**

I understand that the Air Force plans to reduce its Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve end strength in the near future. I am not familiar with the details of the Air Force plan. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **What is your understanding of the current status of coordination about the impact of these reductions with the National Guard Bureau and the state National Guard units affected?**

I am not familiar with the current status of Air Force coordination with the National Guard Bureau and state National Guard units on the possible impacts of end strength

reductions. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **What missions currently assigned to the Air Guard and Air Force Reserve would be changed or eliminated in order to meet end strength reductions?**

I am not familiar with the Air Force's plans for adjusting Air Guard or Air Force Reserve missions to meet end strength reductions. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

8. Reserve Component Involuntary Recall Policy

The DOD has implemented a policy that limits the involuntary recall of Reserve and National Guard personnel for mobilization to 24 cumulative months.

- **What is your understanding of the impact, if any, of the 24 month policy on the Air Force Reserve and ANG with respect to their ability to generate forces for operational missions?**

I understand that the policy limiting involuntary recall to 24 cumulative months may have an impact on Air Force Reserve and ANG. The Navy and Marine Corps have had to deal with the same policy; however, I recognize that the policy may have different impacts on different services. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **What is your understanding of the number and percentage of members of the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard who are unavailable for deployment as a result of the 24 month policy and the impact, if any, that this has on mission readiness?**

I am not familiar with Air Force statistics on non-availability of Reserve or Guard personnel or the impact on mission readiness, as a result of the 24 month policy. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **What measures are being taken in the Department to respond to operational requirements for low density, high demand units and personnel whose skills are found primarily in the Reserve Components?**

I am not familiar with measures taken in the Department of the Air Force to respond to such skill gaps. The Navy Reserve has reorganized to align itself better with the active-duty Navy and its current and forecasted missions. The Marine Corps Reserve remains

flexible and agile to meet new requirements on a continuous basis. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

9. Officer Management Issues

- **If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, what role would you expect to play, if any, in the officer management and promotion system, including policies affecting general officers?**

If confirmed, I will provide support as directed by the Secretary of the Air Force in matters concerning the officer management and promotion system, including policies affecting general officers.

10. Force Shaping Initiatives

The Air Force has requested authority to reduce the number of its active-duty airmen by 23,000 in FY 2007. In order to implement this ambitious plan without irreparably harming recruiting, the Air Force intends to employ both voluntary separation incentives and involuntary separation procedures.

- **What is your understanding of Air Force planning with respect to the numbers of officer and enlisted personnel by paygrade who must be separated in 2007 to achieve end strength requirements?**

I understand that the Air Force has requested force-shaping authorities. I am not familiar with the Air Force's detailed planning. The Navy has engaged in similar planning in recent years in connection with its force reductions. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **What oversight role, if any, would you play, if confirmed, to ensure that involuntary separations or forced retirement are implemented as equitably as possible?**

If confirmed, and with the advice of the Department's legal staffs, I will require that Air Force policies governing involuntary separations or forced retirement be implemented in a manner consistent with applicable law and policies, as well as fundamental principles of fairness.

11. Implementation of TRICARE for Reservists

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 authorized new categories of eligibility for TRICARE for members of the Selected Reserve, which are required to be implemented by October 1, 2006.

- **What is your assessment of the Department's ability to timely implement the new benefits and the challenges it will have to overcome?**

I understand that the Air Force, like other Services, has members of the Selected Reserve who are intended beneficiaries of this new extension of TRICARE. Effective communication and notification will be important in meeting the deadline. If confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **If confirmed, what role would you play in coordinating the Air Force's efforts implementing these new benefits?**

If confirmed, I expect to oversee the efforts of the Air Force Staff, including the Air Force Reserve, and to assist the Air Force Surgeon General in coordinating those efforts with the DOD TRICARE agency.

12. Gender Integrated Training

You were the chairman of the Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues that from 1998 to 1999 studied cross-gender relationships of members of the Armed Forces and, in particular, the basic training programs of the services. The Commission recommended that the services continue to train recruits of both sexes in accordance with their current policies, which for the Air Force, Navy and Army, meant gender-integrated basic training. You disagreed with the Commission's finding in this regard, and issued a personal statement expressing your view that military effectiveness should dictate how the services conduct basic training and that there were unanswered, serious questions about the relative effectiveness of gender integrated versus gender-separate training.

- **Based on your experience since August 2001 as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Military Personnel Policy and, since February 2005, Total Force Transformation, what are your current views about the military effectiveness of gender-integrated training?**

I believe that military effectiveness should be the standard by which Services make decisions about training. Pursuing military effectiveness as a goal, the Services should not stand still, but continually reexamine their assumptions and seek out better ways to accomplish their training mission.

In the Department of the Navy today, both Services have retained the same format for basic training that they had in 1999: Navy boot camp is gender-integrated, and Marine Corps boot camp is gender-separate. Both Services report that they are satisfied with the product they obtain and they are able to perform their assigned missions.

- **If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you take with respect to evaluating the benefits of gender integrated versus gender-separate training in the Air Force?**

If confirmed, I will let the Air Force know (as I have done with both the Navy and Marine Corps) that I stand ready to support efforts to improve training results.

13. Employment of Military Spouses

- **In your view, what progress has been made, and what actions need to be taken to provide increased employment opportunities for military spouses?**

Thanks to congressional support extending over the past twenty years, many programs exist today to provide increased employment opportunities for military spouses. These include relocation assistance, both in the United States and world-wide, job search aids, federal preferences for military spouses, education and job training programs, and even assistance in starting their own businesses.

It is important to assess the effectiveness of these programs and continue to support those that work, while improving or replacing others with new program opportunities that may produce better results for our military families.

14. Management and Development of the Senior Executive Services (SES)

The Air Force has initiated a senior leader management model to enhance and improve management, development and assignment of SES and general officers.

- **What is your assessment of how the Air Force program is working?**

I am aware that the Air Force has initiated a new model for management, development and assignment of SES and general officers. I applaud the Air Force's initiative in this important area. The program is in a very early stage, and it may take several years before the program fully takes shape. I look forward to learning more about the design, deployment, and results of this model.

- **What is your vision of the approach the Air Force should take to further improve the management, development, and assignment of SES members, especially in the critically important areas of acquisition and financial management?**

I believe these efforts should be aligned with the relevant provisions of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and similar strategic documents to achieve the vision of a capable, flexible and agile future Total Force. The leadership of the future Total Force must be of the highest character, competence, and accountability. I believe the acquisition and financial management communities would benefit from studying how other professions are organized and governed, to include specific ethical rules, some form of internal self-policing, minimum competency standards, and requirements for continuing education.

15. Joint Assignment Opportunities for Military and Civilian Personnel

The Quadrennial Defense Review Report of February 2006 calls for reorienting defense capabilities in support of joint operations, to include joint air, joint mobility, and joint command and control.

- **What is your view of the opportunities for joint training and assignment today for both military and civilian personnel in the Department of Defense?**

Opportunities for joint training and assignment for military and civilian personnel in the Department of Defense remain somewhat limited today, but are growing steadily. The leadership in both DOD and the Service Departments is focused on increasing capabilities by expanding the pool of individuals who may be able to perform the many jobs involved in our national defense. “Jointness” no longer applies only to the military services, but to the Total Force of active and reserve component military, plus government, non-government, and contractor civilians.

- **If confirmed, how would you assess the adequacy of the Air Force civilian workforce – in terms of training, experience, and numbers of government personnel – to support the Air Force mission?**

I have not had enough exposure to the Air Force civilian workforce to be able to assess their training, experience, and numbers. If confirmed, I expect to examine these issues in detail with Air Force staff and others.

- **What steps would you take, if confirmed, to move closer to the goal of reorienting Air Force personnel in support of a joint concept of operations?**

If confirmed, I would gather information and data to assess the current status of Air Force personnel, identify gaps that need to be addressed in order to bring them fully in support of a joint concept of operations, and along with Air Force staff and others, develop plans and programs to fill the gaps, along with measures of progress and performance.

16. Medical Personnel Shortages

The military medical corps of all three Departments are facing unprecedented challenges in the recruitment and retention of medical and dental personnel needed to support DOD's medical mission.

- **What steps would you take, if confirmed, to address recruitment and retention challenges in the Air Force Medical Services as well as the Air Force Reserve?**

I have worked with Navy Medicine in addressing similar challenges, and I hope that experience will be useful. I am aware, however, that the Navy and Air Force medical corps have somewhat different missions and requirements, and so I would not assume that either the problems or the solutions are the same for both Services. If confirmed, I expect to examine these issues in detail with Air Force staff and other Service and DOD colleagues, among others.

- **Based on your Navy experience, are you confident that the Department has sufficient tools to achieve goals for recruitment and retention of highly skilled health care personnel? If not, what additional tools might be worthy of consideration in the future?**

Based on my knowledge of Navy Medicine's concerns and challenges, I know that a number of tools already exist – including scholarships, loan repayment programs, and critical skills accession and retention bonuses – to recruit and retain highly skilled health care personnel. The Navy recognizes that it needs to make full use of the tools it already has. Bottom Line: While I cannot say that I am confident that the Department has all the tools it might need for this purpose, I do believe the Services should look critically and creatively at the full range of tools, flexibilities and authorities that Congress has already provided and make good use of them.

It is hard to compete with the private sector on a financial basis alone. Further, I believe many people who are attracted to military medicine are not necessarily motivated by money alone. In addition to financial incentives, the ability to offer flexible career options could help us recruit and retain highly skilled health care personnel. For example, on- and off-ramps (allowing people to leave the Service for a period of time and return later) could be very attractive to some of our medical personnel, who may wish to leave the military for a time to devote themselves to raising a family or pursuing other personal or professional goals, then return to military medicine later. Permitting the Services to experiment with different approaches to managing their medical Reserve

components (for example, adjusting the timing and conditions of Reserve duty to avoid undue damage to the physician Reservist's private practice) also could help with recruiting and retention.

17. Personnel and Health Care Costs

Senior military leaders have testified in favor of the Administration's plan to significantly increase health care fees for military retirees as a result of the growing portion of the DoD budget devoted to personnel and benefit costs.

- **Do you share the view that future operational readiness of the armed forces is threatened by the increasing costs of personnel benefits?**

The increasing costs of personnel benefits, especially health care, do pose a budgetary threat because we must operate within the limits of finite resources. Funds for increased entitlement costs must come from discretionary spending elsewhere in the budget. Thus, dramatic increases in benefit costs are bound to affect the amount of money we can apply toward operational readiness.

- **What efficiencies and personnel benefit changes do you believe warrant consideration to ensure a viable and affordable force?**

I believe that the government must keep its promises, and it is important to keep faith with service members who rely upon promises previously made to them. Nevertheless, we all have a stake in ensuring a viable and affordable force. I believe there may be more creative options that could both reduce costs and increase members' satisfaction. For example, cafeteria-style benefits plans enable individual employees to select the benefits that are most valuable to them personally. Other non-financial benefits, such as allowing more individual choice in transfers and assignments, might yield equal or better retention at lower cost to DOD.

18. National Security Personnel System

Although currently enjoined from implementation of a new labor-relations system, the Department is planning to move ahead in the implementation of a pay-for-performance civilian personnel system.

- **Based on your experience in the Navy, what is your assessment of the adequacy and quality of training that is being provided on the new personnel system?**

Based on my experience in the Navy, NSPS training appears to be proceeding as planned and receiving a lot of attention from leadership. The success of the plan will not be

known until results can be seen and evaluated. Meanwhile, I believe that the leadership of the Department of the Navy is committed to ensuring that managers and others receive the training they need. Leaders are watching these programs carefully and are willing to adapt in response to experience in order to achieve the best results.

- **What is your understanding of the manner in which pay levels will be determined under the new system?**

I understand that under NSPS employees will be assigned to a pay band that reflects their current pay, with no reduction in actual pay, and they will have the opportunity to earn future increases through merit and performance.

- **If confirmed, how would you monitor the acceptance of the new system by the civilian workforce, and how would you intervene if acceptance of the system fell below expected levels?**

If confirmed, I expect to work closely with both Air Force staff and other elements of DOD to monitor workforce acceptance of NSPS. If acceptance falls below expected levels, I will work with colleagues to determine how best to respond to workforce concerns.

19. Family Support

- **In your view, do the Services have adequate programs in place to ensure support for active and reserve component families, particularly those who live great distances from military installations?**

Thanks to the Congress, military family support programs have improved tremendously. The Services are able to offer a wide range of programs to meet the needs of families in both active and reserve components. Toll-free telephone support, such as OneSource, allows families who live far away from military installations to have access to support tailored for their needs. Customer surveys and retention rates in the Navy and Marine Corps show that family support programs appear to be adequate.

- **If confirmed, what additional steps would you take to enhance family support to airmen?**

In the Department of the Navy, although there are many similarities between the Navy and the Marine Corps, there are also many differences, resulting in different programs that nonetheless meet the needs of each Service. I have found it is important to ask what people feel they need rather than impose “solutions” that they don’t want and can’t use.

If confirmed, I would not want to make assumptions about what airmen and their families need or want, but instead I would ask them what they think and do my best to develop programs that respond to them.

20. General and Flag Officer Nominations

Under section 506 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, the services must provide substantiated adverse information to promotion selection boards selecting officers for promotion to the grades of O7 and above.

- **What problems, if any, do you foresee in the Air Force's ability to implement this requirement?**

I have no information about the Air Force's ability to provide substantiated adverse information to promotion selection boards for grades of O7 and above.

- **If confirmed, what guidance would you provide to promotion selection board members about the manner in which such adverse information should be considered?**

Any guidance naturally would start with the legislative language itself. In addition, I understand that the Office of Secretary of Defense is about to publish regulations providing guidance as required under Section 506, which will be effective October 1, 2006. If confirmed, I expect to provide support in this area as directed by the Secretary of the Air Force.

21. Interservice Transfers

At the same time that the Army and Marine Corps are working harder than ever to achieve recruiting goals, the Navy and the Air Force are planning for significant reductions in active-duty and reserve military personnel. Under section 641 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, an inter-service bonus for transfer was authorized. Additional incentives may be necessary, however, to encourage "blue to green" transfers in order to retain sailors and airmen with valuable military training, skills, and experience

- **What is your assessment of the adequacy of existing incentives for inter-service transfers?**

It may be that monetary incentives alone will not prove sufficient to persuade members of one Service to join another. Each Service has a unique culture, with which its members strongly identify. I endorse the idea of promoting "blue to green" transfers, but I believe that, to be successful, the program should consider other methods of motivating departing sailors and airmen to stay in the military in another Service.

- **If confirmed, and given your experience as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, what steps would you take to enhance the number of “blue to green” inter-service transfers?**

If confirmed, I would like to explore other possible methods of assisting the Army and Marine Corps in fulfilling their mission requirements. For example, one barrier to inter-service cooperation is the lack of a common set of competencies for various jobs. Recently, the Navy was able to provide Master at Arms (MA) sailors to assist the Army in Military Police (MP) work by identifying competency gaps between the two communities and providing “just in time” training to MAs so that they could do the work of MPs. I look forward to continuing to work with other Service Department colleagues on this issue.

22. Diversity in the Air Force

In its policies and practices, the Air Force is committed to the principles of equal opportunity with the goal of promoting equity, eliminating unlawful discrimination and building teamwork and readiness. Diversity initiatives, including reliance on affirmative action plans, according to Air Force instructions, focus on “broad policies seeking to remove barriers to status inequality and to capitalize on demographic changes in society. Diversity initiatives constitute a philosophy and practical tools aimed at producing results.”

- **What is your view of the proper use of affirmative action plans and measures aimed at achieving or nurturing diversity in the Armed Forces?**

I am not familiar with the details of the Air Force diversity plan, but I appreciate the strategic importance of ensuring that service in the Armed Forces is broadly supported by all Americans and that our Armed Forces are able to work effectively in many different areas and cultures around the world.

“Affirmative action” originally meant taking positive steps to identify and remove barriers and to “cast a wider net” in seeking to offer qualified persons an opportunity to compete based on their own merits. I endorse this original intent, and I believe there are many ways in which the Armed Forces can take positive steps as just described, without resorting to quotas and preferences, in order to achieve or nurture diversity. For example, both Navy and Marine Corps have produced ads and marketing plans tailored to reach non-traditional markets. We also challenged Navy recruiters, not to deliver a certain number of minority sailors, but instead to increase measurably their contacts with minority prospects. Both these efforts – classic examples of “casting a wider net” – helped to increase diversity without using quotas or preferences.

- **In your opinion, how, if at all, should considerations relating to gender and minority status with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin be addressed in the guidance provided by the Secretary of each Service to promotion selection boards?**

Precept language relating to race, ethnicity, national origin or gender should emphasize that candidates must be evaluated based on merit and performance in the assignments they have been given. Precepts should also advise boards that the demonstrated ability to lead a diverse force and deal successfully with different cultures is valued and important.

- **What is your understanding of the manner in which considerations relating to gender and race, ethnicity, and national origin are used in selection processes for the U. S. Air Force Academy?**

I am not familiar with the manner in which the U.S. Air Force Academy considers gender and race, ethnicity and national origin in its selection processes.

- **Do you agree with the Air Force Academy's approach with respect to the selection of applicants?**

I am not familiar with the Air Force Academy's selection process, but if confirmed, I expect to examine this area in detail with Air Force staff and others.

23. Sexual Assault

On February 25, 2004, the Senate Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Personnel conducted a hearing on policies and programs of the Department of Defense for preventing and responding to incidents of sexual assault in the Armed Forces at which the service vice chiefs endorsed a "zero tolerance" standard. Subsequently, in response to Congressional direction, the Department developed a comprehensive set of policies and procedures aimed at improving prevention of and response to incidents of sexual assaults, including appropriate resources and care for victims of sexual assault.

- **Do you consider the new sexual assault policies and procedures, particularly those on confidential reporting, to be effective?**

The new sexual assault policies and procedures have not been in effect very long. Early indications seem to show that the expanded opportunity for confidential reporting may have had the desired effect of inducing more victims of sexual assault (who otherwise might not have reported their attacks) to come forward and receive assistance and treatment. It is not yet clear whether increased reporting rates will yield greater numbers of substantiated cases or convictions.

- **What problems, if any, are you aware of in the manner in which the new policies have been implemented?**

For over ten years before the recent DOD policies became effective, the Department of the Navy had regulations on “Sexual Assault Victim Intervention” or “SAVI,” setting standards for mandatory Navy and Marine Corps programs in response to sexual assault victim needs and rights, reporting requirements, and investigations and prosecutions. As a result, the Navy and Marine Corps already had well-developed programs and a strong culture of victim support and zero tolerance for sexual assault. The only problem I am aware of so far in connection with implementation of the new policies is that both Services had to change some of their previous terminology (e.g., “SAVI” to “SARC”) in order to comply with the DOD policy, and those changes seem to have caused some confusion in the fleet and field.

- **If confirmed, what oversight role, if any, would you expect to play?**

If confirmed, I expect to devote substantial and constant attention to these issues.

24. United States Air Force Academy

In 2003, in response to complaints of sexual assaults and harassment of female cadets at the U. S. Air Force Academy, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff initiated the “Agenda for Change,” which introduced numerous changes at the Academy aimed at preventing and responding to incidents of sexual assault.

- **What elements of the Agenda for Change have been repealed, and why?**

I am not familiar with the details of the implementation of the Agenda for Change at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

- **What is your assessment of the reforms included in the Agenda for Change, and what is your current assessment of the equal opportunity climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy?**

I am not familiar with the details of reforms and the current equal opportunity climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

- **If confirmed, what role would you expect to play with respect to implementation of Air Force-wide policies regarding equal opportunity and prevention of and response to sexual assault at the Air Force Academy?**

If confirmed, I expect to devote significant attention to these issues.

The reviews focused on the status and problems experienced by female cadets at the Air Force Academy in 2003 demonstrated the importance of focused, informed oversight by service civilian and military senior leaders of conditions for female cadets and midshipmen. The *Service Academy 2005 Sexual Harassment and Assault Survey* found that even with the implementation of corrective measures, sexual assault and harassment continue to be factors negatively affecting female cadets at the military academies.

- **What is your evaluation of the conclusions and recommendations of the *Service Academy 2005 Sexual Harassment and Assault Survey* and the Report of the Defense Task Force on Sexual Harassment & Violence at the Military Service Academies?**

The *2005 Sexual Harassment and Assault Survey* revealed that, in the case of the U.S. Naval Academy, 59 percent of female and 14 percent of male midshipmen indicated they had experienced some form of sexual harassment, while 5 percent of women and one percent of men reported experiencing sexual assault. According to the Defense Manpower Data Center, these statistics are consistent with those for civilian college students; however, I believe it is fair to expect a higher standard of behavior from young people privileged to attend a service academy and intending to pursue a military career.

Concerning the Defense Task Force on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies, most of its recommendations were consistent with pre-existing policies in the Department of the Navy, which has mandated comprehensive sexual assault victim intervention programs in the Navy and Marine Corps for over ten years.

- **What actions would you expect to take, if confirmed, to address the problems of sexual assault and sexual harassment at the U. S. Air Force Academy and with respect to the Air Force's programs in this regard?**

If confirmed, I expect to devote significant attention to these issues. As the Task Force noted, "sexual harassment and assault is not a 'fix and forget' problem" but requires "a long-term, sustained effort, not only by the leaders of the Academies, but also by the cadets and midshipmen."

25. Religious Practices in the Air Force

- **What is your assessment of corrective measures taken at the U. S. Air Force Academy to ensure religious tolerance and respect, and of Air Force guidelines regarding religious tolerance that were promulgated in August of 2005?**

I am not familiar with the details of corrective measures taken at the U.S. Air Force Academy or the August 2005 Air Force guidelines on religious tolerance and respect. If

confirmed, I expect to examine this subject thoroughly with the Air Force Staff and others.

- **What additional steps, if any, do you think need to be taken with respect to the role of military chaplains in performing their duties in ministering to airmen?**

I believe the recently revised Department of the Navy Instruction strikes a proper balance between the free expression rights of chaplains and of service members. If confirmed, I would want to learn more about the Air Force guidelines on religious tolerance and what issues are present in the Air Force before determining any specific course of action.

26. Foreign Language Transformation Roadmap

A Foreign Language Transformation Roadmap announced by the Department on March 30, 2005, directed a series of actions aimed at transforming the Department's foreign language capabilities, to include revision of policy and doctrine, building a capabilities-based requirements process, and enhancing foreign language capability for both military and civilian personnel.

- **What is your understanding of the status of the actions identified in the Defense Language Transformation roadmap?**

I am not familiar with the status of Air Force implementation of Defense Language Transformation Roadmap requirements. In the Navy Department, both Navy and Marine Corps have recently submitted progress reports indicating they are on track in executing their service-level language transformation plans. Of note, the Navy is revitalizing its Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program, and the Marine Corps has established a new Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL). As described on its website, the CAOCL "ensures Marines are equipped with operationally relevant regional, culture, and language knowledge to allow them to plan and operate successfully in the joint and combined expeditionary environment in any region, in current and potential operating conditions, and targeting persistent and emerging threats and opportunities."

- **If confirmed, what steps would you take to identify foreign language requirements, and to design military and civilian personnel policies and programs to fill those gaps?**

If confirmed, I would encourage a joint approach in which, for example, each Service might take the lead for developing culture and language capabilities in the regions where that Service typically operates. I would also encourage the use of informed risk-management in determining how we should allocate both financial and human resources to attain optimum cultural and language readiness. Our policies and programs should seek ways to leverage existing capabilities, for example, by employing knowledge

management systems that can help us find individuals with the needed mix of skills, no matter what their current positions might be.

- **What is your assessment of an appropriate time frame within which results can be realized in this critical area?**

The time frame for results depends on the nature of the actions required. When emergent requirements are known, there may be ways to “jump-start” capabilities (*e.g.*, recruiting native speakers, using new technologies). But in general, building language capabilities should be regarded as a long-term investment. We need to acknowledge that language skills decline if not properly maintained and provide the right kind of assignments and opportunities for skilled linguists.

27. Military Quality of Life

In May 2004 the Department published its first Quadrennial Quality of Life Review, which articulated a compact with military families on the importance of key quality of life factors, such as family support, child care, education, health care and morale, welfare and recreation services.

- **How do you perceive the relationship between quality of life improvements and your own top priorities for military recruitment and retention?**

Quality of life improvements are definitely one of the most important factors in successful military recruiting and retention – which in turn, is fundamental to mission accomplishment for any Service. Some quality of life programs primarily benefit the individual service member, and others provide support for members’ families; both kinds are important. We know that families often play a decisive role in whether a member stays in or leaves the service.

- **If confirmed, what further enhancements to military quality of life would you make a priority, and how do you envision working with the Services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress to achieve them?**

If confirmed, I would encourage further enhancements to military quality of life that would give Service members greater ability to select the benefits and programs of most interest to them. I would also like to examine *quality of service* improvements, such as longer tours, fewer moves, and greater ability to pursue jobs of special interest to the member. The Services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress would be vital partners in efforts to enhance quality of life programs along these lines.

28. Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

- **Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?**

Yes.

- **Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.**

Yes.

- **Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?**

Yes.