

Advance Policy Questions for Daniel Ginsberg
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the war-fighting 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?

The Defense Department, working with the Congress, should continually assess the law in light of improving capabilities, evolving threats, and changing organizational dynamics. There have been legislative initiatives from Congress in recent years to clarify the role of the National Guard in the Department of Defense's organization but I am currently unaware of any reason to fundamentally amend Goldwater-Nichols. If confirmed, I will have an opportunity to assess whether the challenges posed by today's security environment require broad amendments to the legislation with a view to continuing the objectives of defense reform.

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

At this time I am unaware of any reason to fundamentally amend the Goldwater-Nichols Act. If I am confirmed and I identify areas that I believe merit changes, I will propose those changes through the established process.

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 "as his principal duty the overall supervision of manpower and reserve component affairs of the Department of the Air Force."

If confirmed, what duties do you expect that the Secretary of the Air Force will prescribe for you?

The principle duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force are to support the tasks assigned by the Secretary of the Air Force. These duties include providing guidance, direction, and oversight for Air Force military and civilian manpower/personnel programs; medical readiness and health care; plus Reserve

Component affairs. The Assistant Secretary is also responsible for oversight of the operation of the Air Force Review Board Agency and its component board.

What actions will you take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

If confirmed, I look forward to immersing myself into the Air Force's mission, organizations and its people, to maximize the duties expected of me and to support the Total Force. I will work hard to understand the Air Force's challenges and the resources necessary to sustain yet continue to transform the Total Force. To that end I will seek advice and counsel from the many and diverse stakeholders dedicated to the success of the Air Force.

In carrying out these duties, what would be your relationship with the following officials:

- **The Secretary of the Air Force**
If confirmed, I will meet and communicate with the Secretary of the Air Force on a regular and as required basis. I will provide him with my honest assessment and advice and support him in the implementation of his decisions and policy.
- **The Under Secretary of the Air Force**
If confirmed, I will work closely with the Under Secretary and communicate on a regular basis.
- **The other Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force**
If confirmed, I will establish and maintain close and professional relationships with each of the Assistant Secretaries and seek to foster an environment of cooperative teamwork, working together on the day-to-day management and long-range planning needs of the Air Force.
- **The General Counsel of the Air Force**
The Air Force General Counsel has a significant role to play in virtually all policy decisions in the Air Force. If confirmed, I expect to have a strong relationship with The General Counsel to provide consistent and sound legal advice.
- **The Inspector General of the Air Force**
If confirmed, I will establish and maintain a close and professional relationship with the Inspector General as this office has an important role in inquiring and reporting on matters that are the cornerstone of our readiness (such as efficiency, training, discipline, and morale).
- **The Chief of Legislative Liaison of the Department of the Air Force**
If confirmed, I will establish and maintain a close and professional relationship with the Director of Legislative Liaison who plays an integral role in ensuring that the Air Force maintains positive relations with Congress and coordinates the Air Force's legislative strategy.
- **The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness**

If confirmed, I plan to foster a harmonious working relationship with all my civilian contemporaries in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I will communicate openly and directly with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in articulating the views of the Department of the Air Force.

- **The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness**

If confirmed, I would expect to establish the same harmonious relationship that I intend to establish with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

- **The Chief of Staff of the Air Force**

The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, except as otherwise prescribed by law, performs his duties under the authority, direction and control of the Secretary of the Air Force and is directly responsible to the Secretary. If confirmed, I would, as the senior civilian charged with policy decision for manpower and reserve affairs work hand in hand with the Chief of Staff to carry out the duties prescribed by the Secretary of the Air Force.

- **The Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs**

Much of the day-to-day operations involving Air Force personnel are actually handled by the staff members of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services. As such, this office implements the policies approved by the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. I understand that the Secretary of the Air Force has clarified that relationship through recent revisions to mission directives.

- **The Surgeon General of the Air Force**

If confirmed, it will be my priority to ensure that our Airmen continue to receive quality medical support. I will work closely with the Surgeon General of the Air Force to ensure the Air Force medical system supports a medically ready force.

- **The Judge Advocate General of the Air Force**

I expect to establish a relationship with the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force as the Air Force's senior military legal counsel and senior leader of the Air Force Judge Advocate Corps.

- **The Chief, National Guard Bureau**

I have a history of working successfully with the National Guard Bureau on a range of issues. If confirmed, I expect to maintain a close working relationship with the Chief on matters relating to the National Guard and the Air National Guard. It will be my priority to ensure that our National Guard meets requirements whether in federal or state status.

- **The Director of the Air National Guard**

The Air National Guard is one of the two Air Reserve Components with which, if confirmed, I expect to be in close, constant communication. I understand Air National Guard issues and challenges well and know that the Reserve Components are key to Air Force mission success.

- **The Chief of Air Force Reserve**
If confirmed, I expect that my relationship to the Chief of Air Force Reserve to be virtually identical to that of the Director of the Air National Guard. However, because the Air Force Reserve is limited to the federal mission, I would expect some differences in challenges and issues.
- **The Reserve Forces Policy Board**
I understand that the Reserve Forces Policy Board is the principal policy adviser to the Secretary of Defense on matters relating to the reserve components. If confirmed, I will be a member of the Reserve Forces Policy Board. I will use that role to ensure that the Air Force communicates its Reserve Component issues and priorities with the other service Reserve Forces Policy Board members and the Secretary of Defense.
- **The Air Force Reserve Forces Policy Committee**
The Air Force Reserve Forces Policy Committee advises the Secretary of the Air Force on major policy matters directly affecting the reserve components and the mobilization preparedness of the Air Force. If confirmed, I will fully support the Air Force Reserve Forces Policy Committee in its statutory role and provide such other support as directed by the Secretary of the Air Force.
- **Airmen and their families**
Ultimately, the individual Airmen and their families will determine whether the Air Force is successful in any endeavor. If confirmed, I will devote the necessary energies to improving the policies, processes, and programs under my purview that will ensure our Airmen mission success and the quality of life they deserve.

Qualifications

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

The United States Air Force and our Airmen have remained a lifelong concern, personally, intellectually, and professionally. I have spent more than a decade working directly on military personnel, readiness, and reserve issues in the United States Senate, which has constitutionally derived oversight responsibilities over the Department of Defense. With the Senate Armed Services Committee during the chairmanship of Sam Nunn of Georgia, I saw how Congress made providing for the men and women in uniform a paramount concern to the basic functioning and strength of the armed services. As an adviser on defense, veterans, and national security to Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, I directly assisted the Senator in his role as a senior member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and as co-chair of the Senate's National Guard Caucus, which has worked successfully to pass far-reaching legislation to improve the benefits, equipment, and organization of the reserves, including the Air National Guard and the Air Reserves. I provided direct support and helped coordinate—among others--efforts to provide affordable health

insurance to members of the Select Reserve, provide more uniform housing allowances, and improve the Department's ability to carry out domestic operations in support of civilian authorities. I have recently traveled with Senator Leahy to Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan saw first-hand some of the contributions and challenges facing our deployed U.S. Airmen.

Second, military personnel policy, the relationship between the military and its civilian leadership, and the historical development of the U.S. Air Force has been a special focus of my education, whether in my undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan and the London School of Economics or in my graduate work at the Johns Hopkins Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and the University of Chicago. Finally, the United States Air Force has been a life-long interest to me. Before my eyesight deteriorated and my interests and goals evolved, I dreamed of flying the F-15 Eagle, the Air Force's longtime, main air superiority fighter. In my childhood and teen years, I read about the Service intensely, visited many U.S. Air Force bases across the globe, and took private pilot lessons to begin to build basic flying skills.

Major Challenges

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

I believe the Air Force's ability to prevail in current operations and to sustain global commitments is critical. The Air Force must balance the employment of the Regular forces with those of the Guard and Reserve. If confirmed, I will lead and partner on efforts to formulate policies that will help facilitate our Airmen's ability to provide a continuum of service.

Family support programs are more important than ever in light of continued deployments and the related stress, both on the members of the armed services and their families. I understand the Air Force is establishing a first class Wounded Warrior program to provide high standards of care in a compassionate and supportive way.

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

If confirmed, I would be honored to do all that I can to work with the rest of the Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs to promote a high standard of care for our Wounded Warriors and to ensure our families receive the support they require.

Active-Duty End Strength

The Air Force has requested an active-duty end strength of 331,700 for fiscal year 2010—an increase of about 15,000 from last year’s authorization. This follows several years of declining Air Force end strength.

What is your view of the required Air Force active-duty end strength?

The 331,700 active duty end strength should allow the Air Force to fund its most pressing requirements, such as robusting its nuclear forces as well as supporting new and emerging missions. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing and assessing the Air Force end strength requirement.

Officer Management Issues

As the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs you would have significant responsibilities with regard to officer management policies, the promotion system, and recommending officers for nomination to positions of authority and responsibility.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you make to the officer management system?

It’s well known that the Air Force has an exceptionally talented and highly trained officer corps supporting not only the mission of the Air Force but also the Joint warfighting mission as well. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing officer management processes and policies to ensure the optimal development of the officer corps.

Do you believe the current Air Force procedures and practices for reviewing the records of officers pending nomination by the President are sufficient to ensure the Secretary of the Air Force, the Secretary of Defense, and the President can make informed decisions?

Based on my conversations with the service, I believe that Air Force officer promotion procedures are sufficient and ensure the Air Force selects only the best qualified officers for promotion. Should I be confirmed, I will ensure the promotion selection procedures continue to be sufficiently rigorous to ensure officers meet the statutory requirement of exemplary conduct both before and after the convening of a promotion selection board.

In your view, are these procedures and practices fair and reasonable for the officers involved?

It is my understanding that the Air Force’s promotion system is fair and reasonable for all eligible officers. Officers are considered based on a “whole-person” concept that gives ultimate consideration to their demonstrated potential to serve in the next

higher grade. If confirmed, I will continuously monitor board processes to ensure fairness and legal compliance.

General and Flag Officer Nominations

Under DOD Instruction 1320.4, adverse and alleged adverse information pertaining to general and flag officers must be evaluated by senior leaders in the Services and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense prior to nomination.

If confirmed, what role would you play in the officer promotion system, particularly in reviewing general and flag officer nominations?

The Secretary of the Air Force is directly involved in the General Officer nomination process working with the Chief of Staff. If confirmed, I look forward to working with senior Air Force leadership to execute the duties of the office of the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

What is your assessment of the ability of the Services to timely document credible information of an adverse nature for evaluation by promotion selection boards and military and civilian leaders?

While I have not made a complete assessment, it is my understanding that under current Department of the Air Force practice, the adverse information presented to promotion selection boards is culled from numerous Air Force organizations that maintain relevant data, and generally has been found to be accurate and timely. Certainly, if confirmed, this will be a key area to explore.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that only the best qualified officers are nominated for promotion to general and flag officer rank?

As previously stated, the Secretary of the Air Force works directly with the Chief of Staff on this matter, however, if requested by the Secretary, I stand ready to advise, if confirmed.

Technical Training of General Officers

In your view, do a sufficient number of Air Force general officers have advanced training and degrees in scientific and technical disciplines?

At this time I cannot answer definitively, however, if confirmed, I will engage and advise where necessary.

Are the career paths for officers with technical skills appropriate to ensure that the Air Force can execute complex acquisition programs, adapt to a rapidly changing

technological threat environment, and make informed investment decisions on DOD and Air Force resources?

I have been informed that the Air Force carefully manages its officer corps to the appropriate level of adaptability and technical expertise relevant to each career field. I also understand that the Air Force is presently studying its Acquisition Corps to insure career paths for officers provide them with the technical skills and experiences to take on the responsibilities of our complex acquisition programs. If confirmed, I look forward to the results.

What actions would you take, if confirmed, to ensure that Air Force officers can capably perform these missions?

As I mentioned, the Air Force is in the process of studying its Acquisition Corps to ensure that the Air Force better develop our officers to meet our Acquisition requirements at the general officer level. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with the Assistant Secretary for Acquisition to rectify any deficiencies.

Medical Personnel Recruiting and Retention

The Air Force is facing significant shortages in critically needed medical personnel in both the active and reserve components. The Committee is concerned that despite authorizing large bonuses for critically short medical specialties, serious challenges remain in recruitment and retention of medical, dental, nurse, and behavioral health personnel.

If confirmed, will you undertake a comprehensive review of the medical support requirements for the Air Force and the sufficiency of the plans to meet recruiting and retention goals in these specialties?

I appreciate the Committee's concerns regarding this issue, and if confirmed, I pledge to consider this matter with the seriousness it requires. Medical support is critical to the success of our All-Volunteer force, and I intend to pay special attention to the Air Force's medical personnel requirements. Recruiting and retention of healthcare professionals is challenging in all areas of the country at this time, and the Air Force is experiencing shortages in several medical specialties and disciplines. However, even during these challenging times, I am pleased to note that Air Force continues to attract and produce world-class physicians, dentists, nurses, and medics.

What legislative and policy initiatives, including increased involvement of Air Force medical personnel in medical recruiting and bonuses and special pays, do you think may be necessary to ensure that the Air Force can continue to meet medical support requirements?

If confirmed, I plan to review the Air Force's programs for recruiting and retaining military and civilian medical personnel. I will also work closely with the Air Force Surgeon General and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services to evaluate requirements and support on-going programs and develop initiatives to enhance the Air Force's ability to recruit and retain health care providers and support personnel with the requisite critical skills. Should legislative or policy changes be required, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force, other Air Force leaders, the leadership of the Department of Defense, and the Congress to bring them to fruition.

Lessons Learned

What do you believe are the major Air Force personnel lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) which you would seek to address if confirmed as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

From what I have observed, two major themes stand out from lessons derived from OEF and OIF:

In interviews, senior leaders expressed the view they could not distinguish between active, guard and reserve forces. We need to maintain a "total force" by sustaining equal training and inspection standards, and recognizing the contribution of the Reserve Component by improving health, education, pay and retirement benefits for our airmen when they return home.

Airmen supporting OEF and OIF from CONUS locations are providing critical space and cyberspace capabilities to overseas forces. These airmen are seeing substantial increases in mission requirements with no proportional increase in manning, which is putting great strain on the force. The Air Force must recruit, train, support and retain these highly skilled individuals to fulfill these vital missions.

If confirmed, I will continuously monitor and seek out other lessons learned and apply them to the personnel challenges and complexities of our contingency operations.

TRICARE Fee Increases for Military Retirees

Secretary Gates recently told officers at the Air War College that "health care is eating the (Defense) Department alive."

How do you interpret this statement and do you agree with the Secretary's assessment?

As I understand it, healthcare costs in the Department of Defense and the civilian sector have increased disproportionately due to many factors. I believe that over the past 10 years, the AF worked diligently to streamline medical infrastructure and capitalize on advancements in the field of medicine. This resulted in rightsizing many of our facilities without compromising care provided to our Airmen and their families. The AF currently leverages strategic partnerships with civilian trauma centers, university medical centers, Veterans Affairs, and other DoD facilities to provide quality care and the broadest range of clinical opportunities for our entire medical team. If confirmed, I will optimize the use of our assets and those of our partners to ensure the greatest return on our investments.

What is your view of the need for increased beneficiary payments in reducing overall health care costs to the Department?

I am advised that costs have grown due to many factors including increased utilization by a mobilized Reserve Component force, expansion of benefits to support basic healthcare needs of severely wounded and their families, increased retiree healthcare utilization, healthcare inflation, and the same TRICARE premiums for the past last 10 years. I believe that a sound medical benefit program directly impacts the retention of Airmen and their families. If confirmed, I will support a Department of Defense review of the current beneficiary payment structure to ensure that future benefit costs are sustainable.

What other reforms in infrastructure, benefits, or benefit management, if any, do you think should be examined in order to control the costs of military health care?

Military health care is critical to our force and if confirmed, I will study this issue further and work with the other Services and DoD to determine the best structure for the future.

Personnel and Entitlement Costs

In addition to health care costs, personnel and related entitlement spending continues to soar and is becoming an ever increasing portion of the DOD budget.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to control the rise in personnel costs and entitlement spending?

If confirmed, I will work closely with our finance community to strike a balance between appropriate personnel costs and military pay or benefits.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to avoid a requirement for massive end-of-year reprogramming to cover personnel costs?

As is the case with regard to change in any large organization, military personnel changes take time to execute and implement throughout the force. In order to avoid

unnecessary changes, if confirmed, I will work closely within the Air Force and with the Department of Defense to accurately project requirements, and will then monitor execution, strength, and incentives, to ensure the Air Force remains in balance.

Family Readiness

If confirmed, how would you address family readiness needs in light of global rebasing, BRAC, and continuing deployments for both active and reserve component Air Force personnel?

To use a quote from Air Force Chief of Staff General Schwartz, “We are committed to ensuring that we not only address the needs of the military member, but recognize the fact that families make sacrifices, too. It’s this larger acknowledgement of a sense of community, a sense of family – that the United States Air Force isn’t just machines, it’s people, it’s families.”

In that spirit, if confirmed, I will continue to identify and address the needs of the Total Force and the Total Family with deliberate attention directed toward the ongoing improvement in the quality of their environment.

If confirmed, how would you ensure support for reserve component families, particularly those who do not reside near an active-duty military installation, related to mobilization, deployment, and family readiness?

Family readiness is a very important issue to me. Geographically separated families are entitled to all of the programs and services necessary to enhance and maintain their family readiness. Standardized programs across the Air Force benefit both Active and Reserve components. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program can also play an important role in helping relieve some of the stresses that grow out of military service and frequent deployments. That being said, if confirmed, I will address and bridge any gaps that may exist for the Total Force and will continue to focus on providing child care and youth program options for geographically separated Airmen and their families.

In your view, what progress has been made, and what actions need to be taken in the Air Force to provide increased employment opportunities for military spouses?

I understand that the Air Force has made continuing progress in addressing the needs of military spouses. If confirmed, I will continue to pursue the initiatives that have been established and develop new initiatives as needed, to benefit military families.

If confirmed, what additional steps would you take to ensure that family readiness needs, including child care, are addressed and adequately resourced?

If confirmed, I would continue to support childcare space growth and recapitalization. I would provide support for expanded childcare aid subsidy programs and work to increase the availability of childcare for the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. I would also review the ability to expand childcare options for families with children who have special needs (respite care).

Quality of Life

In May 2004, the Department of Defense 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?

I understand that the Air Force prides itself on its commitment to quality of life, a strong point in recruiting and retention efforts. If confirmed, I will continue to make quality of life a priority in the Air Force, just as I have worked in the past to promote quality of life in the Reserve Components.

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

If confirmed, I will continue to work with family advocacy groups and all of the Air Force Quality of Life providers in their transformation efforts aimed at improving airmen and their families' Quality of Service. Additionally, joint basing has forced all of the Armed Services to work together to find ways to improve the delivery of Quality of Life to our troops and their families. Fortunately, there is support both from Congress and the President, who are committed to taking care of military families.

Support for the Single Airman

While the percentage of married service members has steadily increased, a substantial portion, especially young service members, are single.

What are the unique support needs of single airmen, especially those returning from combat?

It is my understanding that the needs of single Airmen differ from those of the married Airmen. Recognizing those differences led to the development of programs and services that targeted the single Airman and their parents, siblings and significant others and their ability to stay connected.

If confirmed, what would you do to address these needs?

It is my understanding that support programs for single Airmen are being reviewed and improved, with determinations as to what will be kept, altered and appropriately discontinued to better meet the needs of single Airmen. If confirmed, I will review these programs designed to improve the quality of life for all Airmen—Active and Reserve Component, single and married, with a view toward ensuring that these programs are effective in meeting the specific needs of each group.

National Security Personnel System

Section 1106 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 restored the collective bargaining rights of civilian employees included in the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) established by the Department of Defense pursuant to section 9902 of title 5, United States Code. Under section 1106, the Department retains the authority to establish a new performance management system (including pay for performance) and streamlined practices for hiring and promotion of civilian employees. Senior DOD officials have stated that they do not intend to expand NSPS to include employees in bargaining units that are represented by employee unions.

What is your view of the NSPS system, as currently constituted?

I understand that the key features of NSPS (i.e. flexible civilian compensation, staffing, classification, and performance management systems) were designed to provide effective management of a mission-oriented and results-driven civilian workforce that is vital to the success of Department of Defense missions. I understand that the Department of Defense and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) are conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the NSPS system. If confirmed, I look forward to seeing the results of Department of Defense and OPM's comprehensive evaluation of NSPS in order to work toward addressing any identified concerns.

Do you support the pay-for-performance approach adopted for civilian employees in the NSPS system?

As a general principle, I support pay-for-performance; an employee's compensation should be based on contribution to mission. If confirmed, I look forward to seeing the results of DoD and OPM's comprehensive evaluation of NSPS in order to work toward addressing any identified concerns.

Do you believe that the Department needs streamlined authority for hiring and promotion of civilian employees to meet its human capital needs?

I am advised that the Department is challenged in meeting increased civilian labor requirements in critical occupations and developing human capital strategies to respond to these challenges. It is my understanding that there are situations where specialized hiring authorities are required in order to provide sufficient qualified applicants to meet mission needs. If confirmed, I will review creative and active use of available authorities and will explore the need for and use of direct and expedited hiring authorities to assist in achieving the Department's human capital objectives.

In your view, is it viable in the long run for the Department of Defense to maintain two separate systems (NSPS and the General Schedule) for its civilian employees?

It is my understanding that DoD has a number of other personnel systems, such as Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS). If confirmed, I will work with DoD and OPM to assess the appropriate number and types of personnel systems for effective and efficient personnel management.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to the NSPS authorizing legislation? What changes, if any, would you recommend to the NSPS regulations?

It is my understanding that DoD, in conjunction with OPM, is conducting a comprehensive evaluation of NSPS, as currently implemented. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that the Air Force participates fully in this evaluation. Depending on the outcome of this evaluation, legislation and/or policy changes may be appropriate to ensure that NSPS is on track to achieve its full potential.

Balance Between Civilian Employees and Contractor Employees

In recent years, the Department of Defense and the Air Force have become increasingly reliant on services provided by contractors. Over the past eight years, DOD's civilian workforce has remained essentially unchanged in size. Over the same period, the DOD's spending on contract services has more than doubled, with the estimated number of contractor employees working for the Department increasing from an estimated 730,000 in Fiscal Year 2000 to an estimated 1,550,000 in Fiscal Year 2007. As a result of the explosive growth in service contracts, contractors now play an integral role in the performance of functions that were once performed exclusively by government employees, including the management and oversight of weapons programs, the development of policies, the development of public relations strategies, and even the collection and analysis of intelligence. In many cases, contractor employees work in the same offices, serve on the same projects and task forces, and perform many of the same functions as federal employees.

Do you believe that the current balance between civilian employees and contractor employees is in the best interests of the Air Force?

In your view, has the Air Force become too reliant on contractors to perform its basic functions?

I agree with President Obama's government contracting memorandum of March 4, 2009, directing the Federal Government to ensure that functions that are inherently governmental in nature are not outsourced. If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary of the Air Force, and leaders across the Air Force to assess this matter so as to ensure compliance with the law and with the President's policy.

Do you believe that the current extensive use of personal services contracts is in the best interests of the Air Force?

As I understand it, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) restricts the use of personal services contracts. If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary of the Air Force, and leaders across the Air Force to ensure compliance with applicable law and policy.

Do you believe that the Air Force should undertake a comprehensive reappraisal of "inherently governmental functions" and other critical government functions, and how they are performed?

I support fully the principles and policies set forth in President Obama's memorandum of March 4, 2009. That memorandum directs the Office of Management and Budget, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, among others, to "develop and issue by July 1, 2009, Government-wide guidance to assist branch agencies in reviewing, and creating processes for ongoing review of, existing contracts in order to identify contracts that are wasteful, inefficient, or not otherwise likely to meet the agency's needs and to formulate appropriate corrective action in a timely manner." I believe that any such review must include a review of inherently governmental functions and other critical government functions and how they are performed. If confirmed, I will support any such review and corrective action, particularly as it relates to matters under the purview of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

If confirmed, will you work with other appropriate officials in the Air Force to address these issues?

If confirmed, I will work collaboratively with other Air Force officials to ensure these matters are addressed in the best interest of the Air Force and the Department of Defense.

One reason for the explosive growth in DOD's contractor workforce has been the continuing limitation placed on the number of civilian employees of the Department of

Defense. Rather than saving money as intended, this limitation has shifted all growth to contractor employees.

Would you agree that the balance between civilian employees and contractor employees in performing Air Force functions should be determined by the best interests of the Air Force and not by artificial constraints on the number of civilian employees?

Yes, I agree.

If confirmed, will you work to remove any artificial constraints placed on the size of the Air Force's civilian workforce, so that the Air Force can hire the number of employees most appropriate to accomplish its mission?

If confirmed, I would support all efforts to ensure compliance with the law, and if modifications are determined to be necessary, to work with Congress as necessary.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Numerous cases of sexual misconduct involving service members in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan have been reported over the last several years. Many victims and their advocates contend that they were victimized twice: first by attackers in their own ranks and then by unresponsive or inadequate military treatment. They asserted that the military services have failed to respond appropriately by providing basic services, including medical attention and criminal investigation of their charges.

What is your understanding of the resources and programs the Air Force has in place in deployed locations to offer victims of sexual assaults the medical, psychological, and legal help that they need?

I am aware of recent Congressional testimony on this matter and understand that the Air Force goes to great lengths to ensure appropriate levels of support are available to our deployed Airmen. I understand that the Air Force deploys a fully trained Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) to each of our Air Expeditionary Wings and is posturing to support an additional location. While deployed, it is vital to have a robust sexual assault training and awareness program to ensure all personnel, regardless of military branch, know that the SARC is there to support them. I understand the Air Force's SARCs must complete a mandatory training before they can assume the role and responsibility. Combined with strong base leadership support, SARCs provide a 24/7 response capability. Responsibilities include conducting weekly in-processing briefings to newly arrived personnel and monthly case management team meetings to review on-going cases. Air Force SARCs also address process improvements with representatives from Medical, Office of Special Investigations, Security Forces and Judge Advocate and Chaplain communities and provide outreach and prevention programs across their

installation and supported Geographically Separated Units. If confirmed, I will continue to study this matter in greater depth with a view to ensuring that the Air Force continues to take appropriate steps to aid victims of sexual assault, both in garrison and in deployed locations.

What is your view of the steps the Air Force has taken to prevent additional sexual assaults at home stations as well as deployed locations?

In my opinion, the Air Force has taken several extremely important steps in its campaign to prevent sexual assaults both at home station and deployed locations. For instance, I have learned that from the beginning of the Air Force's institutional program in 2005, prevention approaches have been included with our awareness and response efforts. Most prominent has been the inclusion of bystander awareness and how each Airman has a role in preventing sexual assaults. Part of the Air Force's continuous improvement to our training has been a long-term project to develop specific bystander intervention training modules for men, women, and leaders. If confirmed, I will continue these vital initiatives and assess whether additional steps should be taken.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources the Air Force has in place to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault?

I have been informed that from the time when the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program was created just three years ago, the Air Force believes they have implemented a sound response capability at the installation level. Since 2006, all Airmen entering Basic training and all pre-commissioning programs are educated about sexual assault, their reporting options, and how to seek assistance if they have been a victim of this crime. Education and training courses have been designed and are ready to implement across the Air Force this year to reach Airmen throughout their time in the Air Force regardless of the length of their service. If confirmed, I will assess whether additional steps should be taken to support victims and hold offenders accountable.

Do you consider the Air Force's current sexual assault policies and procedures, particularly those on confidential, or restricted, reporting, to be effective?

Since the Air Force's program formally launched in 2005, I understand great progress has been made in policies and procedures, however, if confirmed, I will work with knowledgeable professionals to assess and ensure the continuation of such progress.

What problems, if any, are you aware of in the manner in which the restricted reporting procedures have been put into effect?

While not extensively familiar with restrictive reporting problems, we must always be aware of what victims are experiencing and recognize that many will not report for a multitude of reasons. Many of those barriers are similar to what civilian victims endure who have no association with the military, as well as, some very unique challenges to those who are in the military. If I am confirmed, I will constantly engage to determine whether improvements are needed in the area of restrictive reporting.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure senior management level direction and oversight of Departmental efforts on sexual assault prevention and response?

If confirmed, I will have an active role in the oversight and implementation of the Air Force's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program. I'm committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance regarding the crime of sexual assault. I recognize the importance of sustained partnerships with the Department of Defense, and with national subject matter experts and advocacy groups to get it right.

United States Air Force Academy

What is your assessment of the policies and procedures, including the frequency and use of surveys, at the United States Air Force Academy to prevent and respond appropriately to sexual assaults and sexual harassment and to ensure essential oversight?

I understand the Academy has institutionalized a comprehensive program of both prevention and response to sexual assault and sexual harassment, and that surveys are a necessary and important part of that program. I am not familiar exactly with the extent to which surveys are currently used at the Academy. If confirmed I will ensure vigilant oversight of this critical issue both and, if necessary, adjust policies and resources.

What is your assessment of the policies and procedures at the United States Air Force Academy to ensure religious tolerance and respect?

It is critical that one consistent set of guidelines that are fair to everyone be applied equally across the board because the Air Force Academy cannot be an institution unto itself but must part of the larger Air Force. If confirmed, I expect the Air Force Academy to remain in full compliance with OSD and Air Force-wide policy.

Religious Guidelines

What is your understanding of current policies and programs of the Department of Defense and the Department of the Air Force regarding religious practices in the military?

It is my understanding that the Air Force has supported policies of religious tolerance and mutual respect. If confirmed, I would continue the Air Force's commitment to upholding the Constitutional tenets of the "free exercise" and "establishment" clauses, and review policies as necessary to assure continued compliance with the First Amendment.

Do these policies accommodate, where appropriate, religious practices that require adherents to wear particular articles of religious significance?

Like other religious practices, I would expect that the principles of "free exercise" would be balanced against the interests of the Air Force in standardized uniform wear. If confirmed, I will review these policies, as required.

In your view, do these policies accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief?

I have not had opportunity to review in depth the Air Force's policies regarding free exercise of religion and other beliefs. If confirmed, I will study this issue to determine if changes in policy are necessary.

In your opinion, do existing Air Force policies and practices regarding public prayers offered by military chaplains in a variety of formal and informal settings strike the proper balance between a chaplain's ability to pray in accordance with his or her religious beliefs and the rights of other service members with different beliefs, including no religious beliefs?

I understand that chaplains are not compelled to offer prayers that are inconsistent with their faith, but are expected to remain sensitive to the pluralistic Air Force and society they serve. In my opinion, such an approach strikes an appropriate balance given the diversity of religious views in the Air Force. If confirmed, I am willing to study this issue further to determine if changes in policy are necessary.

Suicide Prevention

The Committee is concerned about the increasing rate of suicides in all of the Services.

In your view, what is the cause of this increase in suicides in the Air Force?

I understand the Air Force has experienced an upward trend in suicides in 2008 compared to 2007. I believe that deployments and heavy operational tempo place a

heavy strain on Airmen and their families. If confirmed, I will aggressively work with other Air Force leaders, DoD and outside agencies to give this our full attention.

What is your assessment of the Air Force's response to this increase in suicides?

It is my understanding that AF leadership has aggressively responded to the increase in suicides. The AF continues to look at many successful initiatives to build on an established Suicide Prevention Program. In my view, the Air Force has a benchmark program that we can continue to improve on to provide a comprehensive and collaborative approach to enhancing the psychological health and resiliency of Airmen. If confirmed, I will fully support and build upon the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program.

What is your assessment of the adequacy of Air Force programs in place to reduce or eliminate the incidence of suicides in the Air Force?

While one suicide is too many, I believe the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program has been an effective program. The program engages leadership at all levels; incorporates suicide prevention into Air Force education and training programs; utilizes recurrent mental health screening; and fosters a cross-functional approach to enhance our "Wingman" culture and strengthen the psychological health and resiliency of Airmen.

Foreign Language Proficiency

A Foreign Language Transformation Roadmap announced by the Department of Defense 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. More recently, Congress authorized incentive pay for members of pre-commissioning programs to study critical foreign languages.

In your view, what should be the priorities of the Federal Government to expanding the foreign language skills of civilian and military personnel and improving coordination of foreign language programs and activities among the Federal agencies?

In my view, our nation's current and future involvement in overseas contingency operations will rely heavily on both foreign language skills and cultural knowledge. I recommend that all federal agencies develop and incentivize organic foreign language capability within their respective organizations. These skills will allow us to strengthen and multiply our forces' capabilities across the full operational spectrum.

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?

I have been advised that the Air Force is currently participating in a Department of Defense-directed, Joint Chiefs of Staff-led Capabilities Based Assessment (CBA); this joint effort is tasked to address the issue of foreign language requirements and the shortfalls we currently have in the Department. If confirmed, I would continue to assess and monitor this process and impact Air Force policy to ensure that we best utilize our resources to make up the shortfalls and continue to grow this high-demand capability within in the Air Force for the benefit of the Nation's defense.

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

I have been advised that the Air Force is in compliance with the requirements outlined in the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (DLTR) and we are in close coordination with the Defense Language Office in the preparation of goals and action plans for the next phase of the DLTR which will provide a more focused approach to build out foreign language capability. If confirmed I will continue to monitor compliance and closely coordinate with necessary agencies throughout the Department of Defense.

Legislative Fellowship Program

Each year, the Services assign mid-career officers to the offices of Members of Congress under the Legislative Fellows Program. Upon completion of their legislative fellowships, officers are required to be assigned to follow-on positions in their Services in which they effectively use the experience and knowledge they gained during their fellowships.

What is the total number of Air Force personnel currently assigned as legislative fellows, and what grades are these officers in?

I have been told that for academic year 08-09, the Air Force has 35 participants in the Air Force Legislative Fellowship Program. They have 32 officers in the O-4 grade and three DoD civilians in the Pay Band 2/GS-12/13 range attending.

For academic year 09-10, the Air Force has 36 individuals projected to start in July 09. All military members are in the grade of O-4 (28 are active duty officers, two are Air National Guard members and two are Air Force Reservists). The remaining four are DoD civilians, again in Pay Band 2/GS-12/13.

Describe how the Air Force selects individual officers for participation in its legislative fellows program.

As I understand the process, the Air Force Personnel Center advertises for nominations during the annual Intermediate and Senior Developmental Education

selection process. Air Force Legislative Fellows are initially recommended by their senior Air Force leadership and then vectored by their Air Force Developmental Team to the Air Force Developmental Education Designation Board for selection.

Civilian Fellows meet an internal Civilian Developmental Education Board from which they are selected and forwarded to the Developmental Education Designation Board.

What is your assessment of the value of the Legislative Fellows program to the Air Force and the utilization of officers who have served as legislative fellows?

I am familiar with the Air Force Legislative Fellows program and many other agency programs from my time spent on the Hill. I'm an advocate of these fellows programs as they provide participants a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of legislative operations and Congress's role in the process of government as a whole. As a development opportunity for our Airmen, fellowships enable first-hand understanding of legislative branch functions and how congressional decisions affecting federal agencies' programs are made. This exposure provides participants the opportunity to learn how legislation is crafted, as well as enabling a fundamental understanding of the legislative role in military requirements and procurement. This is an experience that will serve these officers well as they progress into senior leadership roles. If confirmed I look forward to working with the Air Force personnel community to ensure optimum utilization of the Fellows' recent experience with the Congress.

Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS)

The Department and the Services have been moving toward adoption of DIMHRS as a cross-service, fully integrated personnel and pay system. Under the proposed timeline, the Army is the first in line to launch DIMHRS, with the Air Force to follow. Recent reports indicate technical difficulties will postpone the Army's launch date.

What is the status of the Air Force's implementation of DIMHRS? What is your assessment of the need for an integrated, cross-service personnel and pay system?

I understand that the Department of Defense is in the process of transitioning the core DIMHRS software to the Services for completion of tailored operational systems. The Air Force is establishing an acquisition program office to complete the solution, and will use the core software to the maximum extent practical and if confirmed, will aggressively engage to ensure fielding of the system.

What is your understanding of the Air Force's evaluation of the adequacy of DIMHRS and other alternative personnel management systems for the Air Force?

If confirmed, I will carefully evaluate the adequacy of DIMHRS and other alternative personnel management systems for the Air Force?

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to the implementation schedule and process currently in place?

If confirmed, I would review the assessment and implementation plan to ensure it reflects best practices and is supported by a solid business case. If I discover deficiencies in the plan, I will make appropriate recommendations, after cross-Service coordination.

GI Bill Benefits

Last year, Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act that created enhanced educational benefits for service members who have served at least 90 days on active duty since 9/11. The maximum benefit would roughly cover the cost of a college education at any public university in the country.

What is your assessment of the effect of the Act on recruiting and retention of service members?

I understand the GI Bill has always been a positive recruiting and retention tool and I expect the post-9/11 GI Bill to continue this legacy. I believe it is too soon to have empirical data regarding the exact effect the new GI Bill has on recruiting, but there are stories from the field that the new GI Bill is a major point of discussion for potential recruits and is a major recruiting incentive. In addition to the revised education benefits, I believe the revised eligibility and transferability will have a positive effect on morale in general.

If I am confirmed I will share any empirical data regarding the effect of the post-9/11 GI Bill on recruiting, retention, and morale with this committee.

What is your evaluation of the sufficiency of the implementation plan for the transferability provisions contained in the Act?

I have been informed that the Air Force is working closely with the Department of Defense on the implementation of this new program and that DoD will publish its implementing policies in the near future. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure a close working relationship with the Department of Defense and our Sister Services so that the program is well-executed and consistent with Air Force policy.

Air National Guard

The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves issued its report in January 2008, and since then the Department has been engaged in evaluating and implementing the Commission's recommendations.

What do you consider to be the most important recommendations of the Commission relating to the National Guard, and which recommendations, in your view, should receive the highest priority for implementation?

The Commission on the National Guard and Reserve (CNGR) report in 2008 provided 95 recommendations for change. I believe the CNGR did a remarkable job of examining the issues of the reserve components. Every recommendation provides a level of importance within its own right. There are themes that remain consistent throughout the report. These include transforming the Guard and Reserve with the means to become an Operational Reserve of the 21st century with the effective implementation of a continuum of service for its members. Generically, this core concept provides for reserve component changes in training, equipping, career progression, family and member benefits, and employer support.

In your view, would it facilitate integration of active and reserve components if the Director of the Air National Guard was dual-hatted with responsibilities under the Chief of Staff of the Air Force?

The Director of the Air National Guard reports to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau. Under current Department of Defense Directive, the CNGB serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Air Force, and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, on matters relating to the Air National Guard. As I understand it, dual-hatting the Director of the ANG would be contrary to current DoD Directives and the NGB Charter.

With respect to the wearing of the military uniform, under what circumstances should personnel of the National Guard be authorized to wear their Air Force uniforms?

Present and retired members of the Air National Guard should wear the Air Force uniform on occasions and under circumstances prescribed by current Air Force and Air National Guard Instructions.

Do you believe that Air National Guard personnel should be allowed to wear their uniforms at political rallies or events related to advancing legislation of interest? If so, under what circumstances?

Air National Guard members should only wear the Air Force uniform as prescribed by current Air Force regulations and supplemented by Air National Guard Instructions.

From an organizational and force management perspective, what goals do you hope to accomplish with respect to the Air National Guard if you are confirmed?

If confirmed, I will work to support the needs of the Air Reserve Components as part of the totally integrated Air Force through policy oversight of human resources and Reserve component programs.

Mobilization and Demobilization of National Guard and Reserves

In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the National Guard and Reserves have experienced their largest and most sustained employment since World War II. Numerous problems arose in the planning and procedures for mobilization and demobilization, e.g., inadequate health screening and medical readiness, monitoring, antiquated pay systems, limited transition assistance programs upon demobilization, and lack of access to members of the Individual Ready Reserve. Reserve force management policies and systems have been characterized in the past as “inefficient and rigid” and readiness levels have been adversely affected by equipment stay-behind, cross-leveling, and reset policies.

What is your assessment of advances made in improving Air Force reserve component mobilization and demobilization procedures, and in what areas do problems still exist?

It is too early for me to make an assessment of the problems that may exist in the mobilization and demobilization process. From the outside looking in, the Air Force seems to do very well with the way it employs the reserve components.

What do you consider to be the most significant enduring changes to the administration of the reserve components aimed at ensuring their readiness for future mobilization requirements?

The Air Force’s Total Force approach resourcing and training the reserve components goes a long way to ensuring their readiness for mobilization and AEF participation.

Do you see a need to modify current statutory authorities for the mobilization of members of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves?

At this point, based on my limited knowledge, I feel current statutory authorities are sufficient to support mobilization requirements. If confirmed, I will be in a better position to assess whether to recommend changes to applicable law and policy.

Do you agree that Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve personnel should be mobilized to augment civilians deployed to Afghanistan?

Yes, I believe that National Guard and Reserve Component personnel bring skills and experience that can be used to augment other executive branch agencies.

Medical and Dental Readiness of Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Personnel

Medical and dental readiness of reserve component personnel has been an issue of significant concern to the Committee, and shortfalls that have been identified have indicated a need for improved policy oversight and accountability.

If confirmed, how would you seek to clarify and coordinate reporting on the medical and dental readiness of the reserves?

First, let me say that I am extremely proud of our Reserve Component service members and their service to our Nation during this time of war and transformation. Based upon what I have seen of the Air Reserve Components, this has not been an issue that prevents their contribution to the Total Force. However, if confirmed I will assess the effectiveness of reporting on the medical and dental readiness and to evaluate the need for policy changes and increased oversight

How would you improve upon the Air Force's ability to produce a healthy and fit reserve component?

At present, the Air Reserve Components maintain the same level of fitness as the Regular Air Force. These standards have served them well and, if confirmed, I hope to work with the Air Force to ensure our Reserve Components remain healthy and fit.

National Guard Organization, Equipment, and Readiness

Legislative proposals introduced in recent years and recommendations of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves have proposed numerous changes to the roles and responsibilities of the National Guard and Reserves. Several of the proposed changes have been implemented, and numerous others are under consideration.

How do you assess the changes in the roles, mission, and authorities of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and the Air National Guard?

From my perspective, the changes to the roles, mission and authorities of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau elevates the National Guard to a level of visibility needed to ensure it is properly equipped and resourced to carry out its dual-role mission.

In your view, do the current Air Force processes for planning, programming, and budgeting sufficiently address the requirements of the Air National Guard? What is the appropriate role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau in this regard?

I have not had sufficient time to examine the Air Force processes for planning, programming and budgeting, nor, am I aware of how the Chief, National Guard

Bureau interacts within this process. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging in this process to ensure our Air Reserve Components are properly equipped and resourced to carry out their missions and responsibilities.

Systems and Support for Wounded Soldiers

Wounded soldiers from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom deserve the highest priority from the Air Force for support services, healing and recuperation, rehabilitation, evaluation for return to duty, successful transition from active duty if required, and continuing support beyond retirement or discharge.

In your view, what were the most critical shortcomings in warrior care since 2001?

From my understanding, the Air Force has been doing an outstanding job caring for our wounded Airmen since 2001. The most critical shortcoming that I have been advised on is retaining individuals who wished to remain on active duty and providing policy to ensure they could continue to be productive members of the service. If confirmed, it will be my distinct honor and privilege to do all I can to continue to promote the highest standard of lifelong care for our Wounded Warriors.

What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the Air Force's response?

I have been advised that the Air Force has taken great action in addressing this issue and made retention, if possible, a priority. The biggest shortcoming facing the Air Force in the near future is reintegration into civilian communities if retention is not possible especially for those with non-visible wounds of war such as traumatic brain injury or post traumatic stress disorder. Employment for our wounded warriors outside of the Air Force is not just a Service issue but an American issue. The Air Force must continue to work through civilian hiring policies to hire wounded veterans when qualified, partner with organizations like the National Chamber of Commerce for local placement with business, and other helping organizations.

If confirmed, I will assess the effectiveness of the Air Force's response and continue to work with Congress to ensure our warriors and their survivors receive the highest possible care and support.

If confirmed, are there additional strategies and resources that you would pursue to increase the Air Force's support for wounded soldiers, and to monitor their progress in returning to duty or to civilian life?

If confirmed, I will continuously assess the efficiency and appropriateness of the Air Force's Warrior and Survivor Care Program and implement strategies and seek

additional resources as appropriate to ensure the Air Force meets the needs of our wounded Airmen.

Studies following the revelations at Walter Reed point to the need to reform the DOD disability evaluation system.

What is your assessment of the need to streamline and improve the Air Force's disability evaluation system?

I am informed that beginning November 26, 2007, the Army started to test a revamped physical disability evaluation program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, streamlining the process used to determine Soldiers' fitness for service or eligibility for military and veterans' benefits. I am advised that key features of this pilot program include a single medical examination and a single-sourced disability rating. It is my understanding that the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) conducts a single comprehensive exam and will rate all medical conditions. The Military Departments accept the DVA rating for all medical conditions determined unfitting for continued military service unless the condition involves non-compliance, misconduct, or a non-service aggravated medical condition which existed prior to service. Based on the limited information I have so far, I believe the process does need to be improved. If confirmed, I will work to this end with stakeholders in the Air Force as well as with experts in the Department of Defense (DoD) and the DVA.

If confirmed, how will you address any need for change?

If I am confirmed, I will listen to the information presented by the experts in this area and study the process myself. After becoming fully informed on the issues, I would work with the stakeholders in the Air Force and appropriate personnel in both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veteran Affairs to determine what areas should be changed and how best to accomplish those changes.

Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation

The Department completed work last year on the 10th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC), releasing Volume I of its report in February 2008 and Volume II in July 2008. Among other recommendations, the QRMC proposes a new defined benefit retirement plan that more resembles the benefits available under the Federal Employee Retirement System than the current military retirement benefit; increasing TRICARE fees for retirees; and the adoption of dependent care and flexible spending accounts for service members.

What is your assessment of the QRMC recommendations, particularly the proposed new defined retirement plan?

Reductions in current entitlements and benefits could impact future recruiting and retention efforts. Proposed changes in military retirement entitlements and benefits must be thoroughly reviewed to fully understand these impacts. If I am confirmed, I will be mindful that our military forces, who are often called upon to fight under extremely arduous conditions, should receive deserving pay and entitlements.

Which recommendations, if any, would you propose that the Congress implement?

I believe that any proposed action on the earlier QRMC recommendation will require thorough review and analysis to understand the impact. At this time, I do not have a specific proposal for implementation of any change.

Management and Development of the Senior Executive Service (SES)

The transformation of the Armed Forces has brought with it an increasing realization of the importance of efficient and forward-thinking management of civilian senior executives.

What is your vision for the management and development of the Air Force civilian senior executive workforce, especially in the critically important areas of acquisition, financial management, and the scientific and technical fields?

I am told that the Air Force believes that deliberate management of this diverse population is of preeminent importance. They also feel that development of our senior executives -- and those who one day will become senior executives -- is equally important. The Air Force is committed to providing opportunities -- educational and experiential -- to enhance leadership skills for all executives, including those in the acquisition, financial management and scientific and technical fields. If confirmed, I will continue this vision, ensuring deliberate management and development of the Air Force senior executive workforce.

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, I do.

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 in a timely manner to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Yes.

Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Yes.