

Advance Questions for Mr. Craig W. Duehring
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 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?

No, not at this time. We've just implemented the most dramatic change to Joint Officer Management in the Joint Qualification System (JQS) on Oct 2007, as a result of changes mandated by the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act 2007. However, we can address this issue again when the CNGR report is presented.

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

Truly believe these modifications are exactly what were needed to ensure that we adapt to how we fight today...and build the inventory we need to fight tomorrow. I support this new system fully.

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?

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 Personnel Council and its component boards – the Air Force Civilian Appellate Review Office and the Air Force Board for the Correction of Military Records.

Relationships

If confirmed, what will be your relationship with:

The Secretary of the Air Force

As my direct supervisor, I will continue to meet with the SECAF on a regular and as required basis. I will provide him with my honest assessment and advice.

The Under Secretary of the Air Force

I will take direction from the Under Secretary of the Air Force in the absence of the Secretary. During other periods, I will work closely with him in areas of common interest.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

I have already established an excellent working relationship with Dr. Chu and his entire staff. I am confident that I will be able to articulate Air Force interests and positions with all of them.

The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

In my earlier capacity as PDASD/RA, I established a relationship of mutual respect between myself and Mr. Dominguez. I expect that relationship to continue.

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. In my capacity as acting ASAF/M&RA I have already established a strong relationship with the General Counsel and the members of her staff.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs

As you know, I performed the duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs for 15 months during the opening days of this administration, to include the tumultuous events surrounding the attacks of 9-11. Beginning in October of 2002, when the current ASD/RA was confirmed by the Senate and sworn in, I was his principal deputy and, as such, was very involved in every aspect of operations conducted by that office. To this day, we have retained both a personal and professional relationship which I believe can only enhance our mutual responsibilities to make certain that the members of the National Guard and Reserve components continue to receive the tools they need to protect our nation.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs

I have worked successfully with Dr. Casscells and his staff since the secretary was sworn in on a myriad of health issues, some of which have received much public and congressional attention as well as others that are less visible. All are important to our fighting men and women and their families. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs to ensure that our service members receive the best medical attention that this nation can provide.

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 personnel and manpower areas under my authority, seek to work closely with the Chief of Staff to carry out the duties prescribed by the Secretary of the Air Force. In my present capacity I have an excellent working relationship with General Mosley.

The Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force for Personnel

Much of the day to day operations involving Air Force personnel are actually handled by the staff members of the DCS/Personnel. As such the DCS/Personnel implements the policies approved by the SecAF. Recently, the Secretary of the Air Force signed a document that reinforced the role of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (M&RA) as being responsible for personnel and manpower policy decisions affecting our Air Force family and ensuring oversight of those policies. Confirmation by the Senate will complete that action.

The Surgeon General of the Air Force

As you know, the effects of the Global War on Terror highlighted the need for change in the medical support that our Airmen receive. Beyond that, our efforts also directly affect the quality and timeliness of treatment that all of our brave service members receive, especially when it involves the medevac system. If I am confirmed, I will continue work closely with LTG Roudebush and his staff to meet the changing needs of our medical system.

The Chief, National Guard Bureau

I have known LTG Blum professionally for over 6 ½ years. We have traveled together numerous times in Europe, the southwest U.S. – Mexican border and to numerous other locations throughout the country to gather information and make absolutely certain that our National Guard Soldiers and Airmen meet the requirements of their governors and the missions that they have shouldered in Title 10 and Title 32 status. If I am confirmed, I will continue to work with the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and his staff to continue our support for his people and to

implement any changes in responsibility that he may face as the result of Congressional direction.

The Director, Air National Guard

LTG McKinley and I have a close working relationship that permits us both to meet the challenges brought about by the GWOT, BRAC, QDR and myriad of other programs that affect both operations and personnel in the Air National Guard. In my current status, we meet regularly to make certain that our actions are open and transparent to one another. I know the Air National Guard programs as well as anyone at my level. If confirmed, I will be able to be more proactive in proposing solutions to and even anticipate problems that will require Congressional support.

The Chief, Air Force Reserve

My relationship with LTG Bradley is virtually identical as that with the Director of the Air National Guard. His challenges and solutions differ somewhat because his organization has a national scope only. We meet regularly for the same reasons that I meet with LTG McKinley. Often, we all meet together to discuss our common areas of concern. If confirmed, my ability to bring about change that they need will increase dramatically.

Airmen and their families

Our Air Force family is the most important asset we have. If confirmed, I will devote all of my energies to improving processes, programs and procedures used by our people to carry out their mission of protecting the citizens of the United States. I look forward to working with the Congress to continuously seek out new solutions to both old and new challenges. I pride myself as being a good listener and I tend to travel extensively. I will keep in touch with our Airmen and their families by seeking them out on their turf

Qualifications

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

First, I spent 28 years as an officer in the United States Air Force. As a pilot, I have flown over 800 combat missions and earned a Silver Star and two Distinguished Flying Crosses. I was a commander during a very turbulent period in my squadron's history. During that tour, I was awarded the Air Force's highest individual award for Leadership – the Lance P. Sijan Award. Second, I spent six rewarding years as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs covering the activities of all seven reserve components beginning 50 days before September 11, 2001 and continuing until June 29, 2007, when the President appointed me as the acting Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (M&RA). Since that appointment, I have immersed

myself in the responsibilities associated with this job. Finally, my father-in-law, CMSgt (Ret) Richard D. Blevins, who is a hero to me, retired from the Air Force after 30 years of service. In our house, we are truly an Air Force family

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?

I most certainly do. While I know much about the National Guard and Reserves as well as many of the benefits programs that are common to all services, I intend to learn as much as possible about the other aspects of my job that are unique to the Air Force. While I have begun this task within the confines of the headquarters already, if I am confirmed, I will be able to work more closely with the Congress and the committee staff personnel to become more proactive in programs and issues that affect our people.

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?

There are several. First, there is the continuing challenge of providing qualified personnel to continue to fight in the Global War on Terrorism. Second, we must reduce the stress on Airman and their families who are shouldering the burden of repeated operational rotations. Third, we must make absolutely certain that our wounded warriors receive the finest possible treatment available. Fourth, we must plan for the next war and support the Secretary of the Air Force's initiatives to recapitalize the fleet.

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

The Air Force relies upon volunteers to meet our commitments around the world. Recruiting, retention, training and planning are essential elements of our plans. If we meet the needs of our people, our people will meet the needs of the Air Force. Second, my visits with Airmen and their families lead me to believe that we can sustain a volunteer rotation cycle indefinitely if we establish a reasonable dwell ratio. The burden needs to be shared by all. Third, I am extremely proud of the men and women who make up our medevac mission – the first step on the road to recovery for all wounded warriors from this war. We need to partner with the rest of the department as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs as we seek to improve the care that these heroes receive once they return. Finally, there are threats in this world that are potentially even greater than the terrorist threats we face today. I share the Secretary's deep concern that, if we are to meet the threats of the future, we must recapitalize our hardware and develop new capabilities in the cyber world. People remain at the center of all these challenges.

Air Force Active-Duty End Strength Reductions

Following the QDR, the Air Force began a process to reduce the size of its total force by 40,000 airmen. Last year, the Air Force cut 23,000 personnel, and under the President's budget request for fiscal year 2008, the Air Force plans to cut another 5,600 active airmen. Planning for fiscal year 2009 contemplates additional reductions that would result in an active-duty end strength of 316,000 airmen by the end of that fiscal year.

How will the Air Force achieve these planned force reductions, and what is your understanding of the probable effects they will have on readiness, quality of life, and retention?

The PBD 720 FYDP reductions have already been programmed. Preserving readiness, sustaining deployment and contingency missions while managing risk to home stations missions were all factors taken into consideration when determining where the cuts should take place. As a result of these reductions individuals/organizations face increased/intense steady-state mission demands and may deploy more frequently.

The Air Force is currently developing a strategy to achieve the force reductions needed in FY09. No final decisions have been made at this point, but we expect to fully use the tools available in law—voluntary first, then involuntary. The authorities include voluntary separation pay, reductions in force, selective early retirements, and force shaping of probationary officers (less than 4 years of commissioned service). We will also take advantage of waivers from time-in-grade and commissioned service requirements for retirement.

What is your understanding of military service leaders' views about whether an end strength of 316,000 will be sufficient for the Air Force to achieve its assigned missions in the future?

316.5K active duty end strength is only sufficient for a 78 combat wing equivalent force structure, while the most current Air Force vision to support combatant commanders requires manpower associated with an 86 wing equivalent structure, requiring active duty end strength to grow to 330+K. The DCS/Personnel staff is chartered to prepare a Congressional Reporting Requirement (CRR) on a Review of Total Air Force End Strength Requirements, specifically the capabilities the current force structure provides, any shortfalls for new and emerging missions, and an explanation on how the Air Force could balance the budgetary demands necessary to implement any corrective policy action within its own budget. This report is due to Congress on 5 Feb 08.

In your view, will an end strength of 316,000 allow the Air Force to perform and accomplish its assigned missions?

No. This is a similar question to the previous question. Currently the proposed end strength supports a 78 combat wing structure. As the Combatant Command requirements increase our need for additional manpower will increase to fulfill that mission.

If the Air Force Special Operations Command requires additional end strength, do you believe that the Air Force will be able to support this requirement?

Air Force will continue to provide the active military end strength as long as SOCOM provides the dollars to buy the end strength.

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 what is your understanding of the availability of funding for civilian salaries, and the amount of time needed to achieve significant reductions using this means?

The Air Force does not plan on using military to civilian conversion to achieve significant reductions. The Air Force has instituted an active military floor of 316.5K during the FY09 Program Budget Review (PBR). Per FY10 POM Preparation Instruction (PPI), military end strength may not be “cashed in” as savings or as an offset to pay shortfalls in other areas without the consent of DCS/Personnel. No military to civilian conversion were programmed in the FY09 PB given the 316.5K active military floor nor has the plan in the past or the future been to use military to civilian conversions as a means to achieve reductions in end strength. FY04 and FY05 military to civilian conversions focused on reducing stress; civilian positions were added and military realigned to stressed career fields (no military end strength reductions). FY06 and FY07 military to civilian conversions focused on converting non-military essential positions to civilian; military personnel funding transferred to civilian O&M to fund conversions (military end strength reduced).

A recent Air Force Times article quotes Air Force Secretary Wynne as concluding that the draw-down, which in his words was intended to maximize the resources that could be applied to recapitalization, was not having the intended effect and has only slowed—not reversed—the aging of the fleet.

What is your assessment of whether the ongoing Air Force personnel reductions will significantly affect achievement of recapitalization?

The personnel cuts were specifically programmed to help with the recapitalization of our force and the personnel savings have specifically been reprogrammed for meeting that requirement.

How will the increased number of Army and Marine Corps ground forces affect Air Force personnel requirements?

As the US Army and Marines are targeted for significant increases to bolster combat capability, there will be a commensurate requirement for an increase in Air Force manpower to ensure the effectiveness of the interdependent, joint team. Our Air Mobility units are intrinsically tied to supporting our Army and Marine team with logistical reach

to go and be supplied anywhere in the world. Our weather teams, tactical air control, and other forces are imbedded with or closely tied with the ground forces. Air Force provides the full range of air assets as part of the interdependent joint fight, including increased Special Forces and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) requirements. Failure to recognize and fund the increase in capabilities provided by the Air Force via aforementioned Congressional Report on Total Air Force Active Military End Strength Requirements will impact the Air Forces flexibility to support the expanded ground forces.

Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve End Strength Reductions

Under the President's 2008 budget request, the Air Force plans to cut 7,700 part-time end strength positions from the Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve over the next year.

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

The Air National Guard chose not to take a reduction in their endstrength.. They funded the manpower positions through internal rebalancing.

The AFR focused on maintaining combat capability when making PBD 720 reductions and focused the majority of its PBD 720 reductions on the Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs) force. IMA reductions minimized the operational risk to the Air Force by retaining needed experience by re-rolling IMAs to the participating Individual Ready Reserve where the AF still has access to their capabilities.

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?

“The ANG is not part of the 7,700 person reduction”.

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

There are mission changes underway in the reserve Component. As part of the Total Force Integration the Air Force is reviewing which component is best suited to support Air Force missions

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?

The office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs enjoys a close working relationship with DCS/Personnel. As the policy owner for officer management and promotions, I expect that to continue. I feel very comfortable that, if confirmed, I could continue to provide the Secretary of the Air Force the appropriate guidance in these policy areas, to include policies affecting general officers

Employment of Military Spouses

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

Today, more and more spouses seek the personal fulfillment of a career. When this is coupled with the fact that many families need two incomes to maintain their quality of life, spouse employment opportunities become crucial to recruitment and retention. Air Force, through the Airman and Family Readiness Centers (A&FRC), has developed employment assistance services to meet the challenges spouses face in training for and finding suitable positions and, as they relocate, continuing and progressing in their chosen career fields. Baseline services at all centers include classes and individual consultation on career planning and personal development. Resource centers provide guided access to computers, laser printers, internet information on careers and the development of job search skills as well as local and long distance job listings. Individual career counseling and planning, assessment instruments and interpretation of results are available. Air Force partners with the Air Force Aid Society and grants are offered every year to fund special programs at selected installations that train spouses in portable skills such as medical transcription and operating a home- or virtual-business. Recently Air Force has partnered with OSD and DOL in a pilot program that offers up to \$3,000.00 per spouse to train or become licensed/certified in transportable careers. This Military Spouse Career Advancement Account pilot focuses on preparing spouses to work in high-growth, high-demand industries and occupations such as health care, information technology, early childhood education, and information technology. The pilot is currently available at 6 Air Force bases as well as other services' installations. Air Force will work in conjunction with the other partners to insure that pilot is successful and the opportunity is expanded to other installations. In addition, A&FR staff constantly network with local employers and human resource managers to promote the military spouse as a prime candidate for employment and partner with schools, non-profits, and other community organizations to offer career fairs and other employment resource opportunities

Management and Development of the Senior Executive Services (SES)

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

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

This is working well. Senior civilian leaders are managed from a total force perspective with the intention of developing and utilizing executive resources consistent with requirements of the Air Force.

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, logistics, financial, personnel, and contract management?

The current system that is in place is working well. I would continue to endorse the Air Force-level assessment board of senior executives to determine leadership potential necessary for our future. Not to be confused with a promotion board, the assessment board is designed to assist in preparing development and utilization plans to place Senior Executives in the right jobs, with the right training, at the right time to best meet corporate requirements. Results of this board often reflect, or result in, the interchangeability of our senior executive workforce with their uniformed, General Officer counterparts.

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 assessment of the opportunities currently available for joint training and assignment today for both military and civilian personnel in the Department of the Air Force?

The Air Force has adequate opportunities for joint training and assignment. Let me explain.

Given the inherent “jointness” of how we are currently operating for GWOT, we have seen significant improvement in how we prepare our people for joint operations and an increase in assignments that require a significant amount of joint understanding. At the same time, we have an eye on requirements. Along that line, the Air Force recently reviewed its ability to prepare officers for joint assignments by convening a panel of experts – internal and external. We concluded that opportunities exist, but our efforts should be more coordinated to ensure we grow military leaders who are steeped in joint as well as military leaders who have been exposed to joint matters. Up to now, our efforts have focused on ensuring military leaders have been

exposed to joint experience. We plan to make this shift through guidance to our developmental teams. In addition, we plan on capitalizing on the legislative changes that established a non-billet-based, career-long, multi-level Joint Qualification System, which allows for many more opportunities to gain, credit, and collect joint capabilities to an expansive pool of Airmen.

The Air Force also remains concerned about preparing civilian leaders for joint operations. In fact, the Air Force is the executive agent to 5 of the 9 Combatant Commands which means employees of these Combatant Commands are Air Force employees which facilitates movement of Air Force civilian employees in and out of joint organizations. Since the Air Force employs a strong career programs construct in which development of employees for Air Force corporately managed positions, including joint positions, is a primary goal. Therefore there are ongoing efforts to ensure we've developed and/or recruited the talent needed to fill these key positions. Moreover, as the Department moves to emphasize joint matters for civilian employees the Air Force seeks innovative ways to provide more senior civilian leaders with joint opportunities. Recently, the Air Force has been using developmental positions to ensure up-and-coming civilian leaders can have joint assignments (for example in the Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense staff, non-AF serviced Combatant Commands). In future spirals of the Joint Qualification System, we will also be looking at capturing experience of our civilian workforce and how to optimize opportunities to increase our joint-capable inventory.

Finally, not only does the AF train military and civilian members based on joint assignment requirements, but we also provide many joint education opportunities. In fact, 100% of our Majors and 100% of our Air Force civilians starting with Pay Band 2 can complete Air Command and Staff College by correspondence which provides Joint Professional Military Education level I (JPME-I) certification. In addition, we send almost 450 Majors and Pay Band 2 civilians to in-residence JPME-1 schools each year. We also send over 275 Lt Cols, Cols, and civilian equivalents to in-residence Joint Professional Military Education level II (JPME-II) certifying schools each year. Based on joint assignments and deployment requirements, we also send approximately 320 officers each year to the Joint & Combined Warfighting School at Joint Forces Staff College where they also receive JPME-II certification. The Air Force believes in educating our military and our civilians as we prepare them for higher-level jobs that support the joint fight.

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?

If confirmed I would continue to use the developmental boards that determine how many and which civilians need what level of training.

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

The Air Force goal always is to organize, train and equip forces to provide air, space and cyberspace power in support of national defense goals. This by definition means we'll continue to focus on providing trained personnel to support joint operations. Steps we'll take would be those already underway – understand the air, space and cyberspace capabilities required by the joint world, inventory the personnel we have available to meet those requirements, and implement plans to close any gaps that exist.

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 is your understanding of the Air Force's current ability to achieve recruiting and retention goals for medical personnel?

The Air Force is no different than the other services. Significant challenges exist in the recruiting and retention of medical personnel due to lucrative, private sector salaries, which are continuing to rise. Currently, the Air Force's Medical, Dental and Nurse corps have significant manning challenges that are directly attributable to the recruiting and retention of these personnel. As the cost of recruiting individuals to the medical specialties has increased, the Air Force's ability to retain experienced personnel has declined—compounding the problem. Without doubt, substantial challenges remain for the Air Force in order to compete with the private medical sector.

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?

If confirmed I would use the AF Recruiting and Retention Investment Strategy Council (RRISC) inputs to determine the right strategy—what pays and at what level.

The Reserves are facing the same challenges as the Active Duty. We have an active “Continuum of Service” program at HQ USAF to address gaps that need closing to make the Total Force even more effective as we move forward to operationalize the reserve forces.

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?

Yes, the Air Force has received multiple authorities over the past 18 months, including the NDAA FY07 authorization to pay accession bonuses to fully qualified physicians. We now have 23 different pay types for the four Air Force Medical Service Corps—Medical, Dental, Biomedical Sciences, and Nurse Corps. We also received authorization to increase the

maximum amount of these pays, generating special pays and bonuses that contribute to a rewarding Air Force career. In addition to tools for attracting qualified candidates for the uniformed Air Force, we have direct hiring authority civilian health care professions in selected specialties. This authority significantly decreases the processes and time required for hiring. These authorities are vital in helping the Air Force successfully compete with the private sector for highly qualified and motivated health care professionals

Personnel and Health Care Costs

Senior military leaders have testified in favor of the Administration's proposals 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 balance between operational needs and personnel benefits requires hard decisions but I do not see personnel benefits as posing a threat to the operational readiness of the Air Force. Within Air Force, our corporate structure judiciously balances operational requirements against personnel requirements and compensation. It is our people who enable the Air Force to accomplish its mission. Attracting capable personnel to the Air Force at times requires special bonuses. Retaining trained and experienced personnel likewise requires bonuses and special pays to make Air Force compensation competitive with that offered by the private sector or other federal and state agencies. On the operational side, our personnel require equipment, planes, weapons, and systems to accomplish the mission. Air Force will continue to follow a planned approach that balances personnel compensation and benefits with and operational requirements

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

Before efficiencies or changes are made to personnel benefits, the Air Force evaluates the effectiveness of existing benefits in attracting and retaining personnel. Programs are updated based on what we learn from our Airmen and civilian employees. Within Air Force, a lean work force of highly trained and motivated Airmen and civilian employees utilize the newest technologies to accomplish the mission. The Active Duty, Reserve and Guard members, and civilian employees who compose our Total Force are highly trained and motivated, and use the newest technologies to create a seamless, integrated force that is properly shaped and organized to meet all challenges. Air Force will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of benefits in recruiting and retaining a productive work force, update or modify those programs based on the needs and priorities of our personnel, and balance personnel requirements with operational requirements. We will also continue to train and educate our Total Force, as well as use technology to maintain efficiency and effectiveness.

National Security Personnel System

The Department is phasing in a pay-for-performance system under the National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

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

Air Force has successfully converted over 39,000 employees. This represents nearly all non-bargaining general schedule civilian employees. The small number that have not yet converted are Title 5 ANG employees who will convert with their Title 32 counterparts, currently scheduled for Mar 08. A robust training program delivered in advance of NSPS implementation was key to AF's success. The purpose of the training was to teach skills and behaviors to implement and sustain NSPS and to educate employees about NSPS.

Air Force made available a blended approach of e-Learning courses using the AF Portal and classroom training to address critical employee behavior, such as effective communications, problem solving, change-readiness, and leadership, under NSPS. Over 109,000 training occurrences for such courses were recorded to date in the Air Force.

Air Force funded train-the trainer training for a large cadre of trainers from both management and Personnel. This prepared our bases and commands with the capability to deliver NSPS technical courses to the workforce, including military managers, prior to NSPS deployment. Over 72,000 training occurrences for such courses have been recorded to date in AF.

What are the most critical features of NSPS for the Air Force?

The most critical feature of NSPS for the Air Force is the performance management system that is foundational to NSPS because it is a significant change from the two-tier system in place for the remainder of the workforce. Increased management responsibility for compensation is another critical feature.

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

I plan to monitor acceptance using the Annual Status of Forces Survey of DoD Civilian Employees, administered for the DoD by the Defense Manpower Data Center. The survey assesses leadership and management practices that contribute to agency performance; and employee satisfaction with leadership policies and practices, work environment, rewards and recognition for professional accomplishment and personal contributions to achieving organizational mission, opportunity for professional development and growth, and opportunity to contribute to achieving organizational mission. We recently received the results of the 2007 survey and are reviewing those results to determine the questions that serve as bellwether(s) for NSPS acceptance as well as the level of change that would warrant intervention and the method of intervention.

Air Force Family Support

What are the key characteristics needed to ensure adequate support for active and reserve component families, particularly those who live great distances from military installations? The key characteristics are timely support for the family members and accessibility regardless of the Air Force component.

Air Force supports families, both active and reserve components through a variety of programs and services such as Extended Duty Child Care, AF Stay Connected deployment kits, Airman & Family Readiness Centers and Reserve Family Readiness Programs.

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

We are very aware of the fact that we recruit the Airman but retain the family. Quality of life programs that complement our monetary programs are critically important and very well aligned with my top priorities for recruitment and retention. However, the pace of deployments is taking a toll on our families. Airmen love to contribute to the Global War on Terrorism, and we take exceptional care of the families left behind, but the pace of absenteeism from the homefront has an impact that quality of life sometimes can not alleviate.

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

We have multiple programs to enhance the quality of life. As I go out and talk to the airman around the world I will ask for their feedback.

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 is your understanding of the status of the Air Force's implementation of this requirement?

The Air Force has provided substantiated adverse information to general officer selection boards in the form of Senior Officer Unfavorable Information Files (SOUIFs) for at least the last ten years. A SOUIF contains the following: substantiated adverse information collected by the

Inspector General, any action taken by the commander and the officer's comment or response to the SOUIF, if any.

If adverse information is not substantiated in time for review by a promotion selection board, that information will be presented to a promotion review board before the Secretary of the Air Force decides whether to support the officer for appointment to the next higher grade.

What guidance is currently being provided by the Secretary of the Air Force to promotion selection board members about the manner in which such adverse information should be considered?

In his Memorandum of Instructions to each general officer selection board, the Secretary of the Air Force addresses adverse information when discussing Senior Officer Unfavorable Information Files (SOUIFs) and Exemplary Conduct provisions. In particular, he describes what is contained in a SOUIF – adverse information collected by the Inspector General and command action, in addition to the officer's comment or response, if any. He also instructs the board to “first make the judgment in each case whether the matter described in the SOUIF has served as a learning experience or is symptomatic of carelessness or character flaw, and then consider whether the incident should be a bar to promotion.” The Secretary of the Air Force also outlines the exemplary conduct provisions as set forth in Title 10, USC, Section 8583. Finally, by signing the board report, all board members certify to the Secretary of the Air Force that “the officers recommended for promotion, including those who had adverse information furnished to the board, are in the opinion of the majority of the members of the board fully qualified and best qualified for promotion to meet the needs of the Air Force consistent with the exemplary conduct requirements of section 8583, of title 10, United States Code.”

Interservice Transfers

At the same time that the Army and Marine Corps are working harder than ever to achieve recruiting and retention goals, the Air Force has implemented force reductions affecting junior officers and is planning for additional significant reductions in active-duty and reserve military personnel. While a bonus for inter-service transfer has been authorized, additional incentives may be necessary to encourage "blue to green" transfers in order to retain airmen with valuable military training, skills, and experience.

What is your assessment of the adequacy of existing incentives for inter-service transfers by Air Force personnel facing involuntary separation?

The Air Force has targeted its drawdown on officers and enlisted in overage career fields and overage year groups to shape the force as we achieve authorized end strength. By incorporating Blue to Green program with other voluntary force shaping initiatives, we

maximize the options for our officers and enlisted who might otherwise face possible involuntary separation. Increasing the Army's inter-service transfer incentive from \$2.5K to \$10K has had a positive effect.

If confirmed, what steps, if any, would you take to enhance the number of "blue to green" inter-service transfers?

Continue to highlight the opportunities for AF officers and enlisted facing further drawdown that they can continue their military careers and retain the attractive benefits of active duty service by transferring to the Army. Some examples that the AF is already doing to enhance the program:

Air Force provided FSB/RIF eligible list information to Army so they could send out over 2,500 Blue to Green (BtG) mailers.

Air Force waived recoupment of unearned portions of most bonuses for those going BtG.

Posted announcements of BtG program on LESs

Force Shaping messages contain BtG transfer information.

Advertises the program via the Force Shaping website.

Briefs BtG during all transition seminars.

Wounded Warriors and Disability Evaluation

What do you consider to be the most critical changes that are needed in the current disability evaluation system?

To the Service member, the Disability Evaluation System (DES) is overly bureaucratic, complex, and frustrating...and takes many months to complete. DOD and DVA are proactively addressing the issues raised by Congress, Review Groups and Commissions regarding the DES.

Two major concerns involve the differences among the Services and between DOD and DVA regarding how disability ratings are determined, as well as the duplicative physical exam requirements of the Services and DVA. DOD and DVA are working jointly to integrate the activities of both Departments to simplify the process, foster consistency and provide a smooth post-separation transition for veterans and their families.

Regarding the two major concerns, on 26 Nov 2007, DOD and DVA initiated a joint DES Pilot program in the National Capital Region to streamline the DES process, as well as implement other process improvements. Members referred into the DES Pilot will undergo a single, comprehensive DVA physical examination, eliminating the other physical exam required by each Service. Additionally, the DVA has the responsibility for determining disability

ratings for all service-connected conditions, unfitting or not. The Services will decide whether a Service Member with an unfitting condition will be separated or retired based on this DVA-determined rating(s)--this will simplify the physical determination and foster consistency of decisions among the Services and between DOD and DVA.

The DES Pilot also will test enhanced non-clinical care and administrative activities, such as case management, benefits education, and the counseling requirements associated with disability case processing. The goal of the DES Pilot is to shorten the time required to transition Service Members to veteran status and provide them with their VA benefits and compensation.

Overall, our objective is to improve the timeliness, effectiveness, and transparency of the DES process, as well as case management practices for our Service Members.

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.

Where and when appropriate, the AF uses and should continue to use affirmative action plans and measures aimed at achieving and nurturing diversity. For example, the AF has active programs to support the reemployment and accommodation of service disabled veterans and people with targeted disabilities. Through such programs as the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program and the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program, disabled veterans are both valued and sought-after in the Air Force. They currently represent almost 12% of the permanent workforce. In fact, the Air Force was recently recognized by DoD as the best military department for its employment of people with targeted disabilities.

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

The Air Force has already incorporated appropriate DoD policy on diversity into guidance provided to promotion selection boards.

In accordance with DoD Promotion Board Guidance, "To remain competitive, the Department must have members from the entire spectrum of qualified talent available in the United States. Accordingly, DoD needs to make every effort to encourage service by individuals from all backgrounds by providing for the equal treatment and equitable consideration of all personnel considered for promotion."

I fully endorse this guidance

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

The Air Force has already incorporated appropriate DoD policy on diversity into guidance provided to promotion selection boards.

In accordance with DoD Promotion Board Guidance, “To remain competitive, the Department must have members from the entire spectrum of qualified talent available in the United States. Accordingly, DoD needs to make every effort to encourage service by individuals from all backgrounds by providing for the equal treatment and equitable consideration of all personnel considered for promotion.”

I fully endorse this guidance

What is your understanding of the manner in which considerations relating to gender and race, ethnicity, and nationality are used in cadet selection policies at the U. S. Air Force Academy?

The Air Force welcomes and supports diversity at our Air Force Academy. We are convinced that diversity significantly enhances the quality of higher education. We encourage everyone who believes that he or she may qualify, to apply for admissions. USAFA is committed to consider all applications lawfully, individually, and fairly. That means that selection decisions are made without regard to religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, or gender. The exception to this is that we have a strong international cadet program where cadets are nominated by their home Nations.

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

First, we have a process today that results in a Cadet Wing full of great cadets. The current selection process is lawful, and is being administered fairly. Selection decisions are made without regard to religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, or gender. In the past two years the Academy has accepted the highest number of women cadets ever, and of African American cadets in recent history. However, we are absolutely committed to achieving greater diversity. The way to continue to improve is through recruiting a more diverse applicant pool. The Academy is developing a very robust Diversity Plan to achieve that end. We are also working through our Board of Visitors to improve the Congressional Nomination submission rate. In addition, we are beginning to look at diversity as a broader composition of individual characteristics than just race, ethnicity or gender. In order to expose all cadets to the broadest possible range of ideas and experiences, USAFA considers such things as life’s experiences, socioeconomic background, whether an individual is a first generation college student, language

abilities, and more. This approach will broaden the aperture for recruiting, and we believe will result in ever a richer educational experience for future cadets.

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 current sexual assault policies and procedures, particularly those on confidential reporting, to be effective?

Yes, I do. Sexual assault is a complex problem. The decision to allow victims the opportunity to make a restricted report, thereby providing her or him time to receive medical assistance and counseling, the ability to provide forensic evidence, and the time to regain control of the decisions impacting their lives is an important factor in helping the victim to begin to heal. We want victims to report this crime so that we can hold offenders accountable but we know that this is the most under reported crime in America and we need to provide a venue where victims who are reluctant to report can receive care.

What is your understanding of the manner in which the new policies have been implemented in the Air Force?

My understanding is that the Air Force has taken a very aggressive approach to addressing sexual assault. As a result of an Air Force-wide *Assessment of USAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response* in 2004, coupled with the *DoD Task Force Report on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault*, the Air Force implemented an aggressive prevention and response program. Full-time Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) are in place at Air Force installations working directly for the Vice Wing Commander. The majority are GS-12 civilian employees. A portion of the SARCs are active duty military so that there are a sufficient number of trained SARCs for deployment. Volunteer victim advocates (military and DoD civilian employees) are screened by the SARCS and trained to assist victims. SARCs and Victim Advocates receive 40 hours of initial training in subjects such as victimology, critical advocacy skills, knowledge of the military, victim reporting preferences, criminal investigative processes and military judicial and evidentiary requirements and healthcare management of sexual assault and medical resources/treatment options. With the assistance of subject matter experts, the Air Education and Training Command developed and is deploying educational modules at all levels of basic, intermediate, professional military education levels and for pre-deployment.

The Air Force is currently developing a Bystander Intervention program to address other methods of prevention.

If confirmed, what oversight role would you expect to play in implementing DOD policies on sexual assault throughout the Air Force, including active and reserve components?

I believe the Air Force has made significant progress in victim assistance and prevention but the complexity of this issue and its pervasiveness throughout all society require that we continue to monitor policies and procedures and their effectiveness. I would work closely with OSD Personnel and Readiness and the various Air Force functional communities who are vital to our success to assess progress and make policy corrections where necessary. While the portfolio of the Assistant Secretary contains policy oversight responsibility for some of the key first responders (personnel, health care providers, Guard and Reserve) I would work closely with all first responders to maintain a proactive and vital Air Force team...with the goal of eliminating the crime but assuring that where there is a victim, she or he receives the best care we can provide.

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 most effective and which have been modified or dropped, and why?

The Agenda for Change (AfC) called for a strong focus on development of the character that is expected from a commissioned Air Force officer—the honor and integrity that reflect the core values of the Air Force. That means developing cadets so that their loyalty to these values and to the institution is above loyalty to their peers or anyone who betrays these values. Much of what appears in the Agenda for Change is designed to achieve that singular purpose. The extensive policies, training, and procedures to prevent and respond to sexual assault are prime examples of that focus. It was this refocusing on developing officers of character that has been most effective because it drove a positive change in the cadet culture.

While the intent of the AfC is being met, we have backed off on some individual directives. For example, we made some organizational changes—such as changing to Vice Superintendent to a Director of Staff, or having the Director of Athletics report to the Commandant of Cadets, that over time proved not to be ideal organizational constructs, therefore, we reverted to the original structure.

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

The AfC was the initial catalyst that started moving the Academy in the right direction. Combined with the many recommendations we received from reviews, surveys, and reports such as the Fowler Panel Report we have made great progress. As we continue to move forward, we need to ensure we don't lose sight of the underlying AfC principles—developing officers of character motivated to lead in the Air Force.

The equal opportunity climate at the Air Force Academy is, overall, very positive.

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 2006 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.

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 2006 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 2006 Sexual Harassment and Assault Survey* and the Report of the Defense Task Force on Sexual Harassment & Violence at the Military Service Academies?

We examined each of the conclusions and recommendations made available to us through the various reviews, reports, and surveys, and they have been instrumental in the development of our policies and programs. Specifically, the Service Academy 2006 Gender Relations Survey (SAGR 2006) provided considerable insight into the status of unwanted, gender related behaviors. It showed we still have work to do in addressing these complex social issues. However, it also showed significant progress in our training programs and overall improvement in female perceptions of USAFA leadership and cadet culture. These were very positive trends. It was also one of the only reports we have

seen that provided some context to this issue by sighting the prevalence of these crimes in civilian institutions.

The Defense Task Force on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies primarily addressed the United States Military Academy and Naval Academies because the Fowler Panel had previously completed a very detailed review of the Air Force Academy. In fact, by the time the report was released the Air Force Academy was already in compliance or acting on 41 of the reports 44 primary recommendations. This was largely due to the fact that we had taken decisive action on the Fowler Panel recommendations—addressing all 21 recommendations spanning accountability, oversight, organizational culture, intervention and response to sexual assault.

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?

First, I would like to emphasize the significant attention, resources, and deep commitment that has been put forth on these issues by leaders in the Congress, OSD, the Air Force, and the Academy over the last several years. We have made progress. The recently released Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at U.S. Military Service Academies for Academic Year 2006-2007 conducted by the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Officer (SAPRO) highlights that progress. It states, “The United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) leadership has clearly demonstrated commitment to their Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program through sustained and dedicated efforts. USAFA has done an outstanding job developing and continuously improving policies, procedures, and processes designed to prevent and respond to sexual violence in accordance with Department of Defense policies.” It goes on to state that, “Appropriate mechanisms are in place both at Headquarters Air Force (HAF) and USAFA to ensure oversight of the effectiveness of the sexual assault prevention and response program at USAFA.”

Now is the time for dedicated, persistent oversight. I will ensure we stay focused on providing the best possible education and training, the best prevention and response programs, and continue to improve the cadet culture. One sexual assault is too many, so we simply cannot let up on continuously improving on what we have started here.

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?

USAFA has made great strides in enhancing their religious respect program. Initially, Headquarters Air Force helped them in developing and implementing an extensive training program based on respecting individual values that reached every cadet and every member of the faculty, staff, and permanent party. That type of training has now been incorporated into initial recurring training. It is important to note that the steps taken at the Air Force Academy to ensure religious tolerance and respect are directly in-line with the religious respect guidelines for the greater Air Force. It is critical that we have one consistent set of guidelines that are fair to everyone and applied equally across the board because the Air Force Academy is not an institution unto itself but part of the larger Air Force.

The task of providing for free exercise of religion, while not appearing to establish a religion, is complex enough in any government setting. Arguably, it is even more complex in a military environment, and yet again more challenging in a university, military setting. The *Revised Interim Guidelines Concerning Free Exercise of Religion in the Air Force*, dated 9 Feb 06, represents a thoughtful effort to strike the right balance on this issue. The guidelines remain “Interim” because we need to be absolutely sure we have this right, and living with the guidelines for an extended period of time is the best way to understand their full impact.

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 don’t anticipate making any significant changes to the interim guidelines until we have more experience with them. The guidelines task HQ Air Education and Training Command with developing a plan for incorporating the guidelines in all venues of formal training and education for officers, enlisted and civilian personnel where Air Force Core Values and professional standards are addressed. In addition, we are developing a computer based training program for all Air Force members. We are well on our way to creating a climate founded on respect. Dedicated and determined oversight is what is needed now to ensure we remain focused on that outcome.

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?

As the Acting Undersecretary, I've kept abreast of the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, and I can tell you with certainty that the Air Force is fully committed to increasing language and cultural capabilities amongst our Airmen. As of June 2007, the Air Force achieved Full Operational Capability with respect to the 10 specific tasks assigned to the Services. In addition, Mr. Joe McDade, the Air Force's Senior Language Authority, is actively engaged in the Defense Language Steering Committee in facilitating achievement of the remaining 12 tasks to be completed under the Roadmap.

The Air Force's specific initiatives have established a strong foundation for embedding language and cultural competencies within our force. As a matter of fact, our institutional competencies embrace language and culture as part of Airman development throughout a career. I look forward to continued coordination with Dr. Chu as the DoD continues along the path of Defense Language Transformation to meet irregular warfare and stability, security and transition missions.

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?

The changing nature of warfare, and the advent of stability and security operations as the norm, have highlighted the need for Air Force Personnel to be able to operate in diverse regions with diverse cultures. The nature of our mobile force also demonstrates our Airmen's adaptability to diverse cultures, which enables operational effectiveness. I will continue to champion Air Force efforts to identify language requirements and cultural skill sets and focus on deliberately developing language capabilities based on validated requirements.

The Air Force works with the USD (Policy) in publishing the Department of Defense Strategic Language List, which reflects regions and languages the DoD anticipates engagement in over the next 15 years. Additionally, the Air Force Senior Language Authority supplements that list based on unique Air Force missions. Upon confirmation, I will continue to ensure Air Force coordination with the Combatant Commands and Defense Agencies to fully identify foreign language requirements.

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

The Air Force is continuing to target Airman for development...the right Airman, at the right place, at the right time. Since implementation of the Language Transformation Roadmap, there have already been results in developing a foundational and surge capability within the Air Force. Our Airmen deploying overseas are provided language familiarization kits while Airman supporting the rebuilding of the Iraqi and Afghani Air Forces are receiving language training from Defense Language Institute mobile training teams.

I also realize that learning a language is not an overnight endeavor. In the Summer of 2010, the Air Force will be commissioning the first cohort of ROTC cadets on foreign language scholarships and seeing the benefits of increased summer immersion tours and study abroad opportunities. The path has been laid and I believe if we fly the course we will continue to see the benefits.

Do you believe that Air Force language proficiency incentives for personnel are appropriate and effective – that is that they encourage personnel to learn foreign languages? If not, why, and what would you do to address this issue, if confirmed?

The increases in foreign language proficiency pay (FLPP) in June of 2006 may have incentivized some who were already familiar with one of the strategic languages. However, it takes the average person several years to achieve fluency in a non-romance language at a level that qualifies for FLPP. If confirmed, I will ensure the appropriate emphasis is continued to be placed on foreign language skills, to include an increased focus on sustaining and enhancing capabilities.

What is your view regarding whether Air Force Special Operators should be “SOF for life” from the perspective of language and cultural awareness training and retention?

I support the Air Force premise of the right Airmen, at the right place, at the right time. In terms of SOF Airmen with a specific mission enhanced by language, cultural and regional awareness, I view retention in-line with Air Force requirements. I will continue to ensure training and education opportunities are targeted to the right Airmen to ensure Air Force support of the SOCOM mission is met.

Families First

For over 10 years, U. S. Transportation Command and its subordinate command, Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, have worked to improve the process of moving service members' household goods. Implementation of the new system – “Families First” – will use a “best value” approach to contracting with movers that will focus on quality of performance, web-based scheduling, member counseling, and tracking of shipments using the new Defense Personnel Property System (DPS), encouragement of door-to-door moves, and full replacement value for damaged household goods. Implementation of Families First and DPS is now taking place, but the support of the military services is critical to its success.

What is your understanding of the progress being made in the Air Force, including adequate funding, in implementing the Families First program, and what challenges remain?

Based on the recently authorized \$100 million (PBD) to cover anticipated increased costs associated with Families First implementation and Full Replacement Value protection for loss and damage to household goods shipments, we understand there is sufficient funding within the Air Force.

If confirmed, what role would you and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel expect to play in ensuring that Families First is fully explained to airmen and women and that customer satisfaction surveys are submitted in order to ensure the system works as intended to measure the performance of movers?

Our role is one of support to A4 who has responsibility for household goods transportation activities within the Air Force. At the time of assignment notification, military members are advised to contact their location Transportation Office to arrangement household goods movement. USTRANSCOM developed a robust customer satisfaction survey process, tracks progress and provides feedback to A4

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

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