Twitter Thread by Kate Brannen



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As the confirmation hearing for retired Gen. #LloydAustin gets underway, here's a roundup of what should be covered and what he will face as defense secretary.

"Does Austin still see himself as an apolitical actor removed from the politics of policymaking, or does he believe that accepting a Cabinet nomination places him squarely in the political realm?" -- @jblankshain

"At Austin's hearing it will not be enough to accept the tired statements of 'this is not who we are' or that 'the military has zero tolerance' on issues of gender discrimination, but to pinpoint exactly how he proposes to bring real change to the military." -- @Jason_K_Dempsey

"What is your view on whether the power to decide who is prosecuted for what under the Uniform Code of Military Justice should be transferred from nonlawyer commanders to uniformed lawyers independent of the chain of command?" -- @globalmjreform

"The new SecDef will have to meaningfully re-center character as a requirement for military service: the need for all service members to work respectfully and effectively with their teammates regardless of race, gender, or religion." -- @suefulton

"The most important test Austin will face is whether he can demonstrate to lawmakers that he is ready to approach these challenges not as a former general, but rather as a civilian political appointee." -- @jimgolby

"What does a scaled down mission with a focus on al-Qaeda in Afghanistan look like? What are our forces doing in this scenario? What aren't they doing? How long will they need to continue this fight?" -- @LukeHartig

"As a career military Army officer does he support diverting funds from the Army to increase the Navy from 290 to 355 ships over this decade? Does he support the 2018 NSS that sees China as the primary security threat which justifies the increase?" -- @LarryKorb

"How will he embrace the external communication role of leadership, something he was not known for during his active-duty time, and empower other DoD leaders — civilian and military — to do the same?" -- @DaveLapanDC

"Do you plan to re-establish lines of communications with the Russian military? At what level? How important are robust channels of communication in lowering the possibility of an escalation of tensions between the U.S. and Russia that could lead to conflict?" -- @AmericanMystic

"Do you believe that climate change is a national security issue, and what role does the Department of Defense have in addressing the climate crisis?" -- @marknevitt

"During his confirmation hearing, Austin must address the many failures at Guantanamo Bay ..." -- @PradhanAlka

"What a time to have a leader who has a unique kind of experience you can't find solely in war colleges, on the battlefield, or in academia. It is the experience of understanding marginalized communities, class inequities, and racism." -- @Robcando

"I am interested to have Austin speak to the problem of barriers to the advancement of officers of color to three- and four-star ranks." -- Barry Robinson

"I would like to know how he intends to mend relations with our NATO allies. Was the tension that surfaced over the last four years primarily at the political level or are their mil-to-mil relationships that need to be rebuilt?" -- @Schmitt_ILaw

"Some of the most pressing internal issues facing the next secretary of defense deal with the mental and physical health of the women and men in uniform, as well as the climate within military units that either protect those serving or help destroy them." -- @rachelv12