

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS OF: MR. RICHARD L.
ANDERSON TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR
FORCE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS; MR.
ADAM R. TELLE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE
ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS; AND DR. MATTHEW C.
NAPOLI TO BE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEFENSE
NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION NATIONAL NUCLEAR
SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Washington, D.C.

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2 BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR MANPOWER AND
3 RESERVE AFFAIRS; MR. ADAM R. TELLE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
4 OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS; AND DR. MATTHEW C. NAPOLI TO BE
5 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEFENSE NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION
6 NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
7

8 Tuesday, May 13, 2025
9

10 U.S. Senate

11 Committee on Armed Services

12 Washington, D.C.
13

14 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:50 a.m. in
15 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
16 Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

17 Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker
18 [presiding], Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Sullivan,
19 Cramer, Scott, Tuberville, Mullin, Budd, Schmitt, Banks,
20 Sheehy, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Kaine, King,
21 Rosen, and Kelly.

22 Also present: Senator Hagerty.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER F. WICKER, U.S.
2 SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

3 Chairman Wicker: This hearing will come to order.
4 Thank you all for being here. I welcome our nominees and
5 their families and I want to express my gratitude for their
6 willingness to serve our nation. The United States is up
7 against very dangerous threat environment. I'm grateful to
8 see these nominees stepping up to serve.

9 Mr. Richard Anderson has been nominated for the
10 position of Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for
11 Manpower and Reserve Affairs. In this role, he will be
12 responsible for overseeing the development and
13 implementation of policies related to the Air Force's,
14 recruiting, retention, talent management, and readiness.
15 This includes ensuring that both active duty and reserve
16 personnel are effectively managed. It includes supporting
17 the training and career progression of Air Force members.
18 The Air Force has seen improvements in recruitment and
19 retention rates, and Mr. Anderson must sustain and build on
20 this positive momentum.

21 Mr. Anderson is a retired Air Force Colonel. He brings
22 valuable firsthand experience to this position. I look
23 forward to hearing his vision for strengthening the services
24 workforce and enhancing its ability to meet future
25 challenges.

1 Mr. Matthew Napoli has been nominated to be Deputy
2 Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation with the
3 National Nuclear Security Administration. In this position,
4 Dr. Napoli will support the NNSA administrator as they both
5 work to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons
6 technologies and to reduce the global threat of nuclear and
7 radiological terrorism. He will have a lot of work to do.
8 The danger from nuclear weapons is growing more complex by
9 the day.

10 Over the past several years, we've watched as Russia,
11 China, and North Korea have rapidly expanded their nuclear
12 arsenals and developed new types of weapons, weapons for
13 which we are not fully prepared. Iran may now be just weeks
14 away from achieving its goal. I applaud President Trump's
15 recent comments and his current efforts. He's made it clear
16 that the Ayatollah's nuclear weapons program must be totally
17 dismantled.

18 As we work to modernize our own deterrent and expand
19 our defenses, we must keep focus in the right place. The
20 real objective is to reduce nuclear dangers by whatever
21 means available. When we prevent those who would do us harm
22 from accessing nuclear material and technology, we are
23 protecting America and Americans, and we protect Americans
24 by defeating those threats once they become a reality. I
25 look forward to hearing how Dr. Napoli will help NNSA reduce

1 the amount of nuclear dangerous array against our country.

2 One small note on this topic. Some of our key allies
3 have begun to question the reliability of U.S. extended
4 deterrence. They need not do this. Both the President and
5 the United States Congress have been clear about our
6 continuing resolve to use the full range of capabilities to
7 meet our alliance commitments. Dr. Napoli would do well to
8 make that clear today.

9 Mr. Adam Telle has been nominated to be the Assistant
10 Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Mr. Telle is a
11 graduate of Mississippi State University and a veteran of
12 Capitol Hill. He currently works as Senator Hagerty's chief
13 of staff, and he once served as Senator Cochran's
14 legislative director. If confirmed, Mr. Telle would be the
15 principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of the Army on
16 all matters related to the Civil Works program.

17 This includes providing policy direction and
18 supervision for all Department of the Army functions
19 relating to the civil works of the United States Army Corps
20 of Engineers. A significant part of those civil works
21 involves the conservation and development of natural water
22 resources, including flood and coastal storm risk
23 management, river and harbor navigation, environmental
24 restoration and protection, and the management of water
25 supply and hydroelectric power resources.

1 I look forward to hearing how Mr. Telle plans to
2 balance the complex demands of these local and regional
3 projects that communities across the nation depend on. With
4 that, I turn to my friend and colleague, Ranking Member
5 Reed.

1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
2 ISLAND

3 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 Gentlemen, congratulations on your nomination and welcome to
5 you and particularly to your families because they will be
6 serving with you. I'd also like to welcome Senator Hagerty
7 who will introduce Mr. Telle. Senator, good to see you.

8 Mr. Anderson, you have been nominated to be assistant
9 secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.
10 You are well qualified for this position, having served a
11 long career as an Air Force officer, including tours in the
12 Pentagon. If confirmed, you'll face considerable challenges
13 overseeing all military and civilian personnel within the
14 Department of the Air Force, including the Space Force.

15 In particular, you'll need to manage the impact from
16 the administration's purge of senior military officers and
17 defense civilians throughout the Department of the Air
18 Force. The workforce has been shaken by several months of
19 chaos at the Pentagon and especially in light of the
20 indiscriminate layoffs and an impending eight percent cut to
21 the entire department.

22 Just last week, Secretary Hegseth issued guidance to
23 reduce 10 percent of all general and flag officers in the
24 U.S. military, including 20 percent of four-star generals
25 and flag officers. Mr. Anderson, I'd like to know how you

1 would plan to oversee such reductions while minimizing the
2 impact on readiness and ensuring all airmen, guardians, and
3 Air Force civilians are treated with the respect they've
4 earned.

5 Mr. Telle, you have been nominated to be the assistant
6 secretary of the Army for Civil Works. You bring experience
7 as a senate staff member and former legislative advisor in
8 the first Trump administration to this role. If confirmed,
9 you'll be responsible for overseeing the civil functions of
10 the Army to include the Army Corps of Engineers and various
11 military cemeteries. This committee has long been concerned
12 with the slow rate of army construction projects and the
13 Army must find new ways to streamline and compress its
14 timelines. I would ask you to share how you would improve
15 these processes.

16 Additionally, catastrophic natural disasters continue
17 to be one of the most dangerous threats to our national
18 security infrastructure. Given the increasing importance of
19 environmental resiliency, I would like to know your plans
20 for incorporating extreme weather projections in the
21 planning and design of Civil Works projects.

22 Dr. Napoli, you have been nominated to be Deputy
23 Administrator of the Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation at the
24 National Nuclear Security Administration or NNSA. You are
25 well qualified for this role as a former U.S. Navy nuclear

1 officer with considerable experience and schooling in
2 nuclear technologies and international relations. If
3 confirmed, you'll be responsible for leading nuclear
4 nonproliferation efforts across a broad portfolio that
5 includes supporting the verification of current and future
6 arms control treaties, securing loose nuclear material
7 around the world, and safeguarding the sale of U.S. nuclear
8 technologies overseas.

9 On the international stage, you'll be charged with
10 supporting the U.S. inter-agency for any future negotiations
11 with Iran with respect to its nuclear capability, leading
12 technical efforts for any follow-on nuclear weapons
13 agreements with Russia after the new start, which will
14 expire very shortly, and coordinating efforts to verify and
15 secure North Korea's nuclear capabilities if a freeze is
16 reached. These are complex challenges. I would ask that
17 you discuss how you would address them.

18 I want to thank again, the nominees for their
19 willingness to serve and I look forward to testimonies.
20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Reed.
22 Senator Hagerty, I understand you have a strong opinion
23 about one of these nominees and that you'll be introducing
24 Mr. Telle this morning. I now turn to you, thanking you for
25 being here with us today.

1 STATEMENT OF SENATOR HAGERTY, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE
2 STATE OF TENNESSEE

3 Senator Hagerty: That's correct, Mr. Chairman. I want
4 to thank you and Ranking Member Reed for having this meeting
5 today. And before I begin my remarks, I'd just like to
6 actually address the staff that's sitting behind you.

7 Adam Telle has been serving for 20 years here. He's
8 led a distinguished career here in the Senate and he's
9 moving on to do something even greater. And I hope that all
10 of you will take Adam's presence here today as a point of
11 inspiration. I know you work your hearts out every day,
12 over the weekends, late at night, but know that you're
13 making a difference and that you'll be in a position to make
14 even more of a difference. So thanks to all of you.

15 Now I'd like to turn to my good friend Adam Telle.
16 I've been privileged to know him for a number of years.
17 Adam is President Trump's nominee to be the Assistant
18 Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. As you all know, the
19 Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works has a range
20 of important responsibilities, including oversight of the
21 Army Corps of Engineers.

22 The Corps and its 26,000 civilian and military
23 personnel play a vital role for the United States, not just
24 for the Department of Defense, but also for the safety,
25 security and prosperity of the many Americans who benefit

1 from the ports, the waterways, and the flood control
2 infrastructure that's maintained by the corps across our
3 nation.

4 When you consider Adam's background and expertise, it's
5 no surprise why President Trump picked him for this key
6 position. As a native of Northport, Alabama, and magna cum
7 laude graduate in computer science and communication from
8 Mississippi State University's Bagley College of
9 Engineering. Adam hails from some of the very states that
10 depend greatly on the critical civil works that he's now
11 called to lead.

12 Indeed, Adam knows firsthand how the work of the Army
13 Corps of Engineers will impact the lives of people in the
14 United States and around the world. Moreover, Adam is a
15 true patriot and has served in the U.S. government
16 faithfully and with great distinction for the past 20 years.

17 Adam began his senate career in the office of Senator
18 Richard Shelby in 2005. Starting in 2000, he worked for the
19 next 10 years in the office of the late Senator Thad Cochran
20 of Mississippi and rose through the ranks to become deputy
21 chief of staff and legislative director. Adam then worked
22 as the chief staff member on the Senate Appropriation
23 Committee's Homeland Security subcommittee. There he served
24 under the chairmanship of Senator Thad Cochran, Richard
25 Shelby, and John Boozman, as well as Shelley Moore Capito.

1 In this role, Adam served as the point person in the
2 Senate for an organization comprised of nearly 20 agencies,
3 260,000 personnel, and an annual budget of approximately \$70
4 billion. From 2019 to 2021, Adam led the senate team at the
5 White House's Office of Legislative Affairs, a position that
6 included managing all national security and appropriations
7 matters. Of note, Adam played a critical role in helping to
8 conclude and implement President Trump's historic Abraham
9 Accords that brought peace and prosperity to Israel and to
10 four Arab nations.

11 He also played an outsized role in working with the
12 Armed Services Committee on the establishment of the Space
13 Force, which is the first new branch of the military to be
14 authorized in more than 70 years. Adam is now my chief of
15 staff where each and every day I rely upon his expertise,
16 his experience, and his judgment. I've seen Adam bring
17 people together to solve problems. He's mentored and grown
18 my staff and he's provided thoughtful and effective
19 leadership and strategic direction on some of the toughest
20 problems that face our nation.

21 In short, Adam is just the leader that our nation needs
22 in the Pentagon. His native roots, his work ethic, and his
23 intelligence make him more than qualified. The kindness,
24 mentoring, and heart that demonstrates with his teams will
25 make him an inspirational leader of this critical

1 organization.

2 I urge this committee to move quickly in consideration
3 of Adam Telle's nomination and please confirm him as quickly
4 as possible. Thank you for your time this morning.

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Hagerty. And we
2 would welcome you here for the entire hearing, but I know
3 you have a very full schedule this morning, so thank you
4 very, very much for your testimony.

5 Senator Hagerty: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Wicker: We will now begin with opening
7 statements. Mr. Telle, your opening statement is first.

1 STATEMENT OF MR. ADAM R. TELLE, NOMINATED TO BE
2 ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS

3 Mr. Telle: Thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member
4 Reed, members of the committee, and the staff of the Armed
5 Services Committee. It is an honor to have been nominated
6 by President Trump to serve as the 14th Assistant Secretary
7 of the Army for Civil Works.

8 I want to begin by thanking President Trump, who I was
9 honored to serve during his first administration. In
10 addition, I would like to thank Secretary Hegseth, Secretary
11 Driscoll, my family, my wife, Shelby, my two beautiful
12 children who are here, my mother Rita, and my father
13 Whitney.

14 I would also like to thank the U.S. Senators with whom
15 I've worked the closest over the last 20 years, including
16 Chairman Wicker, the Chairman of the Environment and Public
17 Works Committee, Chairman Capito, Senator John Boozman,
18 Senator Richard Shelby, Senator Thad Cochran, and finally
19 Senator Bill Hagerty, whom I've had the privilege to serve
20 over the last four years. Senator Hagerty, you've given me
21 incredible perspective during our time together and I'm so
22 fortunate to have had a front row seat as you brought that
23 same fresh perspective to the Senate. Thank you.

24 In 1802, as President Thomas Jefferson was
25 contemplating how to expand our nation westward, he keenly

1 understood that our waterways would be key. To harness the
2 power of these waterways, he turned to the U.S. Military
3 Academy at West Point, which was producing America's best
4 engineers. We would no longer rely on European engineers
5 and the original navigation mission of the Army Corps of
6 Engineers was born.

7 The America we know today, stretching from sea to
8 shining sea is a result of the work of the corps. And over
9 time Congress has given the Corps additional missions,
10 primarily flood control and the preservation of natural
11 resources. These missions are also important to our current
12 President.

13 Some of my earliest memories as a young child or of
14 riding with my father, him pointing out the window as we
15 were crossing some of our nation's waterways, the Black
16 Warrior River, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the
17 Mississippi River. He was always teaching and he would turn
18 my attention to the little tugboats, pushing the big barges
19 brimming with natural resources, opening access from the
20 small communities in our neck of the woods to the rest of
21 the country and the world.

22 20 years later, I moved to Washington because I
23 believed that I could make a difference, helping to
24 represent the views and interests of the Americans I grew up
25 with, who often felt ignored by important people in

1 Washington. On August 29th, 2005, exactly one month into my
2 time working in the Senate, Hurricane Katrina made landfall.
3 This was the most devastating natural disaster in American
4 history. I stayed up all night that night, didn't go to
5 sleep watching Katrina come ashore, a 28-foot storm surge,
6 1800 American lives lost, and hundreds of billions of
7 dollars in damage.

8 Pretty soon, Senator Thad Cochran asked me to run point
9 on Mississippi's recovery from Hurricane Katrina. My years
10 of experience securing resources and untangling bureaucratic
11 messes in the wake of Katrina prepared me for my role as a
12 top homeland security staffer on the Senate Appropriations
13 Committee, where I was give also given the top role advising
14 all Senate Republicans on disaster response and recovery.

15 These formative experiences as a child and as a young
16 professional are emblematic of why my personal background
17 and passion match the depth and breadth of the Corps of
18 Engineers Civil Works mission. Enabling commerce,
19 mitigating floods, responding to disasters, most recently by
20 removing debris in areas damaged by Hurricane Helene and the
21 Los Angeles wildfires.

22 Few government agencies missions capture the interests
23 of the American citizens, landowners, communities, states,
24 job creators, and their representatives here in Washington
25 quite like this one. These are real missions with real

1 outcomes that matter deeply to Americans in places that are
2 very far from Washington decision makers often. If
3 confirmed, I intend to aggressively tackle the critical
4 issues that confront the Corps.

5 As it relates to permitting, we're at a moment in
6 history where Americans of all viewpoints crave certainty
7 from their federal government about whether or not the rules
8 apply to them. We must act with haste, transparency, and
9 clarity to give them regulatory certainty without delay.

10 Navigation was the original mission of the Corps. Today,
11 maintenance and construction of our coastal ports and inland
12 waterways will help define how competitive and resilient we
13 are in the 21st century.

14 Flood control. We must work together to maintain the
15 investments that you have made and complete new projects as
16 soon as humanly feasible to mitigate floods before they
17 happen and fight them when we must.

18 Coordination. Issues related to water are spread
19 across federal entities and authorities perhaps like no
20 other. Getting it right for the American public will
21 require an outsized focus on coordination among the dozens
22 of entities across the government that deal with water. If
23 confirmed, I will devote significant attention to
24 collaboration and coordination across these partner
25 agencies.

1 And when it comes to being a member of the broader army
2 team, army engineers are delivering on President Trump's
3 vision of peace through strength every day. As a nation, we
4 are fortunate to have an organization that is at the ready
5 to support civil and national security missions across the
6 globe at a moment's notice. And we are also fortunate that
7 during peace time, the same cadre of professionals is spread
8 out in communities across America, helping make us safer,
9 more competitive, and prouder as a nation.

10 Again, I'm honored to be before you. If I have the
11 honor of being confirmed by the Senate, I commit to be
12 responsive to our nation's politically accountable leaders,
13 the President, the members of this committee, and the
14 members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.
15 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed. I look
16 forward to answering your questions.

17 [The prepared statement of Mr. Telle follows:]

18 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Telle. Colonel
2 Anderson.

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1 STATEMENT OF MR. RICHARD L. ANDERSON NOMINATED TO BE
2 ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR MANPOWER AND
3 RESERVE AFFAIRS

4 Colonel Anderson: Good morning, Chairman Wicker,
5 Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of this
6 committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before
7 you today as the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the
8 Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I especially
9 thank President Trump for nominating me to you for
10 consideration.

11 Most of my adult life has been spent in the cloth of
12 the country and to find myself before you today is something
13 that I never expected to happen when I hung up my uniform
14 for the final time 16 years ago. I'm joined today by my
15 wife Ruth, a retired Air Force career nurse and senior
16 medical commander. Our story is almost identical to the one
17 you heard earlier from Dr. Meink in his opening statement
18 when he acknowledged his wife, also a retired Air Force
19 nurse.

20 Like the Meinks, the Andersons got off to a rocky
21 start, shall we say, with a disagreement when we met during
22 my visit to an Air Force hospital emergency room some 40
23 years ago. Ruth was my nurse that night and you probably
24 can figure out the rest of that story. And like Mrs. Meink,
25 the future Mrs. Anderson thought me to be, in the words of

1 Dr. Meink, somewhat of a nerd. Ruth and I celebrated our
2 39th wedding anniversary just days ago, and we count our
3 greatest achievement to be the great kids that we raised
4 together and a herd of world class grandchildren, two of
5 whom are here today, Felix, age 10, Jasper, age 9, whose
6 four siblings are watching at home today.

7 I began my Air Force career in 1979 after graduating
8 from Virginia Tech and its Corps of cadets. I spent the
9 first half of my military career in the intercontinental
10 ballistic missile career field focused on the strategic
11 defense of the country. I spent the second half of my
12 career in the Air Force international affairs career field
13 focused on building durable relationships with the 43 Air
14 forces in countries throughout Asia and the Pacific.

15 So, in total I spent 30 years in uniform, retiring from
16 active duty in 2009 after eight years at the Pentagon on the
17 air staff and at OSD. After the Air Force, I spent the
18 better part of a decade representing Prince William County
19 Virginia in the Virginia General Assembly, chairing the
20 Joint House Senate Military and Veterans Caucus, and
21 touching every piece of legislation that passed through our
22 body affecting 800,000 Virginia veterans.

23 So, throughout my life, my focus has been on people,
24 and in that spirit, I relish this opportunity, if confirmed
25 by this committee, for a position of trust to lead the Air

1 Force organization that focuses exclusively on the great
2 airmen and guardians who serve our nation. And if
3 confirmed, I pledge to you that people will continue to be
4 the central focus of my every waking hour.

5 I strongly feel that we must fly the flight plan that's
6 been articulated by Air Force Chief of Staff, Dave Allvin
7 and Chief of Space Operations Chance Saltzman for more air
8 force, more space force. We must invest in a 21st century
9 weapon systems that deter aggression and if failing that, we
10 need to be able to fly, fight, and win the nation's wars.
11 And so, as America field's new weapon systems, the new
12 generation of American warriors will be needed to operate
13 these platforms to ensure force readiness, and that's where
14 I wish to be should I be fortunate enough to be confirmed as
15 an assistant secretary of the Air Force.

16 Thank you for the privilege of appearing before you
17 today. Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working
18 with you individually and collectively in ensuring that
19 America's airmen and guardians are fully ready to provide
20 for the common defense of the nation. Thank you.

21 [The prepared statement of Mr. Anderson follows:]

22 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

23 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Colonel Anderson. It
24 seems that the future Mrs. Anderson learned early on how
25 you've dealt with adversity and your tolerance for pain. Is

1 that correct?

2 Colonel Anderson: I would say so, Senator.

3 Chairman Wicker: Interesting story there. Thank you
4 very much for your testimony. And now, Dr. Napoli, you are
5 recognized.

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1 STATEMENT OF DR. MATTHEW C. NAPOLI NOMINATED TO BE
2 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEFENSE NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION
3 NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

4 Dr. Napoli: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,
5 members of the esteemed committee, I respectfully appear
6 before you today seeking your confirmation for my service as
7 Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation
8 within the National Nuclear Security Administration,
9 Department of Energy.

10 Before I begin, I would like to thank President Trump
11 and Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright, for their trust and
12 confidence. I would like to recognize my family in
13 attendance today. My wife, Nicole, who is the foundation of
14 our family, our two daughters, Eleanor, an avid competitive
15 fencer, and Abigail, our all-star softball player. My
16 mother, Shirley Napoli, and my brother Dr. Mark Napoli are
17 here from Louisiana. My brother Mike Napoli here from
18 California, and my sister soon to be Dr. Mary Napoli is
19 watching from Louisiana.

20 I also have several families, friends, and colleagues
21 here to support me as well. I was born and raised in a
22 relatively small town in north Louisiana. My father, a
23 local pharmacist and navy veteran who is watching from
24 above, taught me and my whole family the importance of
25 community and the importance of service to this great

1 nation. I spent my entire adult life serving this nation
2 through my military and federal service.

3 My educational background, including engineering
4 degrees from Louisiana Tech University and the Naval
5 Postgraduate School, a doctorate in public policy and
6 administration, concentrating in science and technology
7 policy from the George Washington University, a fellowship
8 in national security from the Massachusetts Institute of
9 Technology, and my lifetime membership on the Council on
10 Foreign Relations, have given me the foundation for a career
11 spent bridging the gap between policy and the technical
12 fields of engineering and science.

13 My military and federal civilian career spanning 20
14 years has been dedicated to an elite engineering
15 organization, the U.S. Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program,
16 also known to this committee as Naval Reactors, a joint
17 Department of Navy, Department of Energy organization.
18 Naval Reactors has afforded our navy with an unmatched
19 asymmetric advantage in naval warfare.

20 This advantage has manifested in the nuclear-powered
21 fast attack submarine, the ocean's apex predator, the
22 ballistic missile nuclear powered submarine, the backbone of
23 American strategic deterrence and the nuclear-powered
24 aircraft carrier, 100,000 tons of U.S. sovereign territory
25 anywhere in the oceans at any time. I'm proud to have

1 served on this team.

2 During my tenure at Naval Reactors, I achieved a broad
3 range of experience in the defense applications of nuclear
4 energy, starting as a design engineer for the Ford-class
5 aircraft carriers, propulsion plants, and transitioning to
6 the lead for foreign policy, inter-agency policy, and public
7 affairs. I managed and expanded port access for the
8 nuclear-powered fleet to over 150 ports and over 50
9 countries, and was personally involved in the training of
10 all nuclear-powered submarine and aircraft carrier
11 commanding officers on foreign policy matters as they came
12 through Naval Reactors for qualification.

13 I oversaw partnerships with some of our closest allies,
14 including the United Kingdom through our mutual defense
15 agreement, the government of Japan hosting the only Ford
16 deployed nuclear powered aircraft carrier to Yokosuka, and
17 Australia, in the design and execution of our newest defense
18 cooperation agreement.

19 I led strategic and emergency communications for an
20 enterprise totaling 100,000 strong, including nuclear
21 trained sailors, shipyard workers, procurement specialists,
22 schoolhouse instructors, and Department of Energy laboratory
23 scientists and engineers. I also served as a lead
24 spokesperson for the enterprise.

25 I'm now seeking your confirmation to become the deputy

1 administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation within
2 the National Nuclear Security Administration. The
3 responsibilities of the nonproliferation team are profound.
4 An exquisite team of scientists, engineers, analysts,
5 laboratory researchers, and technicians, first responders
6 and many others work arduously to one, prevent the spread of
7 nuclear weapons and associated nuclear technologies, and to
8 combat the existential threat to our national security that
9 these weapons pose.

10 Two, coordinate these activities with partners and
11 allies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency to
12 deter state and non-state actors from acquiring nuclear and
13 radiological weapons. And three, stand ready to respond in
14 the event of nuclear or radiological weapons usage.

15 Our nation faces immediate complex challenges in the
16 area of nuclear nonproliferation. If confirmed, I'm ready
17 to take upon these responsibilities with the utmost urgency.
18 Thank you.

19 [The prepared statement of Dr. Napoli follows:]

20 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Chairman Wicker: Nicely done. And thank you for
2 staying within the time limitation. We now have standard
3 questions that we ask our civilian nominees and I just need
4 a verbal yes or no from each of you simultaneously.

5 Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations
6 governing conflicts of interest?

7 [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

8 Chairman Wicker: Have you assumed any duties or taken
9 any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the
10 confirmation process?

11 [All witnesses answered in the negative.]

12 Chairman Wicker: Exercising our legislative and
13 oversight responsibilities makes it important that this
14 committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate
15 committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings,
16 reports, records, and other information from the executive
17 branch on a timely basis. Do you agree if confirmed, to
18 appear and testify before this committee when requested?

19 [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

20 Chairman Wicker: Do you agree to provide records,
21 documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner
22 when requested by this committee, its subcommittees, or
23 other appropriate committees of Congress and to consult with
24 a requester regarding the basis for any good faith delay or
25 denial in providing such records?

1 [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

2 Chairman Wicker: Will you ensure that your staff
3 complies with deadlines established by this committee for
4 the production of reports, records, and other information,
5 including timely responding to hearing questions for the
6 record?

7 [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

8 Chairman Wicker: Will you cooperate in providing
9 witnesses and briefers in response to congressional
10 requests?

11 [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

12 Chairman Wicker: Will those witnesses and briefings be
13 protected from appraisal for their testimony and briefings?

14 [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

15 Chairman Wicker: And that concludes our standard
16 questions. And it's now time for us to begin the five-
17 minute rounds and I hope members will be as observant of the
18 five-minute time limit as our distinguished nominees are.

19 First of all, a quick yes or no from all of you. Much
20 of the funding in the defense reconciliation bill is
21 unspecific because of our rules and will technically be at
22 the discretion of the Department of Defense, though we will
23 write recommendations for them. A quick yes or no, do you
24 commit to follow the Congress's spending recommendations in
25 defense reconciliation unequivocally?

1 [All witnesses answered in the affirmative.]

2 Chairman Wicker: Yes, from all three. Let me begin
3 with you, Colonel Anderson. There's an Air Force pilot
4 shortage. How big of a challenge is that? What are the
5 reasons for it? Does that include the fact that civilian
6 pilots for the airlines are getting higher pay, better more
7 regular schedules, and more time at home? And what can we
8 and the Congress and you and the administration do about
9 this?

10 Colonel Anderson: Thank you, Senator. I hung up the
11 uniform a full 16 years ago, and we were talking about pilot
12 shortages then, as we have been talking about a number of
13 other issues. And so, the Air Force has embarked on
14 attempting to address this in a very vigorous way. They
15 have implemented, based on my rating, a \$50,000 bonus. But
16 monetary compensation is not the only incentive that keeps
17 our pilots in the cockpit.

18 It is such things as the quality of their service to
19 have challenges, to be able to step up and exercise their
20 leadership skills, to do any number of things.

21 Chairman Wicker: Well, how can we improve on that
22 though, sir?

23 Colonel Anderson: Well, one of the things, Senator,
24 that I just read about in Air and Space Forces Magazine
25 which I was unfamiliar with, the Air Education and Training

1 Command, has just begun a new initiative this year where the
2 AETC Commander is going to begin a pilot program, no pun
3 intended, to test out Initial Pilot Training, IPT, which
4 will be done at civilian flying schools, and then to feed
5 those graduates into traditional undergraduate pilot
6 training.

7 Based on the reading in that article, it can be done at
8 a wash without requiring additional financial resources.
9 And they believe that they can generate an additional 1,500
10 pilots a year.

11 Chairman Wicker: IPT before UPT.

12 Colonel Anderson: That is correct.

13 Chairman Wicker: We could visit the entire five
14 minutes and the entire time of the hearing on that. Let me
15 turn to you, Dr. Napoli. Of course, we know where the
16 President is right now, and we know there are discussions
17 about the Iranian nuclear program. And we're also very
18 aware of the verification challenges under the defunct JCPA.

19 In your view, what steps should we consider in
20 verifying possible future agreements with Iran, and do you
21 think there's any point in even trying that?

22 Dr. Napoli: Thank you, Senator Wicker. I appreciate
23 the question. The complexity and seriousness of the Iranian
24 nuclear issue is obviously very recognized. At this time,
25 I'm not privy to U.S. government or detailed matters

1 regarding our nation's discussions with the government of
2 Iran. However, if confirmed, I will commit to working with
3 the State Department diplomatically, the Department of
4 Defense, the administration, and the broader Department of
5 Energy to ensure that the Office of Defense Nuclear
6 Nonproliferation can bring the tools and expertise needed to
7 address the Iranian nuclear issue.

8 Chairman Wicker: But you know, from open sources, from
9 the news media that that verification was difficult under
10 the JCPA?

11 Dr. Napoli: Yes, Senator. I fully support the IEA
12 efforts for a comprehensive safeguards agreement and the
13 broader goals of an additional protocol. Verification is
14 the heart of nonproliferation, and I think we should all
15 strive to meet those broader nonproliferation norms.

16 Chairman Wicker: Mr. Telle, how are we going to move
17 past some of the burdensome bureaucratic delays that have
18 frustrated all of us on both sides of the dais?

19 Mr. Telle: Thank you, Chairman Wicker for the
20 question. The Supreme Court rendered an opinion in 2023
21 called the Sackett Decision. This decision provided clarity
22 to the question about the regulatory regime related to
23 wetlands and navigable waterways. It's my understanding
24 that the Environmental Protection Agency in coordination
25 with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently working

1 to provide additional clarity about the impacts of that
2 decision. And the goal would be to provide clarity to
3 stakeholders across the country so that they understand
4 where the regulatory regime of the federal government stops
5 and starts.

6 With regard to the various flood control and navigation
7 projects across the country, the Congress is of course, very
8 interested in these projects and has been very involved in
9 directing the executive branch to execute them. It's
10 incumbent upon the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the
11 Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to provide
12 transparency and clarity to the Congress, to the public
13 about the progress of those projects, what may be impeding
14 them.

15 In some cases, it may be that the project's authorized,
16 but the funds haven't been appropriated. It may be that a
17 local, non-federal entity has paperwork that it still needs
18 to complete, or it may be another agency's regime that is a
19 barrier to progress on these projects, but.

20 Chairman Wicker: It might very well be, yes. Thank
21 you, Mr. Telle.

22 Mr. Telle: Thank you, Senator.

23 Chairman Wicker: Senator Reed.

24 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and
25 thank you gentlemen for your testimony. Mr. Anderson

1 recruiting has always been a challenge, and the chairman
2 referred to it. There's been a vast increase in resources.
3 It appears to be coming up. We've seen progress that was
4 measurable by 2024, but to declare victory would be a
5 profound mistake. Is there one thing that you would
6 emphasize in the recruiting process to accelerate it or to
7 maintain it?

8 Colonel Anderson: Well, thank you, Senator Reed. I
9 believe the Air Force is on a correct trajectory, as we have
10 seen. They are on a glide path now to completing recruiting
11 goals this year. I read an article the other day that as of
12 May 1st, that the Air Force had already completed 75 percent
13 of its recruiting goals. And Space Force, of course,
14 historically, has been very effective at doing that.

15 Our job is to number one, go to where individuals are
16 that we can attract into this exciting career in the service
17 of our Air Force and our Space Force. Another thing, and
18 this is purely something that I have thought about, and that
19 is that our recruiting force, the men and women who
20 interface with young people in America to bring them into
21 the uniform of the country, they are in a special duty
22 assignment, not in a career field as defined by an Air Force
23 specialty code. Perhaps we need to grow a career field so
24 that we put experts in the field.

25 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Colonel Anderson.

1 Dr. Napoli, one of the problems that I'm beginning to
2 observe, and this also applies to all the services, is that
3 these offers to senior people to retire could have a
4 devastating effect on our technical civilians with
5 civilians. One of them is the Naval Undersea NUWC Center in
6 Newport, but the NNSA, the Department of the Air Force has
7 many centers of excellence in technology. And frankly, it's
8 my understanding that it's usually the people that are the
9 best that lead, because they have tremendous opportunities
10 outside.

11 So, would you be very conscious of that attrition in
12 our laboratories by very skilled engineers?

13 Dr. Napoli: Senator, thank you for this important
14 question. Admiral Hyman Rickover is the father of the
15 nuclear navy. He was once quoted as saying, "People, not
16 organizations, get things done." This is a core value at
17 Naval Reactors that have served for the past 20 years. And
18 if confirmed, I'll continue to amplify that throughout the
19 National Nuclear Security Administration.

20 Senator Reed: Well, thank you. The other issue too is
21 that we have to confront is the morale issue at NNSA. I was
22 approached by a woman in the airport several months ago who
23 said five days ago, she got fired because she was
24 probationary, and then she had a call last night to get back
25 as fast as possible because they couldn't assure the

1 security of these weapons and also their operational
2 capabilities without her coming back so that she'd be part
3 of the team, and I'm sure that's still reverberating. So
4 that's a task I think you have to address immediately.

5 Mr. Telle thank you for recognizing the founding of
6 West Point in 1802, and as a proud graduate, I must for the
7 record, include I was never considered one of the best
8 engineers in the world. And so I will admit to that, but
9 you're right, it was the first engineering school in the
10 United States.

11 One of the factors that we're seeing more and more is
12 this extreme weather. In fact, there were reports that the
13 hurricane season this year could be one of the most
14 devastating in the future. As I suggest in my open
15 statement, how are you incorporating weather projections in
16 order to change the structure, the mission, the organization
17 of the Corps of Engineers?

18 Mr. Telle: Senator, thank you for the question. It's
19 an important one. I'm not in in the position currently, so
20 I don't have the benefit of all the data, but it's my
21 understanding that the Corps of Engineers applies the latest
22 data, hydrological models to its projects to develop
23 projects that will withstand current demands as well as
24 future ones based on data and science.

25 And it's my hope that if confirmed, I'll be able to

1 serve a role leading the organization in providing guidance
2 to deliver the best result for the public. These, as you
3 mentioned we have severe weather in this country and
4 disasters that are recurring, whether it's inland flooding
5 or coastal flooding, and we have to get it right.

6 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much Mr. Telle.
7 Gentlemen, thank you, and I look forward to your service.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator
9 Fischer.

10 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Napoli,
11 as you mentioned in your opening statement, one of your
12 primary responsibilities if confirmed, will be to coordinate
13 with partners and allies to deter state and non-state actors
14 from acquiring nuclear weapons. And that's no easy task in
15 this environment. Iran continues to enrich uranium far
16 beyond the requirements for civilian use to near weapons
17 grade, and the intelligence community has assessed that
18 North Korea could conduct its first nuclear test in several
19 years on very short notice.

20 If confirmed, how would you work with allies and
21 partners and international organizations such as the IAEA to
22 help deter countries like Iran and North Korea from
23 continuing their pursuit for nuclear weapons?

24 Dr. Napoli: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Your issues
25 ring true to the core mission of the Office of Defense

1 Nuclear Nonproliferation: to prevent and deter our
2 adversaries and non-state actors from acquiring nuclear
3 weapons, nuclear technologies, and radiological weapons as
4 well.

5 My experience working with the interagency and with our
6 international partners provides me firm footing to address
7 these challenges going forward. I agree with you. They're
8 very difficult challenges, but I'm confident in the team at
9 the Office of the Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, and the
10 tool sets that we bring to the broader government efforts to
11 combat those issues.

12 Senator Fischer: Our country has a lot of threats
13 right now. Can you give me an example of a threat that you
14 would see with respect to nuclear proliferation?

15 Dr. Napoli: Senator, I think you --

16 Senator Fischer: Besides what I mentioned, sorry.

17 Dr. Napoli: Thank you. You highlight very primary
18 examples, ma'am. To date, my efforts have been focused on
19 naval nuclear propulsion. I have not received government
20 intelligence briefings on additional threats that you
21 mentioned in excess of that. So, I would defer to my time
22 coming into the office and allow the team to get me up to
23 speed on the threats facing our nation. But I will commit
24 to working to that extent, with the greatest most urgency.

25 Senator Fischer: Good. Given the importance of

1 preventing nuclear conflict, do you concur that modernizing
2 our nuclear deterrent is a national security priority?

3 Dr. Napoli: Senator, I think nuclear deterrence is the
4 backbone of American strategic defense policy. The goal of
5 admission of NNSA is to provide a safe, reliable, and
6 credible nuclear weapon to the Department of Defense. If so
7 fortunate to be confirmed, I'll support the broader NNSA
8 missions to provide that to the department.

9 Senator Fischer: The United States has the most
10 effective processes in place for safeguarding our nuclear
11 and radioactive materials, and one that is underappreciated,
12 I think by many. It is NNSA's leadership in development of
13 technologies to detect potential smuggling or illicit
14 movement of nuclear and radioactive materials. If
15 confirmed, how would you work with allies and partners to
16 share our expertise in that area in detecting and also
17 safeguarding those dangerous materials?

18 Dr. Napoli: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Security is
19 at the heart of the nuclear program within the United
20 States. I've had the pleasure of participating in that
21 mission from the Navy's perspective for the past 20 years,
22 and I look forward to carrying that forward to the Office of
23 Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation. Your point ring rings
24 home very true. You know our business in this area to
25 prevent the spread and proliferation of nuclear material and

1 associated technologies is incredibly important.

2 You know, my experience working with our international
3 partners, I will carry that forward and continue that
4 movement to ensure that it's a broader approach to defense
5 nonproliferation norms, both with our partners and with the
6 IAEA.

7 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir. I look forward to
8 working with you. Mr. Telle, good to see you again. I
9 appreciated you coming in and visiting with me about how
10 important water is to my state of Nebraska.

11 Mr. Telle: Thank you, Senator.

12 Senator Fischer: Our surface water, the many miles of
13 river we have, and also the Ogallala aquifer, the High
14 Plains aquifer, which lies under our state, and what a
15 wonderful resource that is. But what I wanted to ask you
16 about is managing the Missouri River. Flood prevention and
17 control along the Missouri is of the utmost importance to
18 the state of Nebraska.

19 Will you commit to ensuring that when it comes to
20 managing the Missouri River, flood control and prevention
21 will be a top priority?

22 Mr. Telle: Senator Fisher, thank you for the question.
23 And thank you for visiting with me in your office. The
24 Missouri River, of course, by one mile is the longest river
25 in the United States, just edging out the Mississippi.

1 Senator Fischer: But it is one mile.

2 Mr. Telle: It is one mile, and it begins in Senator
3 Sheehy's state and ends in Senator Schmitt's state, and it
4 runs right through your state, Senator. And I would just
5 say that flood control is one of the primary missions of the
6 Corps of Engineers, along with navigation and aquatic
7 ecosystem restoration. And all of these issues have to be
8 managed and balanced.

9 In your state in 2019 with the Missouri River Flood, we
10 saw it devastate agricultural interests in your state. We
11 saw strategic military installations under the threat of
12 flooding, and so this is something we have got to get right,
13 and it requires stakeholder input up and down the system,
14 and balancing all the interests that exist --

15 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

16 Mr. Telle: -- from Montana to Missouri.

17 Senator Fischer: Thank you. I hope we can work on
18 having flood control projects move faster. Look forward to
19 working with you.

20 Mr. Telle: Senator Fischer, I'll work with you on
21 that.

22 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

23 Chairman Wicker: One mile. Senator King.

24 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Anderson
25 welcome to the committee. Several years ago, Senator Cotton

1 and I had what amounted to a focus group with a group of Air
2 Force pilots without a lot of brass in the room, so they
3 could talk freely. And the interesting conclusion that was
4 reached during that discussion was that the principal desire
5 of these pilots in terms of their retention, of their
6 staying in, was that they wanted to fly, and that there were
7 too many cases where they were assigned to desks, and they
8 didn't get the time in the air that that was why they joined
9 the Air Force.

10 I hope you'll take that into consideration. You
11 mentioned the \$50,000 bonus, but interestingly -- and we
12 started our meeting thinking that it would be bonuses and
13 quality of life and those kinds of things -- but it was the
14 fact that the Air Force had this process that took pilots
15 out of the cockpit and that that was one of the major
16 reasons for the loss of the pilots from the Air Force. I
17 hope that's something you'll consider.

18 Colonel Anderson: Senator, that is a very good
19 question, simply because when I was in uniform and I was not
20 a pilot, I was in Michelin Space Operations and then the
21 International Affairs Career field, but that was an enduring
22 challenge, and I think that that is a legitimate issue that
23 should be raised again, because I have heard precisely the
24 same thing from my colleagues, both retired and on active
25 duty.

1 Senator King: Thank you. I appreciate that. Mr.
2 Telle, you mentioned your experience with Katrina and later
3 on with disaster response. Does FEMA play an important role
4 in disaster response in this country, particularly for major
5 disasters that affect more than one state?

6 Mr. Telle: Senator King, thank you for the question.
7 And FEMA certainly has played a role in disaster response.
8 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the National Response
9 Framework is, of course, charged with leading on debris
10 removal. And that relationship between our emergency
11 managers and the Corps of Engineers is important as we
12 respond to disasters like those that occurred recently in
13 North Carolina and Tennessee and surrounding areas with
14 Hurricane Helene.

15 Senator King: I just don't see how we're going to be
16 able to turn disaster response entirely over to the states,
17 given the fact that disasters don't respect state borders.

18 Resiliency planning. That has to be part of the
19 responsibility when the Corps is doing projects wherever
20 they are. Do you agree?

21 Mr. Telle: Yes, Senator. Resiliency is critically
22 important.

23 Senator King: And do you agree that we are facing more
24 and greater and more devastating storms than we have in the
25 past?

1 Mr. Telle: Senator King, we've certainly faced
2 devastating natural disasters throughout our nation's
3 history. It's been a longstanding issue that we've dealt
4 with. I don't have the specific data about the intensity of
5 those disasters, but they're still happening. They've been
6 happening throughout our nation's history, and we have to
7 stay vigilant to make sure we're up to date with the latest
8 data.

9 Senator King: So, just anecdotally, you don't notice
10 any increase in billion-dollar storms?

11 Mr. Telle: Well, Senator King, certainly with
12 Hurricane Katrina, that was a multi-billion dollar storm,
13 hundreds of billions of dollars. Hurricane Maria, certainly
14 the same. Superstorm Sandy, there have been a number of
15 storms over the last 20 years that have --

16 Senator King: In our lifetimes.

17 Mr. Telle: Absolutely, Senator.

18 Senator King: Well, I hope that regardless of the
19 position of the administration on climate change, that the
20 Corps will take advantage of the science, which I think
21 you've committed to, and particularly in resiliency
22 planning. The worst thing we could do would be to build to
23 a hundred-year old standards instead of a hundred year from
24 now standards. Do you agree?

25 Mr. Telle: Senator, I do agree. And the Corps of

1 Engineers currently, and as it's my understanding, will
2 continue to use the latest hydrological trend data that we
3 can measure to make decisions about investments and the
4 design of flood control infrastructure.

5 Senator King: To just follow the science, correct?

6 Mr. Telle: Senator, we should follow the science and
7 make sure that any political ideology is not present as we
8 examine the facts and build infrastructure to respond to the
9 situation as we see it based on the data. Yes, sir.

10 Senator King: Couldn't agree more. Thank you. Mr.
11 Napoli, I'll follow up with a question for the record, but I
12 think the most underappreciated, greatest risk facing our
13 country is nuclear materials falling into the hands of a
14 terrorist. We've talked about deterrence several times.
15 The problem is deterrence, the theory of deterrence doesn't
16 work on somebody who doesn't care about dying and doesn't
17 have a capital city to bomb.

18 So I believe that the nonproliferation, particularly
19 with nuclear materials that could fall into the hands of
20 terrorists, is one of the most important responsibilities in
21 our government right now. It's not very much talked about,
22 but I hope this is something that you will take a really
23 close look at, because there are many nuclear nations out
24 there. There's a lot of nuclear material. And should it
25 fall into the hands of a terrorist, I can almost guarantee

1 that somewhere in the world right now, there's a terrorist
2 group thinking about how to achieve a nuclear weapon.

3 I hope this will be a focus of your attention as part
4 of your nonproliferation responsibilities.

5 Dr. Napoli: Thank you, Senator King. Nonstate actors
6 seeking nuclear and radiological weapons, including the
7 relevant related technologies, is an incredibly serious
8 issue, and if confirmed, I'll work with that issue with the
9 utmost urgency.

10 Senator King: Thank you. Utmost urgency is the right
11 term. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman Wicker: Well said, Senator King. Senator
13 Cotton.

14 Senator Cotton: Thank you. Gentlemen,
15 congratulations. Mr. Anderson, if confirmed you'll be
16 responsible for the guidance, direction, and oversight of
17 the Air Reserve component, including the Air National Guard
18 in Arkansas. The Air National Guard members play a key role
19 in training both our allies on the F-35 and our own C-130
20 air crews that's at Ebbing Airfield outside of Fort Smith
21 and Little Rock Air Force Base.

22 Can you commit to making sure that our Arkansas Air
23 National Guard has the resources it needs to continue
24 delivering strong war fighting capabilities at home and
25 abroad?

1 Colonel Anderson: Absolutely, Senator Cotton. My
2 first assignment was at Little Rock Air Force base at the
3 308 Strategic Missile Wing. I knew a number of individuals
4 in the 189th Air Refueling Wing at the base. And so, yes, I
5 do believe in proper resourcing for our Air National Guard
6 and its people. They're absolutely crucial to the fight.

7 Senator Cotton: Thank you. Mr. Telle, welcome again
8 to the committee. The Army Civil Engineers in Arkansas
9 State are currently developing a comprehensive water
10 resource management strategy for the White River Basin in
11 Arkansas. This study is important to ensure the government
12 provides sustainable water resource management while taking
13 into consideration other priorities like hydropower
14 generation and agriculture.

15 Can you commit to working with the Arkansas
16 Congressional Delegation to ensure that this study and any
17 follow-on actions are completed in a timely manner?

18 Mr. Telle: Senator Cotton, thank you for the question.
19 It's critically important, your state. Of course, it abuts
20 the Mississippi River and the White River flows right into
21 the Mississippi River. This is an important basin. It has
22 to be managed properly. It affects states up and down the
23 Mississippi and the entire system. So I'll commit to work
24 with you on that.

25 Senator Cotton: Thank you. The Fiscal Year '25 NDAA

1 contained language that gives Arkansas the option to work
2 with the Army to determine the proper ownership and
3 disposition of the former Army Navy General Hospital in Hot
4 Springs. Can you commit to working with me, this committee,
5 and the rest of our delegation to ensure that we address the
6 issue in a timely manner that best serves the interests of
7 all parties involved?

8 Mr. Telle: Yes, Senator, of course. And this will
9 require coordination with the Assistant Secretary of the
10 Army for installations energy and the environment. We have
11 a shared workforce of the Corps of Engineers focused on
12 civil works and military, and this will require coordination
13 to make sure we get that right for you, sir.

14 Senator Cotton: Thank you. Congratulations again on
15 your nominations. I yield back my time.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. And it seems
17 that Senator Tuberville is next.

18 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
19 morning, gentlemen. Mr. Telle, I enjoyed visiting in my
20 office recently about Alabama's inland waterways. And last
21 year we had three of our locks fail in one year. That's
22 unacceptable. Our waterways infrastructure is operating
23 past and is expected lifespan and will continue to break.
24 We're having huge problems. Businesses depend upon our
25 waterways to move goods all the way down to the Port of

1 Mobile.

2 What's your plan to cut bureaucratic red tape and
3 rapidly repair critical infrastructure across the system,
4 even though we just passed a couple years ago, trillions of
5 dollars worth of infrastructure money, we didn't see any of
6 that.

7 Mr. Telle: Senator Tuberville, thank you for the
8 question. And as someone who grew up on the Black Warrior
9 River in Tuscaloosa County, one of your waterways I
10 understand their importance. They deliver American commerce
11 to the globe. It's true in Alabama, and it's true
12 throughout the country. It's unacceptable that our
13 infrastructure is not meeting our current demands.

14 We have got to work across government agencies to make
15 sure we remove red tape, coordinate, communicate with you
16 stakeholders here in Congress who have the ability to help
17 deliver some of these projects. And I look forward to
18 working with you on the locks and other navigation and
19 flight patrol infrastructure within Alabama.

20 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. We do have a lot of
21 red tape within the Corps of Engineers, I'll let you know
22 that, and look forward to working with you. I'll know that
23 we have to get stuff done. We just can't sit back and --

24 Mr. Telle: Thank you, Senator. Couldn't agree more.

25 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Mr. Anderson, thank

1 for your service. As a career officer in the Air Force, I'm
2 sure you've had your share of both good and bad base
3 facilities, housing units, commissaries. You know, I
4 believe that what happens outside of work is just as
5 important as work itself. Quality of life, family
6 stability, and all those things that go along with it.

7 Do you believe that having a lower quality of life
8 leads a decreased morale readiness and retention?

9 Colonel Anderson: Absolutely, Senator.

10 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. And how do you plan on
11 working with your colleagues and the Air Force staff to
12 address all these issues? Because we do have problems.

13 Colonel Anderson: Senator, you are correct. If
14 confirmed, I intend to delve into this issue immediately.
15 My intention is to remain at the headquarters for a period
16 of time in order to come up to speed on these issues, and
17 then to get into the field, if confirmed, and to see these
18 things firsthand. I've read about them, and I look forward
19 if confirmed by this committee working with you and with all
20 members of the committee in addressing these.

21 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. You know, last week
22 Secretary Hegseth signed a memorandum requiring our service
23 academies to adapt admission standards based solely on
24 merit. Thank God. As not only a member, recently President
25 put me on the Air Force Academy Board, which I'm looking

1 forward to, I'm also chairman of the subcommittee that
2 oversees our academies. I welcome that change in policy.

3 Under the previous administration, we saw our nation's
4 premier leadership laboratories cower to woke ideologies.
5 If confirmed, you will have oversight over the Air Force
6 Academy. How do you plan on ensuring that this memorandum
7 is thoroughly put to our Air Force Academy?

8 Colonel Anderson: Senator, based on my reading of the
9 public media, the Air Force, and specifically the
10 organization that I hope to lead, if confirmed, has already
11 moved aggressively on this. My understanding is that there
12 is a certification required back by the end of the month
13 from the superintendent of the Academy. But if confirmed, I
14 intend to delve into this completely to ensure fullest
15 compliance with the executive orders, direction of the
16 Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Air Force, as
17 well as existing law.

18 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Look forward to
19 working with you too --

20 Colonel Anderson: Yes, sir.

21 Senator Tuberville: -- on some things I have in mind
22 for the Academy, that possibly we could change. Number one,
23 not looking to save money, but saving money, but also
24 enhancing leadership in the academy there. I think that we
25 can all get together and make it better. It hasn't changed

1 in years. We still go by the same old models. And again,
2 we're looking for leadership. That's what the Air Force
3 Academy and all of our academies represent, you know, for
4 our military. I do have some more questions. I'm out of
5 time, but I'll give them to you for the record. Mr.
6 Chairman.

7 [The information appears in the appendix:]

8 / COMMITTEE INSERT

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator
2 Tuberville. Senator Rounds.

3 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of
4 all, to all three of you, thank you for your continued
5 service to our country. Mr. Telle, state and local
6 governments really do play a key role in flood prevention
7 response. That collaboration is critical between the
8 federal, state, and local, but there's also another entity,
9 and that's the tribes. And I want to just focus a little
10 bit on the Tribal Partnership Program or TPP.

11 Number one, I wanted to know about your comfort with it
12 in terms of knowledge of it today, and then if confirmed,
13 your support for the TPP Authority in terms of making it an
14 integral part of the response that we need in some of the
15 poorest parts of the country.

16 Mr. Telle: Senator Rounds, thank you for the question,
17 and I enjoyed our visit in your office where we talked about
18 the Tribal Partnership Program, which you had a key role in
19 helping to establish. This is the whole reason I'm honored
20 to have been nominated by President Trump for this position.
21 This is an agency and a part of government that reaches into
22 every corner of the United States and affects communities of
23 all types throughout the country, big cities, small towns,
24 and places like South Dakota, and tribal communities as
25 well.

1 And these folks need to be heard by their government,
2 that the Corps of Engineers needs to be responsive to them.
3 And you've gone a long way to making sure that the capacity
4 of the local sponsors is augmented by federal help when
5 necessary, and I look forward to working with you on this
6 program.

7 Senator Rounds: Great. I think, we've been moving in
8 the right direction, and the Corps has done a very good job
9 in responding, and I just want to see that continued. And
10 it sounds like you would commit to working with us to see
11 that that does happen.

12 Mr. Telle: Senator, we must listen to all the
13 stakeholders that are affected by the work of the Corps of
14 Engineers to make sure we balance the different mission sets
15 and obligations appropriately.

16 Senator Rounds: Thank you. Mr. Anderson, both
17 Chairman Wicker and Senator King have talked a little bit
18 about the Air Force's persistent pilot shortage. From this
19 committee's oversight perspective, what systemic or
20 disruptive changes should the department be exploring to
21 address, not just recruitment, but long-term retention of
22 really these very highly skilled aviators?

23 And specifically, I mean, we're talking about folks
24 that are fighter pilots, bomber pilots, plus our mobility
25 platforms themselves. At what point do we acknowledge that

1 the legacy approaches that we're taking simply aren't
2 working?

3 Colonel Anderson: Thank you for the question, Senator.
4 This is an enduring, evasive, elusive problem that we have
5 tried to address for many years. I believe first of all,
6 that the current program with increased compensation,
7 bonuses for these pilots is insufficient. We can see it in
8 the numbers already cited, the initiative from the area,
9 education training command for initial pilot training, but
10 also it is all about quality of life.

11 And I do believe the previous question about affording
12 pilots the opportunity to remain in the cockpit for the
13 duration of their careers is, in fact, a valid one, but one
14 that has not been embraced by the United States Air Force.

15 Senator Rounds: I think you might have hit it on the
16 head, at least in terms of what these guys want to do. They
17 want to stay in and they want to fly. That's what they got
18 there in the first place for. So I appreciate your
19 recognizing that.

20 And I think in terms of this committee's role and
21 responsibility, we should be looking at what disruptive
22 approaches may very well have to be considered. And we look
23 forward to learning more about your thoughts in the near
24 future.

25 Colonel Anderson: Thank you, Senator.

1 Senator Rounds: Also, Mr. Anderson, recruiting and
2 retaining talent in highly technical areas such as cyber,
3 AI, and space systems remains a challenge due to private
4 sector competition, very similar to what we've got in our
5 pilot shortage.

6 What strategies do you see as the most effective for
7 strengthening the Department of the Air Force's civilian and
8 uniform talent pipeline in these critical domains?

9 Colonel Anderson: Thank you, Senator. That is a
10 crucial question that confronts us today. We must go to the
11 place where the talent resides, and it must be in places
12 where there are younger people. There are a number of
13 programs that generate the right young people with the
14 scientific and technical mindsets that can feed into these
15 career fields very capably. The Air Force Association has a
16 very durable cyber patriot program. Junior ROTC conducts a
17 number of cyber activities for their young people.

18 And so we must go and explore these fertile grounds in
19 order to bring people with the right talent and the right
20 mindset into these positions.

21 Senator Rounds: Thank you. And my time has expired,
22 but Dr. Napoli, I do have one question for the record that
23 I'll submit to you, but thank you. Thank you all. Thank
24 you, Mr. Chairman.

25 [The information appears in the appendix:]

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1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Scott.

2 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. Congratulations
3 each of you on your nominations, and I know you're going to
4 do a great job. Mr. Telle, do you have any friends in
5 Florida?

6 Mr. Telle: Senator, I do. My wife behind me is from
7 Pinellas County, and her family, of course, still there in
8 St. Petersburg.

9 Senator Scott: Well, I wish you the best of luck
10 because the Corps's reputation, not the people -- the people
11 of the Corps are wonderful people -- but the Corps's
12 reputation in Florida, as we've talked about, is horrible.
13 I mean, you can't get an answer. I mean, it's just like a
14 black hole of information. No one will tell you the time
15 process, where a permit is, why you're going to get turned
16 down, why you're going to get -- can you fix it? You want
17 to keep your friends in Florida, right?

18 Mr. Telle: Senator Scott, certainly. You raised a
19 very important issue, and your state is one that is
20 surrounded on at least three sides by water. Water is
21 critically important to the state of Florida both inland and
22 on the coasts. It's unacceptable that we can't give answers
23 to your state. Your state has more capacity or as much
24 capacity as any state in terms of dealing with these issues
25 and has taken on a leadership role. And we ought to be

1 working in a complimentary way with the state of Florida.
2 And I hope that you and I can visit the Jacksonville
3 district office together.

4 Senator Scott: So, you think at the end of this,
5 you're going to have friends in Florida, your family's going
6 to talk to you?

7 Mr. Telle: Well, Senator, I hope so. I'm going to do
8 the best job I can for the nation. And if that's true,
9 it'll be the best job I can do for Florida.

10 Senator Scott: Do you have any friends on the beach in
11 Florida?

12 Mr. Telle: Senator, I do often visit the beaches when
13 I'm visiting my in-laws. And I know we have some major
14 issues related to beach nourishment, and it's most acute in
15 Pinellas County. There's been a large challenge --

16 Senator Scott: It's actually all the way down to where
17 I live in Naples. You know what, they changed how they
18 looked at it. They said, think about this on private land -
19 - and so you have private land, and then the public land,
20 the beach is public land, the way it works in Florida. So
21 it means in high tide, you own the land there. After that,
22 the state owns it.

23 The Corps said that they give you a form that says,
24 "We're going to give you a temporary easement forever." It
25 actually says that. It's called temporary easement, then

1 it's a forever easement to go on private land. Does that
2 make any sense to you?

3 Mr. Telle: Senator, certainly the protection of the
4 citizens of Pinellas County, the property, and lives of
5 Pinellas County, is of critical importance. There's a
6 challenge, as you've pointed out, related to land ownership
7 and access here. It seems to me that we ought to be able to
8 find a creative solution that solves the interests of
9 landowners, as well as the interest of the public in, in
10 Pinellas County and as you state, all the way down to
11 Naples.

12 Senator Scott: So you think you can solve this so
13 actually we get the beach renourishment done?

14 Mr. Telle: Senator Scott, I look forward to working
15 with you on that when I'm given more details about the
16 challenges. I know they're extensive, and I know that
17 they've been wrangled over the years, but I look forward to
18 working with you. I think with a can-do attitude, we can
19 make progress here and provide this critical flood
20 protection to Pinellas County and other parts of Florida.

21 Senator Scott: You've brought up Pinellas, especially
22 Pinellas, it's had an unbelievable impact on the value of
23 homes not being able to get the beach renourishment done.
24 Because we have three bad storm surges in the last two and a
25 half years. So it's had a pretty big impact over there.

1 Mr. Telle: Senator, I agree totally. My family was
2 affected by those storms there, and I look forward to
3 working with you on it.

4 Senator Scott: So I'm a business guy, and in business,
5 what you get frustrated with is government. You know, the
6 permitting process, the stupid licenses you have to have,
7 and then the regulatory environment. And so then you say,
8 "Golly, I already did got this permit. I did the exact
9 same." The state government does the exact same thing the
10 federal government does. So why can't we delegate?

11 If you have a good state, why can't you delegate some
12 of the Corps's responsibility to the state and allow them to
13 do the permitting as long as they do a good job?

14 Mr. Telle: Senator Scott, I agree with you. We're
15 going to be able to deliver services to the public better if
16 we do it closer to the public and to the people who
17 understand the environment. You've done a very good job as
18 governor to unlock Florida's capacity and allow the state to
19 take on much of the burden that the federal government was
20 taking on.

21 That's good for the state of Florida, that's good for
22 the public, that's good for the American taxpayer, because
23 it's relieving the federal government of these duties. And
24 I look forward to working with you where appropriate to make
25 sure that we're delegating as much authority as we possibly

1 can to the states, especially those with a lot of capacity
2 like Florida has.

3 Senator Scott: I just hope at the end of your time
4 your relatives continue to talk to you. Thank you.

5 Mr. Telle: Senator, thank you.

6 Chairman Wicker: Senator Scott, I'd share that hope.

7 [Laughter.]

8 Chairman Wicker: And these bureaucrats who award a
9 temporary easement forever, perhaps should stop by the
10 English department at their local community college.
11 Senator Rosen.

12 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking
13 Member Reed, thank you to our witnesses, your families
14 today, your willingness to serve. Appreciate that. I want
15 to change it up from the beaches of Florida to talk about
16 something that you don't get to see, which is classified
17 locations. And I want to talk about documenting exposure at
18 classified locations.

19 So, Mr. Anderson, I asked General Caine at his
20 confirmation hearing about documenting exposure at data
21 masked locations where the duty station and its existence
22 are classified. We have a lot of those all around the
23 country, particularly in Nevada, so that service members'
24 records while they accurately reflect service connected
25 injuries at these classified locations.

1 I've heard from constituents who served at such
2 locations within the Nevada test and training range, who
3 believed they were exposed to radiation from our days of
4 conducting explosive nuclear weapons testing, and to toxins
5 from burn pits, which disposed of classified waste.

6 However, DOD does not classify the range as a place
7 where exposure has occurred, despite the Department of
8 Energy providing a presumption of exposure for their
9 personnel who served at the same exact locations within the
10 range. And because their service records are data masked,
11 these veterans can't even prove to the VA that they actually
12 were ever stationed there.

13 One such facility that's covered for DOE, but not DOD
14 as the Tonopah Test Range, which is both a DOE and Air Force
15 installation. pPrtions of the range are still fenced off
16 today due to contamination. But the airmen who serve there
17 were never told about the contamination. They do not have a
18 presumption of exposure like their DOE counterparts that
19 they served alongside with, and they can't even prove they
20 were there. Again, because their records are data masked.
21 All of this has pre prevented them from being able to
22 receive the veterans benefits that they deserve.

23 So, Mr. Anderson, if confirmed, will you commit to
24 working with me and this committee to find a solution that
25 both provides a presumption of exposure at such Air Force

1 locations and provides those who served and are currently
2 serving at these locations with sufficient documentation so
3 that when they become veterans, they can submit claims for
4 health related issues without compromising the security of
5 their service details?

6 Colonel Anderson: Senator Rosen, absolutely. If
7 confirmed, I will certainly do that. We owe the care and
8 diligence to individuals who have worn the cloth of the
9 country and have served at a masked location or an unmasked
10 location. We take care of our people equally well, and I
11 will commit to working with my counterparts --

12 Senator Rosen: Thank you.

13 Colonel Anderson: -- in the Department of Veterans
14 Affairs and with this committee.

15 Senator Rosen: Thank you. It's extremely important.
16 And I want to continue on this a little bit, talking about
17 the NNSA equities that we have. So, Dr. Napoli, the Nevada
18 National Security Site hosts a nonproliferation test and
19 evaluation complex, the largest facility for open air
20 testing of hazardous materials and biological stimulants in
21 the world. It's where first responders actually train for
22 nuclear catastrophes.

23 If confirmed, another Nevada equity which would fall
24 under your direction, is the Remote Sensing laboratory, RSL.
25 It's on Nellis Air Force Base and Joint Base, Andrews,

1 there's two in the country. They provide radiological
2 emergency response teams along the West Coast and the East
3 Coast respectively, stand ready to provide emergency
4 radiological response anywhere in the world with deployable
5 teams of experts, RA salesman, undergoing a number of
6 upgrades to their equipment, including their helicopters,
7 detectors, communication gears, etc.

8 And I've had the great pleasure of touring their
9 facility at Nellis. I'm glad to bring you there. It's
10 quite, quite remarkable. So, Dr. Napoli, if confirmed, what
11 additional investments in the Nevada National Security Site
12 and the Remote Sensing laboratory, do you think would be
13 prudent to ensure that they continue to fulfill their
14 counter-terrorism, nonproliferation, and nuclear detection
15 missions in the years ahead?

16 Dr. Napoli: Thank you, Senator. The missions that you
17 outline within the Office of Defense Nuclear
18 Nonproliferation are incredibly important. I do look
19 forward to learning more about the nuclear emergency
20 response teams and their actions in the state of Nevada.
21 I've not previously gotten briefed on the details associated
22 with those programs, but I do look forward to learning about
23 that very quickly upon entering into the position.

24 I would say that my experience with the Naval Nuclear
25 Propulsion Program, I have extensive experience in emergency

1 planning and emergency response. So I look forward to
2 bringing those skill sets to the position and leading the
3 team moving forward on those initiatives.

4 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you. I welcome you to
5 Nevada, and we'll give you a great tour.

6 Dr. Napoli: I'll take you up on that, ma'am.

7 Senator Rosen: Thank you so much. Thank you,
8 Chairman.

9 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator
10 Mullin.

11 Senator Mullin: Thank you, Chairman, and thank you all
12 for being here. Mr. Telle, I want to talk to you about the
13 Port of Catoosa. It's a 445-mile channel that runs from
14 essentially the Mississippi all the way up to the Port of
15 Catoosa, which is the largest inland water port west of the
16 Mississippi and on the Gulf of America. It also provides
17 roughly 50 percent of all agricultural products that flow in
18 and out of the Midwest. It goes up to the Port of Catoosa,
19 which is just outside of Tulsa, and from there, it gets on
20 rails and trucks and gets trucked the rest of the way up.

21 It was opened in 1971, and since roughly the 90s, we
22 have talked about increasing the depth because of the amount
23 of traffic that's on it. Right now it's dredged at nine
24 feet in depth, and it also has a critical backlog, which
25 means that any of the levees could shut down at any given

1 time of increasing almost a billion dollars critical backlog
2 needs.

3 The Port of Catoosa, for some reason, continues to be
4 treated like -- this is not politically correct, but
5 whatever -- the redheaded stepchild, and other projects in
6 the Ohio or the Mississippi, or other areas of waterways
7 seem to get the most attention. However, the Midwest feeds
8 the United States and many parts around the world, and yet
9 we're in a critical situation here where we need to increase
10 the depth of the channel from 9 feet to 12 feet.

11 The study has been going on literally since the 90s.
12 An additional study started again in 2005 and expired in
13 roughly 2014. We could see a 40 percent increase in cargo
14 influx into the port and out of the port for every foot we
15 increase it. 40 percent increase of cargo, which would be
16 drastically an improvement to what we deal with today. Not
17 to mention the timing and the cost to get ag products in and
18 out of the Midwest, because as we hit the Mississippi, we
19 actually change out of one barge to another barge that
20 actually is obviously deeper and bigger for us to be able to
21 navigate through the channel with.

22 My concern is that since the Corps has continued to
23 overlook this, I'm looking for a commitment for you that you
24 actually take a hard look at this and understand that
25 literally a heartbeat of America, which is our ag products,

1 is in dire straits of being able to get products in and out.
2 And if this navigation channel goes down, the cost is going
3 to bring to all Americans tables because it will increase in
4 cargo. So, would you commit to helping us with this
5 channel?

6 Mr. Telle: Senator Mullin, absolutely, I will. This
7 is emblematic, the situation you've described. Providing
8 access for Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers to the rest of
9 the world through our waterways is emblematic of the Corps's
10 mission which was originally to use our waterways for the
11 benefit of the American public.

12 Your state's so critical in getting the products from
13 your state to the world. And the opposite of that, getting
14 the world's products to you is critically important. I
15 understand that this issue's been going on for a long time,
16 affects the state of Arkansas as well. And certainly, as
17 vessel traffic changes the types of traffic change based on
18 commercial patterns across the globe, we need to make sure
19 that our infrastructure's up to date to meet it.

20 And I look forward to doing everything we can to take a
21 very hard look at this critical asset and make sure that we
22 modernize it to the degree that we can. And I would also as
23 you described when we were in your office, the critical role
24 that it plays in flood protection in that area as well.
25 And, you know, dredge material often can have a beneficial

1 use in terms of building flood control, infrastructure
2 levies, and other otherwise.

3 So, I look forward to working with you on that, and I
4 commit to do my very best.

5 Senator Mullin: Thank you. And I look forward to
6 hosting you when we can get you there.

7 Mr. Telle: Thank you, sir.

8 Senator Mullin: Mr. Anderson, real quick. As you
9 know, the Air National Guard performs roughly 30 percent of
10 the military space operations, staffed by highly skilled
11 professional personnel distributed all across the country as
12 a directive issue that the President expressed his intent to
13 create a Space National Guard.

14 I would ask your commitment to see this through.
15 There's a lot of concerns in the National Guard about these
16 individuals that are highly skilled, that want to be in the
17 guard being transferred out and forced to either reserve or
18 full-time units. Which obviously, as you can see, that
19 would be a major brain drain within the Space Force, because
20 these guys aren't going to give up their careers and simply
21 move someplace else. They're in the National Guard because
22 they want to be.

23 Colonel Anderson: Senator, the state of play at the
24 present time, as I understand it from the media, is that
25 determination has been made to transfer basic space

1 functions that are performed in the National Guard to the
2 Space Force. And so that is the policy that exists now.
3 When I find myself inside, should I be confirmed, I would
4 like to address this.

5 However, I will commit to following the existing law as
6 defined in a number of areas and in direction from the
7 President and the Secretary of Defense.

8 Senator Mullin: The President expressed an intent to
9 create a Space National Guard. So just to put that out,
10 that was his intent. Thank you, sir. I yield.

11 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator. Senator Kelly.

12 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Telle,
13 good to see you.

14 Mr. Telle: Thank you, sir.

15 Senator Kelly: And thank you to all of our witnesses
16 for being here today, and thanks for taking time to meet
17 with me last week. I'm going to see you tomorrow again, at
18 our EPW Hearing. We'll talk about some Arizona Civil Works
19 projects then, but in this setting, I wanted to ask you
20 about the Army Corps. Some Formerly Utilized Defense Sites,
21 it's under the FUDS program.

22 As you may know, Arizona has long hosted test sites for
23 the Army and the Air Force, and we have several sites in the
24 state that are no longer actively used, but have unexploded
25 ordinance or some other hazards that require some

1 remediation. And the Army Corps FUDS program is what we
2 rely on for that remediation.

3 For example, in the town of Santa Rita in Southern
4 Arizona, we have a FUDS site next to the town's high school.
5 In town, leaders have expressed significant safety concerns.
6 It's next to the high school. There are signs that say,
7 "Don't go in this area." What do you think high school
8 students do? They go out into the area anyway.

9 But also on the Tohono O'odham Nation, there's
10 unexploded ordinance that has prevented the tribe from
11 constructing some new water infrastructure. So, Mr. Telle,
12 if confirmed, will you commit to working with my office to
13 accelerate the site assessment and remediation processes for
14 these sites in Santa Rita and on the Tohono O'odham land?

15 Mr. Telle: Senator, I look forward to working with you
16 on that. And it will require a close coordination with the
17 Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installation, Energy,
18 and the Environment. That person has oversight of the
19 Corps's mission when it comes to the Formerly Used Defense
20 Sites.

21 But because the Assistant Secretary of the Army for
22 Civil Works has oversight of the Army Civil Works Program,
23 and both of those missions fall under the Corps of
24 Engineers, it will require close collaboration between those
25 two offices to make sure that we get it right. And there

1 are implications, as I understand it from you on these sites
2 as it relates to water.

3 And so I'll have a specific focus in that regard,
4 working closely with the Assistant Secretary of the Army for
5 Installations, Energy, and the Environment.

6 Senator Kelly: Right. Thank you. And more broadly,
7 if confirmed, how will you ensure that communities with FUD
8 sites aren't left waiting for years or decades for the Army
9 Corps to address these at-risk sites and these problems?

10 Mr. Telle: Senator, thank you. Congress has charged
11 the Army Corps of Engineers with cleanup at Formerly Used
12 Defense Sites, as well as former Department of Energy sites.
13 Again, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations
14 Energy, and Environment has primary responsibility over the
15 Department of Defense sites, whereas the Assistant Secretary
16 of the Army for Civil Works has primary responsibility over
17 the Department of Energy Sites.

18 But regardless, we share a workforce with the Corps of
19 Engineers, and it's going to require both offices to
20 coordinate very closely to solve the problems like the ones
21 you're bringing up, which are very important, of course, to
22 the local community, but also to the country as the
23 Department of Defense does the important work that it does.

24 Senator Kelly: Thank you. And Dr. Napoli with new
25 countries pursuing nuclear power, there are growing concerns

1 about safeguards in nuclear fuel cycle risks. If confirmed,
2 how would you ensure that the NNSAs work on securing fissile
3 materials and promote responsible nuclear energy expansion
4 continues?

5 Dr. Napoli: Thank you, Senator. Working with the
6 international community, including the International Atomic
7 Energy Agency, is a core mission of the Office of Defense
8 Nuclear Nonproliferation. As you said, to secure all
9 nuclear materials and ensure their protection, as well as
10 promoting comprehensive safeguards for nations to preclude
11 them from seeking nuclear weapons. If confirmed, I look
12 forward to working both with our broader U.S. government and
13 our international partners to ensure that our nation is
14 protected in that regard.

15 Senator Kelly: Thank you, and I yield back.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Budd.

17 Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman. And again,
18 congratulations to all of you for your nomination.
19 Appreciate your willingness to serve. Mr. Telle, if
20 confirmed, you'd be overseeing the Army Corps of Engineers.
21 This organization predominantly focused on critical
22 infrastructure and complex civil works.

23 However, I hear from a lot of military leaders,
24 particularly in North Carolina, that sometimes they're
25 required to go through the core for certain things that just

1 don't make sense. Like minor building repairs, road
2 repairs, it causes long waits, and it leads to substandard
3 conditions for our troops, unfortunately.

4 So, if confirmed, would you be willing to look at such
5 policies -- and I've heard these policies referred to by my
6 colleagues on both sides of the aisle a few moments ago.
7 I've heard them called black holes, red tape, bureaucratic
8 nightmares. But would you take a look at these policies and
9 potentially grant more authorities to local personnel to
10 work on their own infrastructure?

11 Mr. Telle: Senator Budd, thank you for the question.
12 You've addressed a problem that is one that is of critical
13 importance for our nation, for our competitiveness, which
14 has to do with permitting and making sure that we're --
15 making sure that we're streamlining the permitting process
16 to ensure that interested parties, both in the economy and
17 national security and defense related interests are able to
18 do the work that they need to do to complete their missions.

19 We have a patchwork of permitting requirements at the
20 federal level that is confusing. We need to be taking
21 processes that are currently being performed in series -- a
22 process doesn't move to the next desk until the first desk
23 that completes the work on it. We need to be doing those
24 things in parallel instead of in series to deliver results
25 to the public.

1 We need to be transparent about what the holdups are.
2 We need to be communicating with stakeholders across the
3 board in a very clear way, even if it's not the answer that
4 they want to hear so that they can do what's necessary to
5 move progress forward, both with regard to our economy and
6 national security.

7 Senator Budd: I want to continue on. The Army Corps
8 has played a huge role in the cleanup from Hurricane Helene
9 in Western North Carolina. You're very familiar with that,
10 so I appreciate your addressing it. But will you commit to
11 furthering the Army Corps's role in helping communities
12 recover from natural disasters and specifically for North
13 Carolina and Hurricane Helene?

14 Mr. Telle: Senator Budd, absolutely. And as you
15 acknowledged, this is a project that is of critical
16 importance to Western North Carolina, but also East
17 Tennessee and other surrounding areas, South Carolina, West
18 Virginia, Southwest Virginia. This storm affected a large
19 swath of the country. It devastated communities with floods
20 that they couldn't even believe were occurring.

21 And of course, the Corps of Engineers' primary
22 responsibility under the National Response Framework is
23 debris removal, which wound up being a huge issue as plant
24 matter, vegetation, and personal property were washed into
25 the waterways further exacerbating the problem. And I'm

1 pleased to say that the Corps of Engineers was one of the
2 first federal agencies on the scene.

3 I'm disappointed to say that other federal agencies
4 were not as responsive as the people of North Carolina
5 deserve. And I look forward to working with you in every
6 way possible to make sure that they recover from this
7 disaster.

8 Senator Budd: I look forward to working together to
9 get Western North Carolina back on its feet. Thank you.

10 Mr. Telle: Senator, you've done an incredible job
11 being there on the ground. We've noticed it. Senator
12 Hagerty's been in with you as well. Thank you for your
13 attention to this.

14 Senator Budd: And we'll continue. Thank you. Mr.
15 Anderson, thanks again for being here, and congrats on your
16 nomination. You know, as artificial intelligence becomes
17 more common and unmanned collaborative combat aircraft makes
18 its way into the force structure, do you see the Air Force
19 manpower requirements changing in the coming years?

20 Colonel Anderson: Thank you for the question, Senator.
21 As we develop new capabilities and new platforms, obviously
22 we will require a new generation of airmen and guardians in
23 order to operate, maintain those systems. And so, yes, I do
24 see an increase in manpower requirement. If confirmed, my
25 intention is to get on the inside of this very vigorously

1 and try to lead turn, and to work with this committee.

2 Senator Budd: Thank you very much. Dr. Napoli, since
3 9/11, the United States has made great strides in preventing
4 terrorists from gaining nuclear material that could be used
5 in an attack against the United States. However, the threat
6 still exists, and I'm concerned that as we focus on great
7 power competition, that we let the pressure off of these
8 terrorist organizations from gaining access to nuclear
9 material. So, if confirmed, how, how are you going to
10 address this challenge?

11 Dr. Napoli: Thank you, Senator. Nonstate actors
12 seeking nuclear and radiological weapons and the associated
13 technologies for those weapons is of the utmost importance.
14 There is an incredible team at the Office of Defense Nuclear
15 Nonproliferation, both here in Washington, and spread
16 throughout the laboratories and field offices that are
17 addressing this specific issue.

18 I've not been read into all the details that are, you
19 know, the tools and tool sets that we have at our disposal
20 to address that issue, but if so fortunate to be confirmed,
21 I look forward to addressing that issue with the utmost
22 urgency.

23 Senator Budd: Thank you very much. Chairman.

24 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Budd. Mr. Telle,
25 I hope once you take office, you'll give advice to the

1 Congress about what legislation you need to remove these
2 bureaucratic roadblocks.

3 Mr. Telle: Senator Wicker, I look forward to doing
4 that. It's critically important to our nation.

5 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Senator Kaine.

6 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
7 Congratulations to our nominees. Mr. Telle, I really
8 appreciated our visit about the work done by the Corps in
9 Virginia and everywhere. I look forward to working with
10 you. Mr. Anderson, congratulations to you. I don't know
11 that all my colleagues know that Mr. Anderson was a longtime
12 member of the Virginia General Assembly, and I appreciate
13 that service in addition to your military service.

14 And Dr. Napoli, I'm going to spend my time on you and
15 actually talk about a past job, not your current job. In
16 your past or your current position, not the one to which
17 you've been nominated. You've been very involved in AUKUS.
18 I have been very involved in the AUKUS framework as a member
19 of both the Armed Services Committee and the Foreign
20 Relations Committee.

21 The position to which you are nominated deals with
22 nuclear nonproliferation, and that's a different matter than
23 helping Australia develop a capacity to use Virginia class
24 subs and eventually build their own subs. So, I want to
25 draw a line between those two issues. But having you before

1 us gives me the opportunity just to ask you your kind of
2 perception of how AUKUS is going. I've been a big supporter
3 of both Pillar one and the need to, you know, find important
4 innovative projects.

5 We can work together with Australia and UK on Pillar
6 Two. You've been given awards within the Pentagon for your
7 work on AUKUS and I applaud you for that. But talk a little
8 bit about your assessment of AUKUS, where it is right now as
9 you get ready to transition into a potentially different
10 role.

11 Dr. Napoli: Senator, I appreciate the question. And
12 thank you for the recognition of my work with Australia and
13 the United Kingdom to date. The AUKUS agreement provides a
14 new and unique element of our defense cooperation with
15 Australia. I was fortunate enough to be involved at the
16 ground level, as that agreement took shape and also passing
17 forth the Atomic Energy Act, section 123 agreement here with
18 this body in Congress as well.

19 The cooperation with Australia provides new asymmetric
20 advantages in naval warfare in the region for one of our
21 closest allies. I applaud Australia's efforts to date to
22 invest both you know, most importantly the people into this
23 endeavor. And I have also had a personal role, if I tie the
24 nonproliferation effort and the AUKUS effort together,
25 because I believe they're inextricably linked.

1 I have worked with the IAEA to date to ensure that
2 we're upholding very high nonproliferation standards as
3 Australia seeks a conventionally armed nuclear-powered
4 submarine. I'll have a different role moving into the
5 Office of Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, but I know that
6 the team in the Department of Defense is well equipped to
7 continue along with the AUKUS endeavor.

8 Senator Kaine: I'm a huge fan of this framework in the
9 need to focus on the Indo-Pacific. We don't have, you know,
10 the 70 years of a NATO in the Indo-Pacific and what we need
11 to rely on is a more layered set of relationships, some
12 bilateral, some multilateral to promote deterrence and
13 stability. I view this as a positive one.

14 I want to thank both the Chair and the Ranking. The
15 AUKUS framework had to originally go through the foreign
16 relations committee because of jurisdictional issues, but
17 then the leadership here worked very, very hard to kind of
18 take that work product and bolted onto an NDAA. And they've
19 been very supportive of it.

20 I think going forward, you know, the two challenges
21 that we have are, one, making sure that we can produce the
22 Virginia Class subs called for in Pillar One in a timely
23 fashion, when we're having challenges meeting our own needs,
24 how do we meet both our needs in the commitments that we've
25 made to Australia? They've invested in us. We need to meet

1 those commitments to show the world that we're good on the
2 commitments we make.

3 But then on Pillar Two, which is very open-ended, which
4 is great, we probably need to define a finite number of
5 deliverables where we can really achieve something. And
6 then once we achieve those, we can look at more. So, I
7 think there's a lot of work to be done, but the fact that
8 you were in on the ground floor and that you have helped get
9 this off to a positive start is something I commend. And I
10 also commend Senators Wicker and Reed for being such strong
11 champions of it. And with that, I yield back.

12 Chairman Wicker: Thank you. Thank you. That
13 concludes our questioning. Colonel Anderson when were you
14 at Little Rock?

15 Colonel Anderson: Sir, I was in Little Rock from '79
16 to '84, and for the record, that is the base where I met my
17 wife.

18 Chairman Wicker: Let's hear it for Little Rock. Also,
19 I read as a teen, you were member of the Civil Air Patrol.
20 Is that correct?

21 Colonel Anderson: Correct. I was.

22 Chairman Wicker: I think that's a valuable citizenship
23 builder and a little-known asset for our young people. Do
24 you agree?

25 Colonel Anderson: I would absolutely agree, Senator.

1 I joined the Civil Air Patrol in Southwest Virginia, in
2 Roanoke at the tender age of 13, and it set the predicate
3 for a 30-year Air Force career, followed by a career in the
4 Virginia General Assembly, and followed by this opportunity,
5 should I be confirmed? And so, absolutely, yes.

6 I also know, Senator, that you have been a big
7 supporter for Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. It is
8 also an equally invaluable program. And those two programs
9 are mutually supportive. And I think we must do all we can
10 to support them.

11 Chairman Wicker: And this committee and this congress
12 has told the Pentagon that we need to do more in that
13 regard, and we intend for that to be enforced.

14 So, I want to thank all the witnesses. For the
15 information of members, questions for the record will be due
16 to the committee within two business days of the conclusion
17 of this hearing. And with that, we are adjourned.

18 [Whereupon, at 11:26 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]
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