

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JIM INHOFE  
RANKING MEMBER, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ROOM SD-G50  
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING**

**Thursday, February 17, 2022**

*To conduct a confirmation hearing on the nominations of Honorable Franklin R. Parker to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Dr. Agnes G. Schaefer to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Dr. Ravi I. Chaudhary to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy, Installations, and the Environment; and Mr. Frank Calvelli to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force*

*(As prepared for delivery)*

*Thank you, Chairman Reed, and thanks to our witnesses for being with us and for their willingness to serve the nation.*

*Our nation's top military and intelligence leaders have told this committee that the world is more dangerous than at any point in our lifetimes. Just look at what Russia is doing to Ukraine right now.*

*The 2018 National Defense Strategy provides a roadmap to deal with these security challenges — and this must continue to be our priority. We have quite a few challenges in the areas you would oversee, if confirmed.*

*Dr. Chaudhary, you've been nominated to oversee the Air Force's infrastructure.*

*Your commentary over the last several years has focused on extremism in the military. I don't disagree that we don't want any extremists in our military. When we find them, we must act swiftly to remove them from the ranks.*

*But at the same time, this isn't a systemic problem. The Countering Extremist Activity Working Group recently found that "fewer than 100" service members engaged in extremist behavior over the last year.*

*So when our leaders, or people nominated to serve as leaders, like yourself, call our service members extremists — and the vast majority of them aren't — I get worried about the message you're sending to the people you would be there to lead. So I would like to discuss this more with you today.*

*Mr. Calvelli, you are nominated to be the first Space Service Acquisition Executive. Congress created this job over two years ago when we established the Space Force to protect space as a new warfighting domain.*

*We know China and Russia are also making space a priority, so I'm interested to hear what you'll do to make sure our Guardians and the Joint Force have the tools they need to defend our interests in space.*

*Dr. Schaefer and Mr. Parker, you would be responsible for the readiness and well-being of our military personnel in the Army and Navy. Nothing is more important, and I look forward to hearing how you'll support our troops, if confirmed.*

*We look forward to hearing each of your views on these and other important issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.*

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