

Opening Statement

Nomination of Matt Lohmeier to be Under Secretary of the Air Force Senate Armed Services Committee Confirmation Hearing April 8, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of this Committee, for considering my nomination to be the Under Secretary of the Department of the Air Force. I'm grateful for the opportunity, and for the trust of President Trump.

To the many troops—men and women, both uniformed and civilian—who have expressed overwhelming support for me: thank you. To those here or who may be listening who have served or who presently serve: you have my gratitude.

I wish to acknowledge and thank my friends and family for their support, some of whom are here today. I'd especially like to acknowledge and thank my wife Sara, who is here with me today. What a blessing it is for a man who personally cares deeply about the Air Force core values of Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do, to live with a wife who likewise believes in and embodies those values. Furthermore, she, more than anyone else, knows that I strive to be a man of integrity, and that I hope to inspire others to live in that same spirit.

The Under Secretary of the Air Force is, by law, the Chief Management Officer of the Department of the Air Force. My breadth of experience serving in *both* the Air and Space Forces makes me uniquely qualified for the job at this pivotal time in American history.

Even before receiving my commission, while still a cadet at the United States Air Force Academy twenty years ago, I participated in a special exchange program to China that we no longer have. The United States government sent a small contingent of Mandarin-speaking Air Force cadets to the People's Liberation Army Air Force Academy in ChangChun, China (it's north of North Korea). For a brief, cold stint in March of 2005, I lived in the dorms with PLA cadets, attended their classes, did PT with those cadets in the snow, ate in their chow hall, and was wittingly placed on a losing basketball team so that they could film our crushing defeat in front of their entire cadet body, no doubt for distribution in the state media.

Later, after graduating and receiving a commission from the Air Force Academy, I finished pilot training and became a T-38 instructor pilot, where I taught future fighter pilots for both the United States and our foreign mission partners. I then flew F-15Cs out of Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan. That assignment served as yet another reminder to me of the threat posed by China to our allies and

strategic partners, as well as to our own economic prosperity and military interests at home and abroad.

I am keenly aware of that threat, and I understand the need for ready air and space forces, well-trained and equipped to meet the China challenge, to deter any aggression and—if needed—to defeat it.

Following my time in the cockpit, I transferred to what was then Air Force Space Command and provided strategic and theater missile warning for the United States and our allies. When the Space Force was subsequently created, I was entrusted with command of that same mission, leading a combined operation of U.S. and allied partners in control of our nation's \$18 billion space-based missile warning architecture.

I speak the language of the Air Force and the Space Force, I am air-minded and space-minded, and I understand the necessity of United States superiority in *both* of those warfighting domains. Despite my background, however, I've been startled by just how much has changed and developed technologically since I left active duty just shy of 4 years ago. My surprise is evidence of the dynamic and rapidly evolving threat environment mentioned here several weeks ago by Dr. Troy Meink. Combatant Commanders are calling for more air and space power capacity, not less. I'm persuaded that, if confirmed, I must be a strong advocate for a larger and better-funded Department of the Air Force. Every single national security option the President needs is underpinned by air and space power.

The President has nominated me for this important position with the trust that I will be a driving force behind a culture of integrity in the Department of the Air Force. This includes eliminating all unnecessary distractions and enabling military members to focus on their mission. The American people, like me, want nothing less than to enable our Department's men and women to succeed so that our military can—through strength—deter conflict.

Secretary Hegseth has said his priorities include 1) Restoring the Warrior Ethos and a Focus on Warfighting, 2) Rebuilding the Military, and 3) Reestablishing Deterrence. I am firmly aligned with those priorities, and there are unique ways in which they must be accomplished in the Air and Space Forces. If confirmed, all of my efforts will be nested within that framework.

Thank you, again, and I look forward to your questions.