

Shon J. Manasco
Nomination Hearing for Under Secretary of the Air Force
Opening Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee

Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee. I am grateful to be with you again and feel humbled to sit alongside my fellow nominees.

I would like to publicly thank President Trump, Secretary Esper, and Secretary Barrett for the trust and confidence they have placed in me.

I also want to thank my mother Kathryn, my father Benny, my wife Noelle, and my three sons, Gavin, Cade, and Ty. Their love and continued support allows me to serve those in uniform.

I come from a long line of service members, past and present, dating as far back as the Revolutionary War. My worldview was heavily influenced by my grandfathers who fought in WWII.

32 years ago, I too answered the call. A freshman Congressman from Oklahoma's 1st Congressional district took a chance and nominated me to attend the United States Military Academy. So, on a blistering hot day on June 29th 1988, on the parade field of West Point, I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution. Chairman Inhofe, it seems fitting to be before you today to say thank you once again for the chance you afforded me.

As a young Army officer serving at the end of the Cold War, I grew to depend on the Air Force. I needed them to protect my soldiers from threats above while deployed, and to get me over the drop zone on countless training missions. Never once did they fail me.

These past two years I have had the opportunity to serve alongside the roughly 685,000 Air and Space professionals that make up the Department of the Air Force...and I am committed to doing everything I can to not fail them. For the strength of our nation relies in part on the strength of this department ... and the strength of this department lies in the strength of our service members and their families.

I have witnessed their accomplishments first hand, having travelled to more than 50 installations, in 11 countries and on 4 continents ... from Alaska to Antarctica, from Korea to Qatar ... these experiences lead me to conclude we have the finest Air and Space professionals in the world, bar none.

That said, the world has changed since I last sat before this committee in late 2017. From the presence of a new invisible virus, to the awakening of threats posed by

peer adversaries, to the emergence of space as a warfighting domain ... I believe the dangers facing our Nation today are more pervasive than they were yesterday...and the same will hold true for tomorrow.

I firmly believe the Department of the Air Force will be a critical fulcrum in the competitive nexus between the United States and those who wish to do us harm. I am convinced that securing our freedoms in the future will depend on our dominance across the air, cyberspace, and space domains.

This is why the standup of the United States Space Force remains a top priority for the department and for me. We know if we lose in space, we lose.

If confirmed, I will work with Congress and our sister services to ensure we develop ready and modern Air and Space Forces, capable of confronting the complex global security landscape, both today and tomorrow.

In sum, throughout my professional career I have done everything possible to be true to the oath I swore 32 years ago. From wearing the uniform as a young military officer to being a senior executive in private industry, I have been privileged to lead high performing and innovative professionals through times of change.

And ultimately, I know this is a team sport. Regardless of whatever the future may hold for me, it has been an honor of a lifetime to be a member of this team. I look forward to answering your questions.