

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON THE NOMINATION OF

Vice Admiral Richard A. Correll, USN

Opening Statement

24 October 2025

Good morning, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee. It's truly an honor to appear before you today as a nominee to be the next Commander of U.S. Strategic Command. I am very grateful to the President, Secretary Hegseth, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for their trust and confidence in me for this nomination. I would like to recognize the current Commander of U.S. Strategic Command Gen Cotton and his wife Marsha, for their 40 years of selfless service to this great nation and publicly express my gratitude to Gen Cotton for his mentorship to me over the past three years as I've served as his Deputy Commander.

Joining me today is my wife, Samantha, my best friend and life-partner for over 34 years. Service is in her DNA. Born and raised in Bremerton, Washington, home to one of our Navy's largest and most capable shipyard's, her grandfather, grandmother, father, brother, and multiple relatives have worked in the Bremerton shipyard, repairing and maintaining our Navy's front line combatants for generations, a tradition that continues

today. A University of Maryland Graduate and former Accountant, Samantha is a remarkable advocate for our military men and women and their families. She is an incredible source of strength and inspiration for me and our family. Not with us today, but always in our hearts are our three children, Mikayla, Ryan, and Sydney who, after completing college, are pursuing their passions. I'm so proud of our children for the paths that they have taken.

I'd be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank my father, who also served our nation as a Submarine sailor, retiring as a Navy Chief Yeoman after 22 years of service. A few years back, I had the privilege of scattering his ashes at sea, per his wishes, from the bridge of the Virginia Class Submarine, USS NORTH CAROLINA, off the coast of Norfolk, Virginia. I know he is looking down with great pride on these proceedings. My Mom, Patricia, who is soon to be 88, is watching us from her home in Mishawaka, Indiana. Growing up, she was the center of gravity for me, my brother and sister, instilling in each of us the value of hard work and service above self. She is the hardest working and most generous human being I have ever met and continues to inspire me.

Lastly, I want to thank the men and women of U.S. Strategic Command for their continued professionalism and dedication. Their mission focus remains essential to our nation's security. We face the most complex and dynamic security environment in my lifetime, and it is both our conventional and nuclear capabilities, along with crucial support from our allies and partners that underpins our strategic deterrence. Our nation's nuclear forces continue to be safe, secure, effective, and credible.

As we bring the B-21 Raider bomber aircraft, the Columbia class ballistic missile submarine, the Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile weapons system, the long-range standoff weapon, and the Sea Launched Cruise Missile – Nuclear (SLCM-N) online, we will continue to ensure the credibility of deterrence for decades to come. Underpinning all of this is our nuclear command control and communication systems known as NC3. While the current system is secure and resilient, modernization and sustainment of this capability is just as important as the weapon system platforms themselves. If confirmed, I will use my authorities to ensure that NC3 systems continue to outpace the threat, will always build in margin, will always have hedge.

The mission of U.S. Strategic Command is to deter our adversaries, and employ force to guarantee the security of our nation and our allies. If confirmed, I will work with relevant agencies across the U.S. government and within the Department, collaborate closely with civilian leaders, and directly with my fellow combatant Commanders as we monitor the global threats and execute operations in accordance with the national defense strategy. I commit to commanding a resilient joint force capable of conducting multi-domain operations focused on deterring aggression, and if necessary, defending this nation.

I look forward to working with Congress and the members of this Committee to address the strategic challenges of our great nation.

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of this Committee, it is an honor to sit before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.