

## **Opening Statement: Mr. Ditlevson's Confirmation**

**SASC**

**February 26, 2026**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary of War for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs. I would like to thank my family for being here today, especially my wife. Her love and support are the foundation of everything I do.

My entire adult life has been a commitment to serving this great nation, a calling that began on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The tragic attacks of that day profoundly impacted my life, and they shaped my understanding of what it means to defend the homeland. I have always believed that meaningful service is found in confronting the most difficult challenges, and I have deliberately sought out those roles throughout my life. After the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, I decided to apply to the United States

Naval Academy with the goal of becoming a military officer. After witnessing the horrific effects of improvised explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan, I decided to select Explosive Ordnance Disposal as my occupation with the goal of saving American lives.

Now with the many threats facing our nation, I am seeking confirmation to lead one of the Department's most challenging portfolios. The prospect of serving as an Assistant Secretary in President Trump's second term would be the highest honor of my professional life and an opportunity to continue advancing the President's vision for a strong and secure America. I am grateful for the trust President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have placed in me.

This administration has a clear and decisive vision for the defense of our nation, a vision laid out in our core strategic documents. Our approach is one of hard-nosed realism, grounded in deterrence, focused on securing our homeland by bolstering security at our borders, dismantling

narco-terrorists networks, deterring adversary threats, and restoring law and order in our cities.

The 2026 National Defense Strategy establishes an undeniable truth: a secure and sovereign homeland is the absolute prerequisite for projecting American power globally and deterring our adversaries. This is not a choice between domestic security and our foreign policy; one enables the other.

We will defend the United States and ensure the Western Hemisphere remains a bastion of stability. This mission is fundamental to the safety and security of the American people. If confirmed, I pledge to continue this vital work with the urgency and seriousness it demands.

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the Committee, the threats facing our nation are complex and demand a determined response. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly to execute this vision of a secure homeland and a stable hemisphere. I understand the critical statutory requirement to consult with this Committee, and I pledge to maintain an open and honest relationship with you.

Thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to answering your questions.