

Opening Statement: SASC Confirmation Hearing (ASA M&RA)

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Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you here today as President Trump's nominee for the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I am grateful to the President, Secretary Hegseth, and Secretary Driscoll for their confidence and the opportunity to serve.

My family and I owe the U.S. Military an enormous debt. Like many Americans, military service brought us into the middle class, provided us an education, and gave us a sense of purpose. My grandfather, "Sugar", was raised on a farm in Louisiana. He went on to serve in the Merchant Marine during World War II, as a Non-Commissioned Officer in the Marine Corps during Korea, and as an Air Force Air Traffic Controller. My Father, "Sonny", flew C-130s and served as a foreign area officer for 20 years in the United States Air Force.

I commissioned into the Army through ROTC at the College of William and Mary, and I have had the privilege of serving as a Strategist and Military Intelligence Officer on and off active duty over the past 17 years. I have deployed to Afghanistan four times with a Joint Special Operations Task Force, once as a Soldier, and three times as a civilian intelligence officer.

During one of these deployments, I met my wife, Elizabeth, yet another thing I owe the military. She has given me five beautiful children, Henry, Charlotte, Victoria, Augustine, and George, and I am hopeful that at least one of them will continue our family tradition.

Perhaps more than any other Service, the Army is a people business. And while it is very important that we become a customer of choice for industry, it is equally important that we become an employer of choice for the young men and women of the United States.

I believe that the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs should be laser focused on this task. We are in a war for talent, and it is a war of great consequence.

To win this contest we must engage in a process of continuous improvement. Our Soldiers, Civilians, and their families deserve world class services and talent management practices. The Army must continue to modernize its mechanisms for recruiting and hiring personnel, better match talents with assignments, and continue to improve support for military families, spouses, and children.

At the same time, the Army must also prioritize the modernization of its training to reflect modern battlefields and new generations of threats, its practices for building and sustaining readiness, and prepare to conduct a national mobilization if our deterrence ever fails.

If confirmed, I commit to working to improve talent management within the Army, quality of life and quality of service for our Soldiers and Civilians, and to preparing the Army to adapt to the changing character of war.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.