

**Opening Statement of Vice Admiral Scott Pappano**  
**Nominee for Principal Deputy Administrator of the National Nuclear Security**  
**Administration at the U.S. Department of Energy**  
**Before the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services**  
**April 29, 2025**

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of the committee, thank for your consideration of my nomination to be the Principal Deputy Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) at the U.S. Department of Energy. Since first taking the Oath of Office in July of 1985, I have devoted my entire adult life to serving our nation as a commissioned officer in the Navy, and I thank President Trump and Energy Secretary Wright for affording me the opportunity to shift course and continue my public service in a greater and more impactful capacity. I also need to thank my wife of 34 years – Kate – for joining me here today and for her service to the nation as commander-in-chief of the Pappano household. Nothing I have achieved would have been possible without her love and support, and her commitment to raising our children throughout my frequent absences is a testament to her strength and resilience – we are both proud of the adults our children have grown up to be.

Foundational qualifications to serve as Principal Deputy Administrator of NNSA include an extensive background in organizational management and being well-qualified to manage nuclear weapons, infrastructure construction and maintenance, non-proliferation, and material disposition programs in a manner to enhance and protect U.S. national security through the military application of nuclear energy. I believe that, if confirmed, my background, experience, and expertise would be well-suited to execute the duties of this office. I also believe deeply in the mission – strategic nuclear deterrence is fundamental to our national security and modernizing our nation’s nuclear weapons stockpile, nuclear forces, and supporting infrastructure is a critical national security priority.

My qualifications are founded upon the bedrock of a strong technical education with an undergraduate degree in marine engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy and a graduate degree in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Both my education and leadership were honed across a 36-year career as a nuclear submarine officer and military acquisition professional. I have humbly led exceptional teams at all levels with the understanding that my calling was to make the people around me more effective and achieve greater outcomes than they otherwise could have achieved by empowering them, building esprit de corps, fostering deep technical competence, and identifying and removing barriers to their success. As a submarine line officer, I completed sea rotations on five submarines across all classes, culminating in command of a nuclear attack submarine. I also served as a Military Assistant for an Assistant Secretary of Defense charged with both strategic nuclear deterrence

and non-proliferation policy. As a military acquisition professional, I served as major program manager for lifecycle sustainment of operational strategic and attack submarines, oversaw research and development activities of the Naval Undersea Warfare Center labs, established a program executive office to focus on cradle-to-grave lifecycle activities for all nuclear strategic ballistic missile submarines, and eventually served as Principal Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy charged with overseeing the procurement and sustainment of all Navy and Marine Corps weapon systems.

This has all led me to this unique moment in time where, if confirmed, my expertise and experience would align with the leadership necessary for NNSA to overcome generational challenges and deliver programs of record to meet national security needs. I understand the complexity of the threats and the critical importance of the NNSA mission. I have a deep understanding of Naval nuclear propulsion – from construction and testing, through operations, lifecycle sustainment, and eventual decommissioning. I oversaw the recapitalization of our sea-based strategic nuclear deterrent and worked closely with other stakeholders engaged in nuclear modernization efforts to include STRATCOM, Strategic Systems Programs, the United Kingdom Dreadnought Alliance, and other legs of the U.S. Nuclear Triad. I supervised contract performance at our nuclear shipbuilders and led the stand-up of a Navy industrial base team to spearhead data-driven assessment of the submarine supply chain and collaboration across the U.S. Department of Defense and Congress to target industrial base investment in critical infrastructure, supply chain capacity and resilience, manufacturing technology, and workforce attraction, recruitment, training, and retention.

I believe that, if confirmed, the lessons I have learned on my Navy journey would translate well to the NNSA journey that must ultimately modernize the nuclear stockpile and supporting infrastructure – without disrupting production activities – to ensure the nation maintains a safe, secure, reliable, and credible strategic nuclear deterrent.

I understand this is a no fail mission. I am honored and humbled to be considered for this nomination, and I look forward to answering your questions.