

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, good morning. I want to thank President Trump for nominating me for this position and Secretary Hegseth and Deputy Secretary Feinberg for their support. I am honored to be here today. Thank you, Senator Rounds, for your kind introduction, and my sincere thanks to the committee members for taking the time to meet with me during my preparation for this hearing.

I am deeply humbled to be nominated as the second Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber Policy. President Trump's strategy of Peace through Strength requires a cyber force capable of defending the homeland, deterring China, and strengthening burden-sharing with Allies and partners. For more than two decades, I have been focused on safeguarding our networks, protecting our information and data, and defending our Nation.

Before I proceed, I would like to take a moment to recognize my family who is here with me today. Family is the cornerstone of my life, and their presence here speaks to the love and support they provide. My in-laws, Steve and Betsy Mills, traveled from St Louis to be here and have always welcomed me as part of their family. My parents, Steve and Stephanie Sutton, are also here and have been my greatest supporters. I would like to thank them for their unwavering love and their profound influence in shaping who I am today.

My husband, Rob Mills, who has been my steadfast partner through all of life's adventures, is also here by my side. Rob is a hardware engineer who has spent his career supporting national security programs, and working to make our country more secure. I would not be where I am today without his constant support and partnership.

While I began my professional career as an electrical engineer at Sandia National Laboratories, it was my parents, small business owners of a cyber security company, who inspired my passion for technology and instilled in me a sense of dedication, commitment, and service—and the importance of secure computing.

Over the last 20 years, I have held a variety of technical and leadership roles across high-impact national security programs in nuclear weapons, space, and cyber that have prepared me well to execute the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber Policy. I have successfully delivered programs, led multidisciplinary teams, and advised on key research and development programs. Through these roles, I developed a strong foundation and honed my abilities to manage complex government programs, engage stakeholders, and integrate strategic planning with technical innovation, all of which were crucial in driving coordinated policy initiatives with nationwide strategic impact.

The cyber domain is complex and fast-developing, requiring us to stay ahead of our adversaries, especially when faced with the threats posed by nations like China. China's growing cyber capabilities and its ongoing attempts to target our infrastructure underscore the critical importance of bolstering our own cyber capabilities. Although the United States has made significant strides in cybersecurity, we must act with urgency to accelerate the development

and integration of new technologies and advanced capabilities, like Artificial Intelligence, that will ensure our continued cyber superiority.

Throughout my career, I have consistently prioritized the support of our warfighters – ensuring they have the technologies and resources to succeed in their missions. From my early work on critical nuclear weapons and satellite systems at Sandia, to the policy and legislation I shaped and championed as a professional staff member in both the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, and most recently as the Chief Technology Advisor to the Commander of U.S. Cyber Command, I have been committed to providing our military with the best tools available.

I believe the key to success in the cyber domain is a combination of talent, technology, and agility. A lesson I learned throughout my professional experience, and in particular at U.S. Cyber Command, is that when our talented civilians and uniformed service members have the right training and tools, they are able to accomplish great things. Success is driven by our warfighters rapidly adopting technology and operationalizing new capabilities.

Secretary Hegseth has made it clear that the Department of Defense must act with confidence and decisive action to reestablish deterrence and defend our homeland. I have taken that guidance to heart and, if confirmed, will work across the Department to eliminate barriers and accelerate opportunities in cyberspace. As technology continues to rapidly evolve, we must remain agile and adapt to the changing environment. Our cyber forces must be well-trained, ready, and equipped to excel in this dynamic landscape.

In closing, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and this committee to ensure the Department remains supported and resourced to execute our strategies in cyberspace, deter our adversaries, and defend the homeland.

I look forward to your questions.

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