

Opening Statement for CSAF Confirmation Hearing

Thank you and Good Morning.

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, it's an honor to appear before you today and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with you. I look forward to our discussions in the hours ahead. More importantly, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with each of you, and with your colleagues in both the Senate and the House, to advance the strength and readiness of our Air Force.

I am incredibly grateful to President Trump for the trust and confidence he has placed in me with this nomination to serve as the next Chief of Staff of the Air Force. I recognize the enormous responsibility that comes with this position, especially in today's global security environment. If confirmed, I pledge to give my all to successfully fulfill the duties of the office **on behalf of the American people**.

Our nation relies on its Air Force to deliver air superiority, nuclear and conventional global strike, rapid mobility, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. These are no-fail missions. They are critical to our national security, particularly in an increasingly dangerous world. While peace is always our goal, it must be preserved through strength – with a military so capable, lethal, and decisive that no adversary would choose to challenge us.

If confirmed, I see two priorities as central to ensuring that strength: **readiness** and modernization. The most important thing we do is fly and fix aircraft, and we must field new capabilities as rapidly as possible. I believe empowering command teams to hold themselves and their Airmen to the highest warrior standards is the key to success. I would like to share a bit about myself and my family. I have served in the Air Force for nearly 40 years, since I graduated from college. My wife, Cindy, who is seated behind me, has been my partner through every step of this journey. She has worked full-time throughout my career, while also dedicating countless hours to supporting military families. Her compassion, leadership, and care have touched the lives of so many Airmen, spouses, and children. I know I would not be here today without our shared faith and Cindy's selfless service and sacrifice. In many ways, she has served the Air Force every bit as much as I have.

Service runs deep in both of our families. Cindy's father was a career National Guardsman from Florida. My grandfathers fought in the Pacific during World War II - one as a Marine and the other as a Navy

submariner. My father was a career Navy pilot, and my uncles graduated from West Point were career Army officers. So, when it came time for me to choose my service, I joined the Air Force to round out our truly joint family. And, in case any of you were wondering, we are still working on our contribution to the Space Force. I am thankful for my family's legacy of service to our nation, as well as their love and support throughout my entire career.

I will close with this: Cindy and I had planned to retire this year to our home state of Florida and begin the next chapter of our lives. But then I received a call to continue my service. After much reflection and prayer, I said yes - because I love our Air Force, and I love our country. My greatest motivation remains supporting Airmen and especially those young, enlisted men and women who do the hard work every day like manning missile silos, guarding flightlines, turning wrenches, flying on the leading edge, and carrying out the many demanding duties that keep our Air Force strong. I am humbled by the opportunity to continue serving our great nation. Thank you for your time today and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.