

STATEMENT OF LOUIS W. BREMER
NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
SPECIAL OPERATIONS / LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT
BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

CLEARED
For Open Publication

Aug 03, 2020

Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

Senator Blumenthal, thank you for those kind words and for your unwavering support of our military.

Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished Members of this Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict.

I want to thank the President and the Secretary of Defense for this opportunity. If confirmed, it will be my highest professional honor to again serve alongside the most capable and honorable fighting force in the world.

I would like to begin by recognizing my amazing wife, Brooke, and son, Will, who are watching from a location nearby. Their unconditional love and support makes this all possible. To my son—if I am confirmed, the long hours and our time apart will be the hardest on you. For that, I thank you. I couldn't be more proud of you.

I also would like to thank my brother, Steve, my sister, Tammy, my extended family, and countless friends and mentors whose counsel and support throughout my career have been invaluable.

Most of all I would like to thank my parents, Lou and Carol Bremer. They are watching from my hometown of Bossier City in the great state of Louisiana.

Because of their sacrifice, I have lived the American dream. My Mom was a West Virginia coalminer's daughter. She grew up in a "holler" with no running water. My Dad enlisted in the Air Force at 17 and served for 20 years. They taught me the importance of faith, hard work, and love of country. Mom and Dad – thank you, and I love you.

The national security challenges we face are complex and rapidly evolving. The rise of great power competition with China and Russia has dramatically increased the stakes of the game, and the myriad threats we face from rogue regimes and non-state actors persist. The consequence of failing to deter great powers is the potential for total war. This is the challenge of our lifetimes.

The National Defense Strategy articulates a sober assessment of these threats and a path forward to address them. I am encouraged by the alignment of the Congress and the Department behind the NDS. I support it without reservation.

Since 9/11, U.S. Special Operations Command has led our global fight against terrorism. In so doing, they have perfected their craft. They are unmatched globally, lethal and agile. The return on investment for the U.S. taxpayer has been immeasurable.

Our battlefield primacy has caused our terrorist adversaries to adapt. They are networked and distributed. They leverage technology to recruit and radicalize sympathizers to launch attacks from outside and inside our borders. Denying safe haven is no longer a fait accompli for securing the homeland.

China and Russia seek to undermine our competitive advantages by investing heavily in asymmetric capabilities in the realms of disinformation, cyber, space, hypersonics, and undersea. They challenge us in the gray zone between competition and conflict, often using proxies to do their bidding—while also building their conventional capabilities.

While SOCOM will always lead in counterterrorism, it has a critical role to play under the NDS. This requires a concerted, long-term investment in how we organize, train and equip the force. Building on the decades-long focus on counterterrorism to also address emergent threats posed by great powers is the principal challenge facing U.S. Special Operations Command. It is not a transition from one to the other, but an *adaptation* to confront both. Under the leadership of General Clarke and his predecessors, this process is well underway. If confirmed, it will be my top priority.

SOF must dominate in the gray space through the instruments of irregular warfare to erode our adversaries' power and influence. We must invest smartly in revolutionary technologies – artificial intelligence, unmanned systems, 5G, and others. And we must be a global leader in the information domain.

And it's critical that we safeguard the well-being of the force and their families. The last two decades have put them under tremendous strain. Taking care of our people is non-negotiable.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.