

## **MARCH 1 – LTG NAKASONE – OPENING REMARKS**

Senator Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today regarding my nomination as Commander, U.S. Cyber Command and Director of the National Security Agency.

I want to thank President Trump, Secretary Mattis, and General Dunford for their confidence in nominating me for these important positions.

Let me also thank my wife Susan for being here. I owe much of my success to her love and support throughout nearly 25 years of marriage, 19 moves, and numerous deployments. Susan and I are joined today by our children Sarah, David, and Joseph. Our oldest son Daniel could not be here today because of mid-terms at University of Virginia. We are exceptionally proud of each of them.

I want to thank Admiral Michael Rogers for his 36 years of commissioned service to our Nation. Admiral Rogers has led Cyber Command and the NSA during a time of incredible transformation and rapid growth. I thank him and his wife Dana for all they have done in service to our Nation.

For the past ten years, I have had the privilege to lead, plan, and execute Joint and Army cyberspace operations supporting national, Combatant Command, and Service missions. In this decade I have seen incredible growth in cyber capacity and capabilities within the Department of Defense. From the stand up of our cyber mission force to the daily operations conducted by Joint Task Force ARES, we are rapidly maturing our cyber forces.

When I first started working cyber, operations were often just concepts, and when conducted, performed ad-hoc by technical specialists on loan from other organizations. Today that is not the case. Now, a mature and highly-capable Cyber force is built and in the fight, aggressively defending our network, conducting daily operations against adversaries, and strengthening the combat power and lethality of U.S. forces around the world.

This swift growth represents tremendous opportunity, and if confirmed I plan to continue this impressive progress.

But I've also seen cyber threats to our Nation grow exponentially—and adapt just as rapidly. From adversaries conducting exploitation of our networks, to the harnessing of social media platforms for false messaging, to targeting our elections, to destructive attacks, the Department and our Nation face significant challenges in this ever-changing domain.

These challenges have taught me several important lessons over this past decade.

First, that operating and aggressively defending our networks is a foundational mission. Our network is our weapons platform.

Second, I've learned that we need to impose costs on our adversaries to ensure mission success by persistent delivery of cyberspace effects in defense of our Nation and in support of our combat forces.

Third, I've learned that defending the Nation in cyberspace is a team effort, requiring a whole-of-nation approach—government, military, industry, and academia—as well as international coalition partnerships.

The fourth and most important of these cornerstones, I have learned that while technology drives change in cyberspace, it's the people -- the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and civilians -- who guarantee our success. Our people demand and deserve the best leadership, training, and equipment to do their mission.

I recognize that Cyber Command and the NSA are two unique and vital organizations, with their own identities, authorities, and oversight mechanisms. I am committed to leading both with vision, drive, and purpose for the future. Cyberspace is dynamic, and adaptive approaches are always needed to solve the new challenges constantly emerging.

Finally, I sit before you today with the understanding that we are at a defining time for our Nation and our military. Near-peer competitors are posturing themselves, and threats to the United States' global advantage are growing – nowhere is this challenge more manifest than in cyberspace.

With this in mind, if confirmed to lead U.S. Cyber Command and NSA, I will ensure our military commanders and national decision makers can call upon an aggressive and globally-dominant cyber force with the capability and capacity to defend us at home and apply pressure on our adversaries abroad.

In closing, I am deeply honored to be considered for these leadership positions. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee and the entire Congress to ensure we leverage our opportunities and also address our challenges. Senator Inhofe, thank you for the opportunity to be here this morning. I look forward to answering your questions.