

Opening Statement – James R. Caggy, Nominee for ASW(MC)

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of War for Mission Capabilities, and I am deeply grateful for the confidence President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have placed in me. This is a humbling moment, and I appreciate your consideration of my nomination.

I have spent my career at the intersection of technology and national security. I served for over a decade as a US Army infantry officer, including combat deployments in Afghanistan and the Middle East, and those experiences impressed upon me the importance of giving our warfighters every possible advantage. After my military service, I held executive leadership roles in the technology sector, delivering cloud computing, advanced analytics and artificial intelligence capabilities to warfighters. Most recently, I served as a technical advisor in the Office of the Secretary of War Strategic Capabilities Office, where I focused on rapidly prototyping new capabilities for the Joint Force. This blend of frontline military experience and technology leadership over two decades has me excited for the opportunity to lead the Mission Capabilities Office.

We are at a pivotal moment. The United States faces the most complex and challenging security environment since World War II. Advanced technologies are emerging at a breakneck pace, and our competitors, especially China, are investing aggressively to outpace us. As a soldier in combat, I learned firsthand that having superior capabilities can be a matter of life or death for the troops on the ground. As a technologist, I see how cutting-edge innovation, such as artificial intelligence, directed energy weapons, hypersonics and advanced space systems, can transform our military if we can get those innovations out of the lab and into the field quickly. It's about ensuring the Department of War can develop, test, and field the tools our warfighters need **faster** and more effectively than our adversaries.

If confirmed, I will focus on three priorities. **First, accelerating prototyping and delivering new capabilities to our warfighters at speed.** We must shorten the cycle from idea to impact. Success in this area means we won't just innovate in a lab; we will get technology into the field where it can make a difference for the men and women on the front lines. I will push the

Department to remove bureaucratic roadblocks that slow down transitioning proven technologies to the Joint Force, so that warfighters receive state-of-the-art capabilities on timelines measured in months, not years.

Second, we must strengthen our development pipelines and test infrastructure to drive innovation at scale. It's not enough to invent or procure a single new gadget; we need a sustainable system that continually transitions good ideas into fielded capabilities. I intend to work with the Services and Combatant Commands to **increase the number of joint prototyping and experimentation events** over the next year, so we identify and fix problems early and get capabilities into warfighters' hands faster. The metric I care about is speed **with** credibility: how quickly we can prove that a technology works and field it at scale. If confirmed, I'll insist we measure and shorten both timelines, without compromising safety or effectiveness.

Finally, we must strengthen DoW's partnership with the emerging defense-tech sector. Startups have transformative ideas but get stuck in our processes. We need to be a better partner. We must be clear, fast, and predictable so a promising technology becomes a funded pilot in months, not years.

In closing, I am motivated above all by the obligation we have to the men and women who serve in uniform. We ask our warfighters to deter aggression and, if necessary, fight and win our nation's wars. So, we must ensure they have every advantage we can give them. That is what the mission capabilities office is all about: making sure that when our troops go into harm's way, they are the best-equipped and best-prepared fighting force on the planet. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to maintain America's technological edge. I am humbled by the prospect of returning to public service, and I will approach the job with a "mission first, bureaucracy last" mindset every single day.

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of the Committee, thank you again for considering my nomination and for your dedication to our nation's defense. I look forward to answering your questions.