

**Robert F. Behler**  
**Nomination Hearing for**  
**Director of Operational Test and Evaluation**  
**Opening Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee**

Chairman McCain, Senator Reed, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the nominee to serve as the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation for the Department of Defense. I wish to thank President Trump for having confidence in me to serve in this important position, and to Secretary Mattis for supporting my nomination.

Our nation's military advantage originates with our dedicated men and women, but their weapons and equipment are indispensable to our nation's ability to deter aggression and prevail in conflict. These weapons incorporate some of the world's most sophisticated technologies and must be adequately tested to prove they are combat ready in all warfighting domains, including cyberspace.

I have spent my entire career in the areas of national defense, testing, and the engineering and management of complex technical challenges. I have employed weapons systems in combat and have been both a developmental and operational test pilot. And, for the last five years I have been immersed into the technical areas of software engineering and cybersecurity. An experience that is particularly relevant in today's acquisition and testing environment.

I believe it is critical to accelerate the speed of acquisition for our weapon systems to continually deliver competitive advantage to our warfighters. I am convinced that operational test and evaluation adds that necessary insight to allow for timely informed decisions on acquisition and deployment.

From personal experience, I know there are three imperatives in combat: believe in yourself, your fellow warriors and your training, believe in your mission and commanders, and believe in your equipment and weapons. If confirmed, I pledge to provide independent and objective assessments to protect every dollar of the taxpayer investment, and to ensure the equipment and weapons we provide to our warfighters are effectiveness, suitability, and survivability in combat.

Accompanying me today is my wife of over forty years, Colonel Naomi Behler, USAF, Nurse-Corps, retired. Between us, Naomi and I have dedicated 58 years of active military service defending this nation.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of this committee for your time and attention, I look forward to answering your questions.