

**Opening Statement of Dr. Ravi Chaudhary
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
For Energy, Installations, and the Environment**

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of the committee, it is a privilege to join you today in consideration for the role of Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy, Installations, and the Environment. I am humbled by the confidence President Biden, Secretary Austin, and Secretary Kendall have placed in me and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to them.

I would also like to acknowledge my family today for their love and support. Starting with my parents, who are watching from my hometown in Minnesota, my brother and former State Senator Satveer Chaudhary, and my sister Dr. Bala Chaudhary, Professor at Dartmouth University. Like many immigrant families, my parents came to this country over fifty years ago in pursuit of the American dream, and share a remarkable story of patriotism. I'm grateful to my son, Krishan, who is watching from Penn State, and my daughter, Nina, a high school senior and aspiring Aerospace Engineer who is here with us today. Both of you have lived your lives on Air Force installations; and know the challenges military children face, to see a headline on TV, watch dad walk out that door, then hear the roar of jets taking off—followed by endless uncertainty and waiting. You both are my rocks. Of course, I cannot thank my lovely wife and eternal anchor, Uma, enough. Alongside me over decades of service, she shares a deep understanding of life on Air Force installations, as well as the sacrifices military families make when they serve, especially during times of war.

I'm humbled to have the opportunity to continue a career of service, one that began 30 years ago at the Air Force Academy. I spent a little over two decades on active duty, where I led a variety of critical missions-sets as an Air Force pilot and aerospace engineer. From launching the first GPS constellation to leading critical flight tests and combat operations, these missions afforded me the opportunity work at many different installations. I've had the honor of serving in Operational Flying Wings, Training Bases and Test Ranges, Space and Logistics Centers, and of course flying into and out of overseas and forward locations. As a result of these experiences, I gained a deep understanding of the vital role installations play in the readiness of our joint force. My service also brought me to the Pentagon, where I worked on high-level strategy, force posture, budget, and transformation of the Total Force.

Later, I had the privilege of serving as a Senior Executive at the Federal Aviation Administration, where I was responsible for leading a team of Regional Administrators, and a federal workforce of over one-thousand employees. Among my diverse responsibilities, I oversaw the transformation of major federal facilities and airports, including projects that reduced carbon footprint and increase environmental stewardship, and innovate in our nation's space program. My duties required interagency collaboration with the DOD, EPA, Department of Interior, as well as State, Local, and Tribal governments on complex aviation issues ranging from navigation and spaceports to protection of our natural resources. If confirmed, these executive experiences will arm me with the skills to be successful in the Department of the Air Force.

Air and Space Forces deliver combat power from their installations. Consequently, the resiliency of our bases, especially at forward locations, is of utmost importance to military readiness, and execution of the National Defense Strategy. Furthermore, technological advances also mean that we can no longer assume installations are a sanctuary from threats across all domains. Ensuring a resilient, hardened, and dispersed network of installations creates ambiguity

for potential adversaries, complicates targeting, and presents operational dilemmas for those who threaten U.S. national interests. Additionally, extreme weather events and other climate-related effects are adversely impacting installation readiness.

Furthermore, the speed, range, and flexibility of Air and Space power is dependent upon the amount of energy it can supply and sustain. Therefore, the more efficiently the Air Force manages its operational energy, the more effective it will be in delivering effects for combatant commanders.

In closing, perhaps the greatest qualification I have occurred a little over 30 years ago, when I walked up the ramp on my first day at the Air Force Academy—my story is an Airman and Guardian story. On this 75th anniversary year of the Department, you have my pledge that, if confirmed, I will work hard every day for the Airmen, Guardians, and their families who serve. Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.