

## **Opening Statement of Mr. Dan Driscoll Nominee for Secretary of the United States Army Senate Armed Services Committee Confirmation Hearing**

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the Committee, good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as Secretary of the United States Army. It is an honor to be considered for this role. To Senator Mullin and Senator Blumenthal, I'm sincerely thankful for the introductions. And I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me by President Trump.

I would like to begin by acknowledging my family who have joined me here today. To my wife, Cassie, who manages to keep us afloat despite being an accomplished surgeon, and children, Daniel and Lila—your unwavering support has made my service possible, and I will be forever grateful. I also want to thank the men and women of the United States Army, past and present, whose courage and dedication inspire all of us every day.

My commitment to this role is rooted in my family's long lineage of military service. My grandfather served in the Army during World War II as a decoder. My father served during Vietnam as an infantryman. I served as a cavalry scout in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. And, in as much as you can trust the plans of an 8-year old, my son, Daniel is planning to join the Army too.

We are a family that is grateful to have had the privilege of wearing the uniform of the United States Army. We are a family that understands the gravity of leading soldiers in, and out of combat. We are a family that has chosen to serve alongside our brothers and sisters in Arms for generations.

I joined the Army as a middle class public school kid from the mountains of North Carolina. The values and experiences I gained through military service molded me into the man I am today and opened the way for opportunities I could scarcely have imagined when I enlisted. In my experience, the transformative power of military service is open to all those who are willing and able to shoulder the task.

If confirmed, I will continue my family's lineage of service. I will be accountable to the President, the Congress, and the American people for the judicious and effective use of an approximately \$200 billion budget and leadership of over a million soldiers and civilians.

Most important, I intend to be the soldiers' Secretary of the Army, not of the Generals or of the Bureaucracy. It is the American Soldier to whom our national defense and prosperity are entrusted. This is why I believe President Trump has nominated me. These are serious obligations that I will enter into with humility and determination.

During my time in the Army, I was fortunate to serve, and deploy to combat, alongside soldiers who represent the very best of America. The American soldier's professionalism, ingenuity, and dedication are unmatched. Whether in garrison at Fort Drum, NY, on the training grounds of Yuma, Arizona or on the battlefield in Baghdad, Iraq, I saw firsthand the immense sacrifices they and their families make to uphold the freedoms we hold dear. This service and sacrifice by soldiers is what will drive my commitment to ensuring the Army has the resources, leadership, and support it needs to remain the world's premier land force. I also saw firsthand how the decisions their leaders made affected the lives of our soldiers, many times decisions which just didn't make sense. We must do better, and we will do better for our soldiers.

The Army's purpose is simple. To protect and advance our national interests by deterring our adversaries. And, if deterrence fails, to win wars with overwhelming dominance. If confirmed, I will prioritize the readiness and modernization of the service to realize that purpose. The world is changing rapidly, and we must ensure the Army is prepared to operate in new, complex and contested environments. From advancing our capabilities in multi-domain operations to cutting-edge technologies, my sacred duty to our Army is to ensure our soldiers have the world's finest training, equipment, and leadership to accomplish any mission, and to be as lethal a force as it can be.

One of my top priorities will be reinvigorating the defense industrial base. New battlefields are teaching us important lessons. These conflicts have demonstrated that the innovation, production, and fielding of some of our new weapons and capabilities must be done in weeks and months rather than years or decades. I believe our nations' innovators and their companies stand ready for this challenge. We must empower them and hold them accountable for achieving these new goals as it is our warfighters who will ultimately pay the price.

If confirmed, America's soldiers will be my mission. Recruitment and retention challenges demand innovative solutions and a renewed focus on quality of life for our troops and their families. The Army has a rich history filled with American heroes in both war and peace. With the Army's 250th anniversary this year, we have a unique opportunity to tell those stories to a generation of future soldiers, who may not yet know that service is their path.

On retention, I want to take a moment to thank this committee for passing the FY2025 NDAA. Your hard work to improve the pay, housing and access to childcare is appreciated by our soldiers and their families. We ask so much of them, and you have helped us take an important step in supporting them. If confirmed, your efforts will have made my job easier and I will strive to ensure you see a return on that investment through increased retention of our most capable personnel who will comprise the Army's future leaders.

Lastly, I recognize the importance of working closely with Congress and in particular with this committee. Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of the committee, it is the honor of my life to be given the opportunity to earn your trust and continue my service to our great nation. I look forward to responding to your questions and discussing how we can work together to support the soldiers, civilians, and families who make up the United States Army. Thank you.