

James F. Geurts
Senate Armed Services Committee
Nomination Hearing – Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development
and Acquisition)
Opening Statement

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition. I would like to thank the President, Secretary Mattis, and Secretary Spencer for their confidence in nominating me, and if confirmed, the opportunity to equip and support the finest Navy and Marine Corps in the world. I thank this Committee for its consideration of my nomination.

Before I begin my formal comments, I would like to express my appreciation to my wife, Kelly, for her love, her dedication to our family, and her support throughout my military and government career. Her dedication to helping others as a lifelong public school teacher serves as a shining example of servant leadership and the criticality of investing in our future generations. I am happy she could join me here today.

I would also like to recognize our sons, Jimmy and Brandon, who could not be here with us today. Their creative talents and kindness to others has always provided me with a sense of optimism for the future. I would also like to recognize my mother and father, as well as my brother and sisters, for the love and support they have always provided me. Finally, I would like to thank all the great mentors, leaders, teammates, allies, and friends who have helped me along the way.

As I sit before this Committee, as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition, there is one thing that is very clear to me --- we will not be able to support today's ongoing operations, improve readiness and lethality, and

recapitalize the Department of the Navy without changing the way we develop, acquire, and maintain combat capabilities for our Sailors and Marines. I applaud the Committee for their efforts in reforming the Department's Acquisition policies. Should I be confirmed, you have my commitment to implement these policies, as well as work closely with this Committee to recommend additional opportunities to improve our ability to protect and enable our Sailors and Marines today and in the future.

For the last decade, I have had the honor of being an acquisition leader in the United States Special Operations Command, equipping and supporting our Special Operations teams operating around the world. That experience reinforced my long-held belief that it is possible to execute an operationally responsive acquisition system when there is a clear understanding of intent, a sense of urgency at all levels of the organization, a close connection between acquirer and operator, transparency to all stakeholders, and a trained, empowered, and accountable acquisition workforce.

The challenges facing the Department of the Navy are many. We need to improve their readiness and lethality while simultaneously growing their capacity. We need to be innovative and creative, while also ensuring we are relentless stewards of the taxpayers' money. Business as usual will not deliver the results the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, and Commandant of the Marine Corps demand and our Sailors and Marines deserve.

These challenges will not be solved overnight and will require an acquisition team that is empowered, mission focused, accountable, resourced, and acts with a sense of urgency. If confirmed, I look forward to working tirelessly with Congress and the Department to take on these challenges

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee for its consideration of my nomination, and I look forward to answering your questions.