

Statement of Paul Ney
Nominated to be General Counsel for the Department of Defense
Before the Senate Armed Services Committee

Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Reed. It is a privilege to appear before this Committee today, and I request that my written statement be accepted for the record.

First, I must thank President Trump for nominating me for the position of General Counsel of the Department of Defense, and I must express my gratitude to Secretary Mattis for placing his trust and confidence in me.

I wish to express my gratitude to Chairman Corker for so kindly introducing me this morning, and for his support and encouragement.

Also, I thank my family and friends, especially my mother, who is back home in Nashville, and my brothers and their families back home in New Jersey, for their support, love and friendship. I hope that they all know how I feel about them, and I hope that my conduct always gives them a reason to be proud.

And I thank all of you on the committee and your staff members for the time you have invested in this process and considering my nomination. I am speaking with you this morning fully recognizing the critical and essential role that this committee and the Senate play in this appointment process and the critical and essential relationship between this committee and the Department of Defense of which I will be a part if I am confirmed.

I previously served in both the Office of the General Counsel of the Department of the Navy and the Office of General Counsel of the Department of Defense. Because of that experience, I am acutely aware of the immense responsibility entrusted to the General Counsel of the Department of Defense, and, if confirmed, I will be profoundly grateful for the honor to again serve in the Office with so many of my former OGC colleagues.

I believe that my prior public service and law practice experience will serve me well in supporting Secretary Mattis and the Department's leadership by providing timely, accurate and sound legal advice in support their priorities, including those set forth in the recently issued National Defense Strategy:

Strengthening military readiness and building a more lethal force:

Strengthening our alliances and attracting new partner; and

Reforming the Department for greater performance and affordability.

Inspired by the unsurpassed work ethic and patriotism of the Department's military and civilian professionals, I am prepared to work tirelessly to address the Department's challenges and opportunities. Among those challenges and opportunities are the demand for continued definition of the law related to cyber warfare and hostilities in the cyber domain, the blight of sexual assault in the military, and a just and effective resolution to detainee litigation.

Early on during my time in the Department of the Navy, I worked with a Navy JAG officer who said to me: "Sir, my job is to help you succeed." I immediately liked the sound of his self-styled job description. And I think (and I hope others in the Department agree) that he performed his job superbly.

I am a little embarrassed to say, however, that the wisdom of his words did not hit home with me for some time. But I finally came to understand that my response to him should have been, "and my job is to help you succeed." Indeed, in our common mission, each of us must look to our teammates and recognize that we will perform best when we are helping each other succeed at our respective duties. There are no challenges that cannot be overcome when that spirit prevails.

That is how I view my responsibilities as a lawyer, counselor, advisor, and public servant. If confirmed, I will be totally committed to helping the Office of General Counsel, the Department of Defense, and this Committee succeed together in our common duty to prepare and support our military and civilian personnel and their families in defending our nation and securing our freedoms.

Thank you for your consideration today. I look forward to answering your questions.