

Mr Lucian Niemeyer
Nomination Hearing – Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment
Senate Armed Services Committee Opening Statement

Thank you Senator Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed and members of this Committee. It is an honor to appear before you seeking confirmation as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment.

I would like to thank Senator Warner for his very gracious introduction and for his leadership to our country for over 70 years. I would also like to thank Secretary Mattis for his support and the President for his confidence in my nomination.

I am joined today by my family. My Mom who immigrated from Italy in her teens and worked hard for my sister and I. I am also blessed to have my Aunt from Connecticut. And I know my Dad, who passed away last year, is watching as well. Last but not least, I am so proud to have my Son, Benjamin here for the hearing...who promises not to be on his cell phone.

As an Air Force veteran and former staffer of this committee, I am acutely aware that, if confirmed, my job will be to carry forth the priorities of Secretary Mattis and the Administration. I am committed to restore warfighter readiness, to provide the infrastructure needed for the force growth, and to contribute to the lethality of our capabilities.

From day one, I will ensure efficient and prudent use of resources in support of our forces and their families. We need to account for every dollar. We need to ensure Congress, and the American people, that we are spending wisely.

Senator Inhofe, with that guidance in mind, I have the following goals if confirmed

- A review of installations and infrastructure to identify actions to eliminate waste;
- Smarter facility contract management;
- Mission assurance through utility resiliency;
- New opportunities for third party partnerships;
- Robust environmental stewardship providing for the safety and welfare of our people; and
- Collaboration with the hundreds of dedicated defense communities around the Nation protecting our bases, and providing for the quality of life for our troops and their families.

These priorities cannot be addressed without collaboration with Congress. I will encourage an open dialogue with the congressional defense committees to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

My highest priority is to address the significant risk posed by underfunded installation accounts. We have failing airfields, piers, and barracks. We have ranges that are limited in training against current threats. We face emerging environmental threats. We continue to spend taxpayer funds on capacity that we do not need. These conditions directly impact readiness. We have to focus installation funding on improving military value. We simply cannot afford more risk or waste.

If Congress allows, the Base Realignment and closure process can be an effective tool to improve the lethality of forces more efficiently, if carried out effectively.

It's been 12 years since we've assessed our bases and infrastructure. Since then, emerging technologies, new weapon systems, and new methods of warfare require a new basing strategy. BRAC provides the opportunity for military forces to get stronger...for capabilities to be enhanced...for training to be more effective...and to save for higher priorities.

I know the history of BRAC and Congressional concerns regarding irreversible decisions, high costs, and mixed results. BRAC decisions must be based on a sound security strategy and force structure to meet global challenges. The Department is committed to providing an updated national defense strategy in the near term that will define military value in the BRAC analysis.

Conducting a BRAC at a time of military growth may seem counterintuitive. But, now is the time to authorize a round. By 2021 when the Secretary submits recommendations, force growth projections will be factored into the analysis to make prudent strategic decisions.

Finally, Defense communities around the country have suffered economically for years under sequestration, continuing resolutions, and the uncertainty of BRAC. Most are ready for the opportunity provided by BRAC to make their bases more efficient and effective. They have for years been improving the military value of their installations. They love the military. They no longer want empty building with no value.

If confirmed, my goal is to use every tool provided to target readiness and improve value in the areas of my responsibility for the best military in the world. I deem this opportunity a call to service once again...and a distinct honor.

Mr Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, and members of the committee, I thank you for your consideration and look forward to your questions.