

CHAIRMAN MCCAIN, SENATOR REED, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, I AM HONORED AND HUMBLLED TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU AS THE NOMINEE TO BE OUR NAVY'S NEXT CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE CONFIDENCE OF PRESIDENT OBAMA, SECRETARY CARTER, AND SECRETARY MABUS.

I'D LIKE TO BEGIN BY THANKING ADM JON GREENERT AND HIS WIFE DARLEEN FOR THEIR MAGNIFICENT SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY FOR OVER 40 YEARS, AND ESPECIALLY FOR THEIR ROLE IN LEADING OUR NAVY THESE PAST FOUR YEARS. THEY HAVE BEEN TIRELESS AND SUPERB ADVOCATES FOR OUR SAILORS AND THEIR FAMILIES, OUR NAVY, AND OUR NATION.

I'M GRATEFUL TO HAVE MY FAMILY WITH ME TODAY – AS THEY HAVE BEEN THROUGHOUT MY CAREER. MY DAD IS HERE WITH ME – A RETIRED NAVY CAPTAIN WHO SERVED WITH DISTINCTION FOR 25 YEARS THROUGH THE COLD WAR. I REMEMBER LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY NIGHTS THAT MY MOM AND WE SIX KIDS WOULD GET TOGETHER IN OUR LIVING ROOM. MY DAD WOULD COME OUT IN HIS SERVICE DRESS BLUES WITH HIS SEABAG, AND WE WOULD SAY GOODBYE FOR 6 MONTHS. WE WOULD THEN CARRY ON, SUPPORTING EACH OTHER UNTIL DAD CAME BACK HOME. I GOT MY START IN THE NAVY FROM MY DAD, AND HE CONTINUES TO ADVISE ME AND MAKE ME PROUD.

MY WIFE DANA IS HERE. DANA AND I MET AS CLASSMATES IN YORK HIGH SCHOOL IN SOUTHERN MAINE. WE MARRIED JUST AS SOON AS WE COULD AFTER I GRADUATED FROM THE NAVAL ACADEMY. OVER THE LAST 33 YEARS, DANA HAS RAISED OUR FIVE CHILDREN WHILE I WAS AWAY AT SEA AND HAS SUPPORTED NAVY FAMILIES IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE. SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN THERE WITH ME, CHALLENGING ME AND ADDING PERSPECTIVE THAT I LONG AGO GREW TO DEPEND ON.

OUR DAUGHTER RACHEL – ONE OF OUR FIVE CHILDREN – IS HERE REPRESENTING THE RICHARDSON TRIBE. SHE'S A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA AND IS A SUMMER INTERN IN THE AMPUTEE CENTER AT WALTER REED. OUR OLDEST SON NATHAN IS A NAVY LIEUTENANT, HE AND HIS WIFE ARE SERVING OVERSEAS IN NAPLES, ITALY. OUR OTHER SON DANIEL IS DOING RESEARCH FOR RENEWABLE FUELS IN HAWAII. AND OUR TWO YOUNGEST CHILDREN, MATTHEW AND VERONICA, ARE VISITING FAMILY IN OREGON BEFORE THEY RETURN HOME TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL.

IF YOU ASKED HER, DANA WOULD SAY THAT WE'RE JUST A TYPICAL NAVY FAMILY – WE'VE MOVED 20 TIMES, OUR KIDS HAVE ATTENDED DOZENS OF SCHOOLS, AND WE'VE LIVED ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY AND OVERSEAS. TODAY, THE RICHARDSON FAMILY, LIKE SO MANY NAVY FAMILIES, IS READY TO CONTINUE TO SERVE OUR NATION.

I AM HERE BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP IN KEEPING OUR NATION SECURE, AND KEEPING OUR NAVY THE STRONGEST THAT HAS EVER SAILED THE SEAS. IF CONFIRMED, I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH YOU TO CONTINUE THAT IMPORTANT WORK.

I SEE THE NAVAL PROFESSION AS A BOND OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE - WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND WITH OUR SAILORS. AND I HOLD SOME CORE BELIEFS ABOUT OUR NAVY THAT GUIDE ME.

THE NAVY MUST BE AT SEA, UNDERWAY. IT MUST BE PRESENT AROUND THE WORLD PROTECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS – ENABLING ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS AND TRADE, RESPONDING TO CRISES, AND PROVIDING SECURITY. WE ARE AT OUR BEST WHEN WE OPERATE WITH OTHERS, INCLUDING OUR FELLOW SERVICES – ESPECIALLY THE MARINE CORPS – AS WELL AS WITH OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES.

THE MUSCLE AND BONES OF THE NAVY ARE OUR SHIPS, SUBMARINES AND AIRCRAFT – HIGHLY CAPABLE, EXERCISED DAILY – WELL EQUIPPED AND READY TO OPERATE FROM THE SEA AND FAR FROM HOME.

BUT THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE NAVY ARE OUR SAILORS. EVERY DAY AROUND THE WORLD, OUR SAILORS CAN BE FOUND

ON, UNDER, AND OVER THE SEA. THEY ARE SMART, RESOURCEFUL, COMMITTED AMERICANS WHO WANT TO BE PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL – TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY BY BEING PART OF A HIGH-PERFORMING TEAM. THEY ARE RIGHTLY PROUD OF WHAT THEY DO AND THEY ARE A FORMIDABLE FORCE.

DESPITE A GROWING SET OF CHALLENGES AND SOME SIGNIFICANT STRAINS, THEY CONTINUE TO GO TO SEA TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE TODAY, AND TO ADAPT AND INNOVATE IN ORDER TO PREVAIL TOMORROW. IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO WORK WITH – AND ESPECIALLY TO LEAD – SUCH A CAPABLE, CREATIVE AND RESILIENT TEAM.

AMERICA SENDS US THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS, THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THEIR FATHERS AND MOTHERS, TO GO TO SEA WITH US, POTENTIALLY INTO HARM'S WAY. IN RETURN FOR THAT SACRIFICE, OUR NAVY MUST PROVIDE THEM A POSITIVE AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY CAN THRIVE AND ACHIEVE THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL.

FINALLY, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DEMAND, AS THEY SHOULD, THAT WE EXECUTE OUR MISSION IN A PRUDENT AND RESPONSIBLE WAY, WORTHY OF THEIR CONFIDENCE IN US.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT IN ANY SITUATION, IN ANY COMPETITION, AND CERTAINLY IN ANY FIGHT, AMERICA EXPECTS THAT THEIR NAVY WILL FIND A WAY TO WIN. AND WE WILL.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, IF CONFIRMED I WILL GIVE EVERYTHING I HAVE TO HONOR AND STRENGTHEN THE BONDS OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THAT YOUR NAVY HAS WITH OUR NATION AND ITS PEOPLE. THANK YOU AND I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR QUESTIONS.