

Randall G. Schriver

Senate Armed Services Committee

Nomination Hearing – Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asia Pacific Security Affairs

Opening Statement

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, I'm truly honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asia Pacific Security Affairs.

I would like to thank the President and Secretary of Defense Mattis for placing their trust and confidence in me.

I'd also like to thank family members, mentors, colleagues and friends who have taken the trouble to be here today to support me. In particular, I'd like to thank my parents John and Sally Schriver, and my mother-in-law Chris Bredholt for being here. And of course, I wish to thank my wife, Jordan Schriver and our four children, Lucas, Rory, Brody and Mae for their support here today and beyond.

I'm joined by other long-time colleagues such as business partner Kara Bue and the Executive Director of Project 2049 Mark Stokes. And finally I'd also like to recognize a great American hero present who is my mentor and friend, former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage.

If confirmed, I would have the great opportunity to return to an office where I began my professional civilian career. After active duty service in the Navy and graduate studies, I joined the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Asia Pacific Affairs as a young professional in the early 1990s. I loved the challenges at the time, and hope with your support to return to this important work on behalf of the Department of Defense.

If confirmed, my immediate attention must turn to how best to provide policy support to our warfighters in this region. This Administration's new South Asia strategy includes deployment of additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan. This will mean more American men in women in harm's way and we must honor that service with our very best efforts aimed at bolstering their chances for success.

This region also faces the urgent security challenges posed by North Korea. If confirmed, it will be an immediate priority to work with colleagues in the Department and the military to ensure our deterrence is strong and credible, and our homeland, citizens, allies and friends are protected.

For this Administration's vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific to be realized, we must position ourselves to prevail in the long term strategic competition we face vis-à-vis the People's Republic of China. While we must continue to seek opportunities to cooperate with China where our interests overlap, the Chinese Communist Party's vision for a new security architecture in Asia with China at the center is in many ways at odds with our own aspirations for the region. If confirmed I will approach the duties of my position with an understanding that a rising China presents the most consequential security challenges of my generation.

If confirmed, I also look forward to building stronger alliances with Japan, South Korea and Australia, and continuing to rebuild our relationships with long term treaty allies Thailand and the Philippines. And we must continue to deepen ties with our “natural” strategic partner India.

If confirmed it will be a priority to invest in our security partners in Taiwan and Singapore, and emerging partnerships with countries such as Vietnam. I also look forward to working with security partners that “punch above their weight” such as Mongolia and New Zealand.

And we must not forget that our Department of Defense is about more than just providing military options for contingencies – our Department can make lives better when assistance is needed the most. The Asia Pacific is prone to disaster, both natural and man-made. If confirmed, I understand our Defense Department must also contribute to policies that help address human suffering in the region.

Finally, if confirmed, I am committed to working with this committee and the Congress as a whole toward sustaining strong policies. I appreciate the role of the Committee and look forward to cooperative efforts to promote our security interests in the Asia Pacific.

Mr. Chairman, my interest in this region has always been deeply personal. I was born in Hawaii and raised in the Pacific Northwest, and thus have always had a Pacific orientation. Our personal ties were strengthened even further when my wife and I adopted our beautiful daughter Mae from the Marshall Islands in 2010. For me, the Asia Pacific is the priority region due to our strategic interests, but also do to my personal history. It would be the greatest honor of my professional life to serve in our Department of Defense working to promote our interests there.

I’m grateful for your consideration of my nomination and I welcome your questions.