

Alan R. Shaffer
Senate Armed Services Committee
Confirmation Hearing—Nomination to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
For Acquisition and Sustainment

Senator Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of this committee—Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for considering me to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment.

I will begin by thanking President Trump, Secretary Mattis and Under Secretary Lord for displaying their confidence in me by supporting my nomination. I have spent my entire adult life in Service to our nation, and it is truly humbling and an amazing honor to be considered for an opportunity to continue to serve at this critical time and in a position that could have a great impact on the ability of today's and tomorrow's soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, to be able to do the things their nation asks them to do more effectively and safely. They deserve this.

I also want to take a moment to thank those people who have supported me through my life and career. I will of course, not be able to thank everyone here, but I have to thank and recognize my wife of almost 32 year, Jacqueline. Jackie understands service more than anyone I know. With the exception of a year after high-school, Jackie has always had a DoD Identification Card—growing up the daughter of an Army Warrant Officer, then she was an Air Force Officer, and finally, the most supporting spouse anyone could have. If I have had any success in my life, it is really due to her. Speaking of Jackie's father, CW2 Fred Sklenar is also here today. I also want to point out my son Eric, who continues in the “family business” as a Civilian Intelligence Officer at the Defense Intelligence Agency, and his wife Renee, who is also serving her nation as a member of the census bureau.

I think there are two relevant questions I should address: Why do I want to do the job, and why do I think I am qualified for the job? I will start with the easy question of why do I want the job. The Air Force got me when I was a 17-year-old Freshman at the University of Vermont, and I had no money. I saw a sign saying “we will give you \$100 a month to go to class”. My plan was to do four years of active duty and be done. A funny thing happened. As a 22 year old lieutenant, I had a job that had incredible responsibility, while my college friends had little to no responsibility. I realized I had a career that had meaning beyond myself. I have spent my entire adult life either as an Air Force Officer, or a Department of Defense and NATO Senior Executive—42 years committed to providing the strongest military as possible—because as one of the major levers of National Security, the military matters. I believe we have entered into another strategically challenging situation, and, in spite of the FY 2018 and 2019 budget increases, we have to acquire and sustain as much capability as we can for the amount of money Congress provides the Department.

One other historical element drives me. As I said, I came onto active duty in the 1970's, at the peak of what we now call the “hollow force”. I remember at our Wing Standup everyday, the

three things briefed, beyond mission, was weather, intelligence, and cannibalization rate. Our acquisition and sustainment stocks had been drawn so low that the only way to keep B-52's in mission was to take parts off other airplanes. We also did not have enough money to train junior pilots on their assigned aircraft—B-52 copilots got hours flying a T-37 trainer. We were not mission ready. I have vowed to do everything within my ability to never let the military again become hollow. Under the Budget Tightness of the early to mid 2010's, I was seeing signs of hollowing. Now Congress has provided the funds to rebuild the military. Within my skill set, I can think of nothing more important to America and the young men and women we inevitably will put in harm's way.

The second question is Why am I qualified? I have not been an acquisition PEO or Commanded a logistics depot. What I have been is incredibly fortunate to have bosses and mentors who believed in me, and gave me the opportunity to do widely diverse tasks. I was blessed to be given the opportunity to help field the "MRAP" vehicles as the last Executive Director, MRAP Task Force. I saw how the Department can field a capability very rapidly when we have to. Between the Program Manager, the PEO, the Honorable Kevin Fahey, and me, we fielded 28,000 vehicles in 4 years. Of course, Congress helped more than I can recount—you gave us all the money we needed, and let us dual thread some acquisition processes. In addition, I spent over 4 of my last 7 years in the Pentagon filling the Assistant Secretary of Defense for research and engineering position. I understand how development and acquisition come together to field capability, and understand how emerging technologies can be modernized to greatly increase the effectiveness of sustainment. In fact, I believe the convergence of artificial intelligence, robotics and automation, and new manufacture methods like additive manufacture actually have us on the verge of a revolution in sustainment. I would like to be part of this revolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and allowing me to try to convince you I am right for the job.