

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED
CHAIRMAN, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

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Thursday, May 27, 2021

*To conduct a confirmation hearing on the nomination of
Jill Hruby to be Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security and Administrator, National Nuclear
Security Administration,
Frank Rose to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration,
Deborah Rosenblum to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense
Programs, and
Christopher Maier to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict*

(As prepared for delivery)

REED: I would like to begin this morning's hearing by recognizing the passing of Senator John Warner at the age of 94. Senator Warner was a member of this committee for 21 years, and either Chairman or Ranking Member for eight years. He was the consummate public servant, but more importantly, he showed us all the importance of bipartisanship. His work with Senator Levin is what ensured the National Defense Authorization Act was passed every year and made this committee what it is today.

Turning to today's hearing, the Committee meets this morning to consider the nominations of Ms. Jill Hruby to be Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, Mr. Frank Rose to be Principal Deputy Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, Ms. Deborah Rosenblum to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs, and Mr. Christopher Maier to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict. I thank the nominees for their long careers of service to the United States and their willingness to assume these important roles.

I would also like to welcome the guests and family members who are with us today. Senator Heinrich, thank you for joining us to introduce Ms. Hruby. Mr. Rose, I welcome your mother, Ms. Athalyn Rose, and sister, Ms. Nikko Rose. Ms. Rosenblum, I welcome your husband Mr. Todd Rosenblum, and I thank Senator Nunn, who will introduce you via WebEx. And, Mr. Maier, I welcome your wife, Ms. Emily Louise Franklin, and thank Senator Manchin, who will introduce you today.

Ms. Hruby, you are well qualified to be nominated as Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, or NNSA, having previously directed Sandia National Labs and its 13,000 engineers and scientists who design components for our nuclear stockpile. If confirmed, there are a number of challenges that will require your attention.

The United States has not produced plutonium pits in quantity since the late 1980s. Ms. Hruby, you have supported a "two site" pit manufacturing strategy, dividing production between the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico and the Savannah River Site in South Carolina. I would ask that you share with the Committee the rationale for this two site solution.

The NNSA is facing its highest workload demand since the 1980s as we modernize our nuclear deterrent, which includes five warhead programs, and recapitalization of our nuclear facilities, many of which date back to the Manhattan Project.

Finally, last year's NDAA included a provision to ensure the DOD and the NNSA work closely together in developing budgets to meet DOD requirements. Ms. Hruby, if confirmed you will be the point person interfacing with DOD on this issue and many others. I ask that you share with us today how you would plan to address these challenges.

Mr. Rose, you have been nominated to serve as Deputy Administrator of the NNSA. Your prior positions as Assistant Secretary for Arms Control at the State Department and as a staff member on the House Armed Services Committee handling Strategic Forces issues should serve you well as you take on the larger policy issues facing the NNSA.

If confirmed, you will lead the day-to-day running of the NNSA and be responsible for addressing a number of institutional issues within the organization. In the immediate term, you will need to maintain the NNSA's federal workforce of 1800 specialized nuclear scientists and engineers – fully a third of whom are eligible to retire. I would like to know your thoughts on how you will retain or replace these skilled civil servants.

Ms. Rosenblum, you bring a wealth of experience through your previous service in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and, most recently, the Nuclear Threat Initiative. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs, you will assume a role that is focused on acquisition and will require an understanding of the technical nature of nuclear physics and engineering, rather than just policy. I would be interested in hearing how you will adapt your experience to this position.

More importantly, you will oversee the day-to-day functioning of the Nuclear Weapons Council, which ensures that the NNSA can meet DOD requirements for our nuclear deterrent. Last year this Committee spent considerable effort to enable the Council and the NNSA to communicate better and coordinate more closely, and I seek your commitment in maintaining that relationship.

Mr. Maier, your role is quite different from our other three nominees. You have been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, or SOLIC, at a critical time. Your previous experience serving as the Acting ASD SOLIC and as the director of the DOD Defeat-ISIS Task Force makes you well-qualified for this position.

For several years, this Committee has focused on empowering the ASD SOLIC to fulfill its "service secretary-like" responsibilities for ensuring the equipping and readiness of our special operations forces. I strongly support the recently issued Department of Defense guidance that clearly articulates the role of the ASD SOLIC in the oversight of and advocacy for U.S. Special Operations Command. Though long-overdue, this guidance is a meaningful signal of the Department's commitment to fully implement the ASD SOLIC reforms mandated by Congress.

Unfortunately, the position of ASD SOLIC has been without a Senate-confirmed individual for much of the last few years. If confirmed, your service will be important to providing empowered leadership and stability as the office grows in resources and responsibilities.

Mr. Maier, you will also play a central role in shaping the Department's policies and operations with respect to counterterrorism, irregular warfare, counternarcotics, stability and humanitarian affairs. We look forward to hearing your views on these issues today.

Thank you, again, to our nominees. I look forward to your testimonies. Let me now recognize Ranking Member Inhofe.