

STATEMENT OF CHARLES D. STIMSON NOMINATED
TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and Members of the Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I also thank my friend and shipmate Secretary Ryan Zinke for his kind introduction. I am honored to be the President's nominee to be General Counsel for the Department of the Navy. I am grateful to Secretary Mattis and former Deputy Secretary of Defense and Navy Secretary Gordon England and Navy Secretary Donald Winter for their confidence in recommending me for this position. And words cannot express my thanks to my wife Laura, who is here today, for her confidence in me and support, and to my four children, who are a constant reminder of why we serve. One of them, Cate, is able to be here today. If confirmed, I will do my very best to live up to the trust and confidence that they and so many others have placed in me.

Service to me is a matter of both duty and of legacy. My father served in the Navy in WWII. His father was a Navy pilot in the 1920s. Several of my uncles served in WWII. None of them are with us anymore, but I know that each of them would take pride in the continued service of this generation. I share their love of country, and have endeavored, in my naval career, to honor their legacy.

Since being nominated, I have had the opportunity to meet with some of you and your staff. I am grateful for those meetings, and thank you for your many courtesies. Before my nomination, I had the privilege of testifying before this Committee as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and as an expert on national security policy and law. I have immense respect for this Committee and its constitutional responsibilities, and I look forward to working closely with its members and staff should I be confirmed.

The national security challenges to our nation span the globe. From non-state actors to rogue states, the threats to our country and our allies are ever-present, ever-changing, and more complex than ever. That holds true for the legal challenges facing the Department of the Navy as it navigates the world of today. Confronting those challenges has been my life's work. Everything that I have done in my professional life—as a prosecutor, a national security analyst, a strategist, and a military judge—has been preparation for this role.

My respect for the Navy's legal leadership is boundless. The Department is exceptionally well-served by the attorneys in the Office of the General Counsel, the Judge Advocate General of the Navy, and the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. And the Department is served best when relations among these three legal divisions are close, collegial, and built on trust. In my 25 years as a Navy Judge Advocate, including three tours on active duty, I have worked alongside these extraordinary attorneys in all three components of the Department of the Navy.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I pledge to continue the close, collegial relationship among these offices. That won't be difficult, because in the 1990s, I served on active duty with both Vice

Admiral Crawford and Rear Admiral John Hannink in London, England, and San Diego, California, respectively, and we have remained friends ever since. I also have known General Ewers for some time and have immense respect for his legal talents.

If confirmed, I will humbly dedicate myself to providing the most rigorous, prudent legal advice to the Secretary, consistent with my oath and fidelity to the United States Constitution, and will always keep in mind the privilege and honor it is to serve the Department of the Navy and our country. Again, I thank you for the privilege of appearing before this Committee, and look forward to your questions.