

## **Army Posture Hearing Opening Remarks**

Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, distinguished members of the subcommittee, it's my pleasure to speak to you today for the first time as Secretary.

I'd like to first thank this committee for the support that you provide to our Soldiers and their families, and for working with General George and me as we embark on our journey of Army transformation.

In my confirmation hearing, I said that I would be the Soldier's Secretary – that they would be my mission and that no special interest group or bureaucracy would stand in the way of our warfighters.

After visiting troops in the Middle East and Europe, on our Southern Border, and at installations across the continental United States and Alaska, I can confidently say that our Soldiers are strong.

Their families are strong. Their dedication to this nation is strong. And the strength that they show every day is a reminder that American Soldiers represent the best of our nation.

We ask a lot from our Soldiers, and they never let us down.

But, for decades, our government has been letting our Soldiers down.

As Secretary, I have found that the Army has become calcified, having suffered from years of inefficiency, slow-moving processes, and wasteful spending.

Program lobbyists and bureaucrats have overtaken the Army's ability to prioritize Soldiers and warfighting.

Those days are over.

We must give our Soldiers the tools and the resources that they need to defend this nation.

We must cut away the bureaucratic bloat that has plagued our formations for too long.

We must rid ourselves of antiquated weapon systems that no longer serve a purpose on modern battlefields.

And we must give our Soldiers the overwhelming advantage against any threat to our nation.

The entrenched bureaucracy and special interests will not drive the Army. The needs of the brave men and women who volunteer to fight for this country will drive every action of this department.

We are transforming the Army to put our Soldiers and their ability to fight and win wars as the sole focus of what we do.

This will not happen without the support of this committee.

I am asking this committee to help us place the mission first.

I am asking this committee to ignore the lobbyists and put aside parochial interests. Allow us to maximize the dollars that we are given to best support our Soldiers as they defend this nation.

I am asking this committee to provide us with the flexibility to make decisions that can match the pace of change that we are seeing today in technology and warfare.

I am asking for this because I believe it is *my* duty as Secretary of the Army *and* as an American citizen to ensure that every dollar that the United States Army receives from Congress contributes to the mission of defending the nation.

I am committed to this because I am committed to our Soldiers.

*They* are the ones who will face the enemies of this nation.

*They* will never quit, and *they* will never accept defeat.

I ask that you join me in my commitment to their success.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

###