

**Statement for the Record**  
**Dr. Christopher J. Scolese**  
**Nominee for Director, National Reconnaissance Office**  
**Senate Select Committee on Intelligence**  
**May 1, 2019**

**Introduction**

Chairman Burr, Vice Chairman Warner, distinguished members of the committee – I am honored to appear before you as the first Presidential appointee requiring Senate confirmation for the position of Director of the National Reconnaissance Office.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet privately with several of you to hear your views and goals for the National Reconnaissance Office and the Intelligence Community. I would also like to note the efforts of the Committee staff, as I know there is a tremendous amount of preparation that goes into any confirmation hearing.

I am honored to have been nominated by President Trump and grateful that the President, Acting Secretary of Defense Shanahan, and Director of National Intelligence Coats have the trust and confidence in my ability to continue serving our nation in this new capacity. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and with the extraordinary women and men of the National Reconnaissance Office.

I am profoundly grateful to my family: my wife of 38 years—Dianne—and our four children—Jenni, Daniel, Lauren, and Anna, who are here with me today. I would like to acknowledge Jenni’s husband Marc, Dan’s wife Maura, and our granddaughter Maddie, as well as Lauren’s fiancé Ian, and Anna’s friend Mike. Their unconditional support means the world to me; I am truly thankful. Additionally, I want to remember my parents who passed away many years ago. My father was a typewriter repair man, and my mother was a secretary; they encouraged my sister and me to go to college so we could have more opportunities. I think about them daily, recognizing the sacrifices they made so that we could pursue our dreams.

I was born and raised in Buffalo, New York, and it was a wonderful place to grow up. As a young child, I was inspired by the space program and space exploration. I was fascinated by all aspects of space exploration. What intrigued me the most were the machines and computers that made it possible to look at our Earth and visit other planets. I spent a lot of time in school building rockets and electronic devices for fun. My science teacher—Mr. Weiss—encouraged me to enter the western New York Science Fair, which I went on to win with a project calculating the drag coefficient of rockets. That early passion set the trajectory for my career—a path that has led me to be here before you today as the nominee for the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office.

## **The Position**

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to have had 40 years of service in the Navy and at NASA. I have been fortunate to be involved with diverse systems, such as nuclear submarines and spacecraft, that have been instrumental in protecting our national security and advancing knowledge about our place in the universe.

During the last three decades at NASA, I have had the opportunity to work on the full range of NASA's missions, from sending humans into space to missions that are providing data about the Earth and our Universe. I held various positions involved in the design, development, acquisition, launch, and operation of space systems—large and small—scaled to accomplish our goals.

Under my leadership, NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center developed satellites and space systems to meet the requirements for NASA and other organizations. To accomplish these missions, I challenged the teams I led to develop new capabilities, seek opportunities to inject new technologies, leverage commercial capabilities, and collaborate with partners. I ensured that the valuable lessons we learned were incorporated into plans that have resulted in improved performance on recent missions, meeting technical, cost, and schedule requirements. These best practices have been applied across a range of missions for NASA and other organizations such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and United States Geological Survey. I also found that it is critical to communicate often with all parties involved to assure a common understanding of progress and risk so adjustments can be made when necessary and when they are still affordable. It was clear to me while leading Goddard that interagency cooperation and collaboration is key to success at the national level. If confirmed, I will make interagency collaboration a priority for the National Reconnaissance Office.

The growth of a commercial space industry capable of launching satellites and providing data provides an opportunity that should be leveraged to replace or enhance required capabilities. At the same time, the continued advance of technology in all areas from artificial intelligence to materials science provides an opportunity to maintain our national space advantage in an increasingly competitive and contested environment. The combination of commercial capabilities, technological advancements, and government-developed systems provides opportunities to expand the supplier base, improve performance, reduce cost, and enhance resiliency.

An organization's people are at the heart of its success. At NASA, I have had the opportunity to lead and manage a large, diverse workforce. Nothing can be accomplished without the talented women and men who are motivated to accomplish the mission. I am proud to be part of NASA, which has been ranked as the Best Place to Work in Government for the last seven years. I am also proud of creating an environment at NASA Goddard that was also ranked as one of the best places to work in the federal government. If confirmed, I am committed to fostering an environment at the NRO that welcomes diverse views, invites new concepts, and energizes its workforce every day. This includes recruiting, training, and retaining a world-class workforce, allowing the National Reconnaissance Office to provide premier space reconnaissance capabilities.

If confirmed, knowing that our adversaries are becoming increasingly more adaptive, I will endeavor to ensure that the nation's policymakers, intelligence analysts, and warfighters will continue to maintain our strategic advantage with timely, relevant space reconnaissance data.

## **Conclusion**

In closing, the National Reconnaissance Office is one of the legendary organizations of the space age, and the capabilities that it has provided have been instrumental in maintaining the United States strategic advantage. The National Reconnaissance Office helps keep our country—and the world—safe from those who seek to harm U.S. citizens, our interests, or our allies.

I am honored to be considered for this position. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee—and the entire Congress—to leverage our opportunities and address our challenges. If confirmed, I will seek your support for the women and men of the National Reconnaissance Office and to ensure that the National Reconnaissance Office has the support it needs to continue developing and operating the world's premier reconnaissance satellites, delivering critical intelligence to the policymaker, intelligence analyst, and warfighter.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the Committee for the hard work that is put into the oversight process. If confirmed as Director, I will uphold the National Reconnaissance Office's obligations to Congress and the American people.

Chairman Burr, Vice Chairman Warner, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

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