

President-Elect Trump Nominates Former Ranger to Lead Army

President-elect Donald Trump announced Monday morning he intends to nominate Virtu Financial founder Vincent Viola, owner of the NHL's Florida Panthers and a former U.S. Army infantry officer, to be the next Secretary of the Army.

Viola graduated from West Point and trained as an Airborne Ranger before serving with the 101st Airborne Division. Throughout his military service, he was engaged in national security issues.

After he left active duty, he joined the New York Mercantile Exchange, becoming its chairman in 2001. In 2008, he founded Virtu Financial, which had a net worth of approximately \$2.2 billion at last report.

"I am proud to have such an incredibly accomplished and selfless individual as Vincent Viola as our Secretary of the Army," Trump said. "Whether it is his distinguished military service or highly impressive track record in the world of business, Vinnie has proved throughout his life that he knows how to be a leader and deliver major results in the face of any challenge."

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Viola worked to support the Army philanthropically in the areas of counterterrorism, cybersecurity and leadership development, including helping to found the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. He also created a technology company, Rowan Technology Solutions, to support cadet education in the areas of military history, military science and leadership.

"He is a man of outstanding work ethic, integrity and

strategic vision, with an exceptional ability to motivate others," Trump added. "The American people, whether civilian or military, should have great confidence that Vinnie Viola has what it takes to keep America safe and oversee issues of concern to our troops in the Army."

Viola was born and raised in an Italian immigrant family in Brooklyn, and his father worked as a truck driver. Viola was inspired to join the military by his father's service in the U.S. Army in World War II. He received a degree from New York Law School in 1983.

He has also been deeply involved in a number of philanthropic causes. He has endowed the Avery Cardinal Dulles Chair in Catholic Theology at Fordham University and is a major supporter of the Catholic Leadership Institute and its mission to provide world-class leadership formation to bishops, priests and deacons.

"It is an honor to be nominated to serve our country as President-elect Trump's Secretary of the Army," Viola said. "If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to provide our President with the land force he will need to accomplish any mission in support of his National Defense Strategy. A primary focus of my leadership will be ensuring that America's soldiers have the ways and means to fight and win across the full spectrum of conflict. This great honor comes with great responsibility, and I will fight for the American people and their right to live free every day."

During the morning press briefing, transition team spokesman Jason Miller continued to heap high praise on the Army secretary-designate. Miller also noted additional candidates for Trump administration jobs would be meeting with the president-elect this week at his Mar-A-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla.

Among those meeting with Trump on Monday were:

- Robert Lighthizer—Partner at the Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom law firm, former U.S. deputy trade representative under President Ronald Reagan and potential candidate for U.S. trade representative.
- Don Peebles—chairman of the board of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and rumored 2017 New York City mayoral candidate.
- Chris Reyes—Co-Chairman of Reyes Holdings and potential chairman of the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers.
- Adm. Thad Allen, USCG (ret.)—former commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard and possible candidate for FEMA director.

Miller said Trump has more meetings scheduled in Palm Beach and will remain at Mar-A-Lago at least through the end of the week, spending the Christmas holiday there with family. Vice President-elect Mike Pence would be holding transition meetings at Trump Tower and would be in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday before returning to Indiana for the rest of the week to spend Christmas there with his family.

During Q&A with the press, Miller refuted a Politico report that Trump would have his own private security team in addition to Secret Service protection, calling the article “complete nonsense.” He also addressed rumors about a potential Ambassador to Mexico nominee—saying there has not been a decision made about the position—and whether or not the president-elect intends to retain IRS Commissioner John Koskinen through the remainder of his current term, which expires Nov. 12, 2017.

“No decision about that has been made yet,” Miller said. “The president-elect knows this is an important issue to many Americans, particularly with the many issues surrounding the IRS. As soon as he makes a decision, we will let you know.”
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