

Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Jonathan Greenert opening remarks to the
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Defense Subcommittee
March 1, 2012

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Dicks, distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you for the first time to discuss our budget submission.

Because of the dedication of our 625,000 active and reserve sailors and civilians, and their families, the navy and our primary joint partner, the U.S. Marine Corps, remain a vital part of our national security.

I am honored to be able serve and lead the Navy in these challenging times.

And I thank this committee for your continued support.

This afternoon, I will address three points:

1. Navy's importance to our nation's security;
2. Enduring tenets and priorities that guided my decisions;
3. How these decisions shaped Navy's budget submission.

Today, our Navy is the world's preeminent maritime force. our "global fleet" operates forward from U.S. bases and partner nation "places" around the world to deter aggression, respond to crisis, and – when needed, and when called upon – to win our nation's wars.

If you refer to the chartlet in front of you, you can see that on any given day we have about 50,000 sailors and 145 ships underway, with about 100 of those ships deployed overseas.

These ships and sailors allow us to influence events abroad because they ensure access to what I refer to the "maritime crossroads." These are areas where shipping lanes and our security interests intersect and are indicated by the orange bow-ties on the chartlet. We can remain forward in these areas because of facilities and support from nearby allies and partners.

For example, in the Middle East we have 30 ships and more than 22,000 sailors at sea and ashore. They are combating piracy, supporting operations in Afghanistan, assuring our allies, and maintaining a presence in the region to deter or counter destabilizing activities. These forces rely on facilities in Bahrain, a U.S. partner for six decades.

In the Asia-pacific region, we have about 50 ships supported by our base on Guam and facilities, or "places", in Singapore, the republic of Korea, and Japan. They will be joined next spring by our first littoral combat ship, which will deploy to Singapore for several months to evaluate our operational concepts.

In the Indian Ocean, we depend on Diego Garcia and the fleet tender and the airfield there for ship repair and logistics support.

Around the horn of Africa, we depend on the air field and port in Djibouti to support our forces conducting counter terrorism and counter piracy operations.

In Europe we rely on places in Spain, Italy, and Greece to sustain our forces forward in support of our NATO allies.

And in our own hemisphere, our port and airfield at Guantanamo bay will grow more important in the next several years as the Panama Canal is widened.

When I assumed the watch as CNO, I established three key principles for our decision making, I call tenets – to me they are clear unambiguous direction for Navy leadership. They are: Warfighting First, Operate Forward, and Be Ready.

Warfighting First that means the Navy must be ready to fight and prevail today, while building the ability to win tomorrow. This is our primary mission and all our efforts must be grounded in this fundamental responsibility.

Iran's recent provocative rhetoric highlights the need for us to have forward deployed warfighting capability. In our FY2013 budget submission, we redirected funding toward weapons, systems, sensors and tactical training that can be more rapidly fielded to the fleet. This includes demonstrators and prototypes that could quickly improve our forces' capability.

Operate Forward that means we will provide the nation offshore options to deter, influence, and win in an era of uncertainty.

Our FY2013 budget submission supports several initiatives to establish our forward posture at the maritime crossroads. These include placing forward deployed naval force destroyers in Rota, Spain, and forward stationing littoral combat ships in Singapore and patrol coastal ships in Bahrain. one ship that is operating from an overseas location can provide the same presence as about four ships that we would rotationally deploy from the continental U.S.

We are also collaborating with the Marine Corps to determine the support and lift needed for marines to effectively operate forward in Darwin, Australia in the future.

Be Ready means we will harness the teamwork, talent and imagination of our diverse force to be ready to fight and responsibly use our resources. This is more than completing required maintenance and ensuring parts and supplies are available. "Being ready" also means being proficient and being confident with our weapons, sensors, command and control, communications and our engineering systems as well.

Applying these tenets to meet the defense strategic guidance, we built our 2013 budget submission to implement three main investment priorities:

Number 1: we will remain ready to meet our current challenges, today. Consistent with the defense strategic guidance, I will continue to prioritize readiness over capacity and focus our warfighting presence on the Asia Pacific and Middle East. We will also sustain the nation's most survivable strategic deterrent in our SSBNs.

Priority 2: we will build a relevant and capable future force. Our Navy will evolve to remain the world's preeminent maritime force and our shipbuilding and aircraft construction investments will form the foundation of the future fleet. In developing our aircraft and ship procurement plans, we focused on three approaches:

Sustaining serial production of today's proven platforms including Arleigh Burke destroyers, Virginia submarines and F/A-18 Super Hornets.

To promptly field new platforms in development such as littoral combat ship, joint strike fighter, Ford class carrier, P-8A Poseidon aircraft and the America class amphibious assault ship.

Will improve the capability of today's platforms through new weapons, sensors and unmanned vehicles including the advanced missile defense radar, Firescout, aerial systems and fire-x.

New “payloads” like these will help ensure we can project power despite threats to access, as described in the new defense strategic guidance. They will also enable our continued dominance in the undersea environment and support our goal to operate effectively in cyberspace and fully exploit the electromagnetic spectrum.

Now developing the future force, we will continue to emphasize jointness, as described in our air-sea battle concept. We will also emphasize affordability, by controlling requirements creep, and by making cost the entering argument for new systems.

Priority 3: we will enable and support our sailors, civilians and their families. I am extremely proud of our people. We have a professional and moral obligation to lead and to train and to equip, and to motivate them.

Our personnel programs deliver a high return on investment in readiness. We fully funded our programs to address operational stress, support families, eliminate the use of synthetic drugs like spice, and aggressively prevent suicides and sexual assaults.

I support the compensation reforms included in the defense department’s FY2013 budget submission, which I believe are appropriate changes to manage the cost of the all-volunteer force.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, your Navy will continue to be critical to our nation’s security and prosperity by assuring access to the global commons and by being at the front line of our nation’s efforts in war and in peace. I assure the congress and the American people that we will focus on Warfighting First, we will Operate Forward, and we will Be Ready. I want to thank you for your support. I want to thank also the professional staff that sit around us here for their help through the deliberations during the budget, they were of great assistance to us. I thank you very much sir, and I look forward to your questions.