

**Chief of Naval Operations  
Adm. Jonathan Greenert  
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## **HAC-D FY16 Posture Hearing Opening Statement**

Thank you Chairman Frelinghuysen, ranking member Visclosky, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Mr. Chairman, you're right, this committee has been wonderful in supporting the building of ships and supporting our Sailors. You're also right that the mix of ships matters, just not the whole number. I thank you for your kind words also.

It's my honor to serve. I have the best job in the world. I get to enable and serve more than 600,000 active and reserve Sailors, Navy civilians, and their families. I'm especially pleased with the 41,000 Sailors who are underway and deployed around the globe today. The dedication and resilience of these people continue to amaze me, Mr. Chairman. The citizens of this nation can take great pride in the daily contributions of their sons and daughters who are out and about around the world today.

I am very pleased to testify this morning beside Secretary Mabus and General Dunford. Your Navy-Marine Corps team is united in fulfilling our longstanding mandate that you mentioned – to be where it matters, when it matters – ready to respond to crises to ensuring the security that underpins the global economy.

Now to that point, recent events exemplify the value of forward presence: last August, the *George H.W. Bush* carrier strike group had to relocate from the north Arabian sea to the north Arabian gulf (about 750 nm) and was on station, ready for combat operations in Iraq and Syria, in less than 30 hours. In that time Navy and Marine strike fighters flew 20-30 combat sorties per day, over Iraq and Syria and for 54 days, they were the only coalition strike option to project power against ISIS; *USS Truxtun* (DDG 103) arrived in the Black Sea to establish a U.S. presence and reassure our allies a week after Russia invaded Crimea; and most of that time was due to paperwork getting established. *USS Fort Worth* (LCS 3), a littoral combat ship, and *USS Sampson* (DDG 102), a destroyer, were among the first to support the Indonesian-led search effort for Air Asia flight 8501 in the Java Sea.

So, we have been where it matters, when it matters.

Mr. Chairman, as I have testified before, the continuing resolution and sequestration in 2013 deeply affected Navy readiness and capabilities. We have not recovered yet.

Navy overall readiness is at its lowest point in many years. Budget reductions forced us to cut afloat and ashore operations, generated ship and aircraft maintenance backlogs, and compelled us to extend unit deployments. Since 2013, many ships have been on deployment for 8-10 months or longer, and that exacts a cost the resiliency of our people, the sustainability of the equipment on the ships, and service lives of the ships themselves.

Our degraded readiness posture has also affected our ability to satisfy contingency response requirements. Now in addition to what is deployed globally today, our combatant commanders require three Carrier Strike Groups and three Amphibious Ready Groups ready to deploy within 30 days to respond to a major crisis. That's our covenant to them. However, on average, we have been able to keep only one carrier strike group and one amphibious ready group in this readiness posture, so we're at a third of the requirement we need to be. Assuming the best case of an on-time, adequate, and stable budget and no major contingencies, we might be able to recover these accumulated backlogs by 2018 for carrier strike groups, and 2020 for amphibious ready groups. So that's five years 5 years after the first round of sequestration. And that's just a glimpse of the damage sequestration can and will cause if we go back there.

Not only do we face several readiness problems, we've been forced to slow Navy modernization. We have lost our momentum in fielding emerging critical capabilities for future fights. We are losing our technical edge. The overall impact of budget shortfalls in the past three years has manifested in the continued decline of our relative warfighting advantages in many areas and notably anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, air-to-air warfare, and what we call the integrated air and missile defense. We have been compelled to accept significant risk in the execution of two key missions of the 2012 defense strategic guidance. I've got a little handout I provided that summarizes what those missions are, and where we stand. The two missions that we have the most risk in; deter and defeat aggression. That means to win a war at sea while deterring another at sea in another different theater. And number two project power in an anti-access/area environment.

Now when I say "risk," I mean that some of our platforms, our people and our systems; They will be arrive late to the fight; they will arrive with insufficient ordnance; and with not superior combat systems, sensors and networks that they need; and they will be inadequately prepared to fight.

This means longer timelines to arrive to fight, like I said, and less time to prevail, if they do. More ships and aircraft out of action when in battle, more Sailors, Marines, and merchant Mariners killed, and less credibility, frankly, to deter adversaries and assure allies in the future.

Given these circumstances, our President's FY16 budget submission represents the absolute minimum funding levels needed to execute our strategic guidance, our strategy.

To bring the Navy program into balance within fiscal guidance, we focused first on building appropriate capability, and then to deliver that capability at a capacity we could afford. Similar to last year, we applied the following six priorities in preparing our program: number one, maintain the Surface Based Strategic Deterrent, that's a homeland defense item. Number two sustain forward presence; develop capability and the capacity to win, improve readiness; develop asymmetric capabilities, and lastly but not least important, sustain the industrial base.

Choices were made using these priorities. For example, we were once again compelled to take reductions in aviation programs, munitions, and shore infrastructure.

So Mr. Chairman, over the last three years, the Navy has been provided budgets \$25 billion less than the president's budget requests. And frankly, if we continue on this track it will be \$55 billion less across this fiscal year defense plan. And the primary result has been deferred modernization. But the cumulative impact has been the loss of current and future readiness and future capability.

Today's world is more complex, more uncertain, and more turbulent. You mentioned it in your opening remarks Mr. Chairman, this trend around the world will likely continue. Our adversaries' are modernizing and expanding their capabilities. It's vital that we have an adequate, predictable, and timely budget to remain an effective Navy.

This budget proposal represents the floor. Any funding level below this submission will require a revision of America's defense strategy. Put simply, it will damage the national security of this country.

I look forward to working with the congress to find solutions that will ensure our Navy retains the ability to organize, train, and equip our great Sailors, and their families, in defense of this nation. Thank you for your continued support and for what this committee has provided your Navy.

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