

Senate Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on the Proposed Fiscal 2014 Defense Authorization as it Relates to the Department of the Navy

April 25, 2013

LEVIN:

Good morning, everybody. Want to welcome Secretary Mabus, Admiral Greenert, General Amos to our committee to testify on the plans and programs of the Department of the Navy in our review of the fiscal year 2014 annual budget request.

We very much appreciate your willingness to accommodate this early starting time for our hearing. It's my goal to conclude the hearing in time for members to attend an all Senators briefing at 10:30 this morning. In order to do that, we're going to have to have a shorter first round when we come to that of either six or seven minutes to give everybody a chance, depending on when that first round begins.

We're grateful to each of you for your service to the national and for the truly professional service of the men and women that you work with. And we're very grateful to their families, all of your families, knowing as you do the vital role that families play in the success of the men and women of our armed forces.

This year, the defense budget situation is particularly challenging. The sequestration required by the Budget Control Act for F.Y. '13 is already having an adverse impact on the Navy and the Marine Corps in the form of deferred maintenance, reduced steaming and flying hours and canceled training and deployments.

This problem will get dramatically worse if sequestration is continued into F.Y. 2014 and beyond and I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses on how this fiscal situation is likely to affect personnel, readiness, modernization in our operations overseas.

The Defense Department's most recent Defense Strategic Guidance issued in January of 2012 refocuses the U.S. military on the Asia Pacific. Consistent with that strategy, the Defense Department has been working to realign U.S. military forces in South Korea and Japan and plans to position Navy and Marine Corps forces further to the south in Australia, Singapore and possibly elsewhere.

The department has also begun implementing a plan to deploy forward -- to deploy forward more ships as shown by the beginning of the Navy's first rotational deployment of a littoral combat ship, the USS Freedom to Singapore in the past few weeks.

As we rebalance and realign our presence in the Asia Pacific it is important that we not only get the strategy right, but that we also ensure that it is sustainable.

With respect to the planned realignment of U.S. Marines currently on Okinawa, Senator McCain, former Senator Webb and I advocated changes to the -- to the 2006 U.S. Japan realignment road map plan to better support U.S. strategic goals of the region while also accounting for the fiscal, political and diplomatic realities associated with long term sustainability.

The April 2012 joint U.S.-Japan announcement of changes to the 2006 plan reflected an appreciation by both governments of the need to make adjustments in order to support the goal of achieving a more viable and sustainable U.S. Marine presence in Japan, Guam, Australia and Hawaii.

The department is currently working to develop the details of this new plan so the final construction schedule and total costs are not yet known. After we receive that plan, we will be in a position to judge it, but until that plan is forthcoming, the committee has deferred action on associated requirements until the conditions that we set are met.

Even in the absence of sequestration, the Department of Defense Authorization Request -- Request raises significant issues.

For example, should we increase the cost cap for the aircraft carrier CVN-78? Should we approve the multiyear procurement authority for the E2D surveillance aircraft? Should we authorize advanced appropriations for the SSN-774 Virginia Class submarine?

For many years, the committee has expressed concern about Navy ship force levels -- ship force levels and -- which have consistently fallen short of the projected needs.

At the same time, Navy and Marine Corps aviation force levels are also under pressure.

The budget provides for a service life extension program on some 150 F-18 aircraft already in the inventory and for the purchase of additional EA-18 G-Electronic warfare aircraft to support land based electronic warfare squadrons but would end the acquisition and production of new F-18 aircraft.

The budget also sustains planned purchases of the Marine Corps and Navy versions of the F-35 joint fighters aircraft -- Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. And while it is encouraging that the Navy is now predicting a strike fighter shortfall of only 18 aircraft compared to earlier projections as high as 250 aircraft. I suspect that estimate would be significantly impacted by sequestration.

The Weapons Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 requires that the Defense Department make significant changes to avoid the kind of costly delays and overruns that have plagued our acquisition system in the past. While this legislation should help correct past problems, I know that we will succeed only through concerted efforts within the executive branch to implement that legislation and we look forward to hearing from our witnesses as to how the department of the Navy is implementing the provisions of the Acquisition Reform Act of 2009.

Finally, I want to commend you, Secretary Mabus, for your efforts to lead on energy efficiency and energy self-reliance. You have placed a strong emphasis on an area where as strong as our military forces may be, we remain subject to the tyranny of energy supplies. You have put deeds behind the commitment to a more sustainable Navy and the nation is stronger for it.

Our witnesses this morning face huge challenges as they strive to balance modernization needs against the costs of supporting ongoing operations and sustaining readiness in the face of across the board cuts from sequestration. Those challenges are made all the more important by the fact that we continue to have roughly 7,000 Marines in Helmand Province in Afghanistan and thousands more Navy and Marine Corps personnel deployed elsewhere around the world.

We appreciate everything that you do and the men and women of the Navy and the Marine Corps to do every day what they do to meet the challenges that this nation faces.

Senator Inhofe?

INHOFE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

INHOFE:

I -- first of all, let me thank all three witnesses for sharing your valuable time with me personally and it was actually helpful to me. I'd say that Secretary Mabus with some of the areas where I'd thought I would have more disagreement with you, that's -- that's kind of changed.

We'll have a chance to cover those things. And I think, Mr. Chairman you covered the budget comments that I would have made, adequately.

Our ability to meet our 30-year shipbuilding goal and recapitalize our sea-based nuclear deterrent will greatly depend upon budget certainty. It's the certainty that's important, I believe. The Navy needs the same level of investment, topping \$20 billion by 2021, and maintaining that level for the following 10 years. And more importantly, this assumes that the department can finally control the runaway costs, and overruns in ship construction. We are not on the right track to accomplish that at this time. The Navy's largest research and development program in fiscal year '14 is the Ohio-class Ballistic Missile Submarine Replacement Program.

A failure to recapitalize our at-seat deterrent on time, would have devastating impacts. I encourage the Navy to aggressively continue to reduce risk and emphasize affordability of this program. The Navy also needs a sustained level of funding for readiness, training and shipyard maintenance, to keep a majority of the fleet fully mission capable. Sequestration in 2013, has resulted in a \$4 billion in maintenance shortfall, and a \$6 billion investment shortfall. In addition,

the Navy has not budgeted for over the \$700 million in unscheduled ship repairs, resulting from a series of sea accidents, sabotage, and major equipment failures.

Now I think you have to budget for these things since these -- these are -- are going to happen. The Navy just released a report stating that shipyards are in such poor shape that at a current funding rate, it would take 17 years just to clear the backlog of critical facility repairs that have been identified to -- to date. Further, the Navy announced in January 2013, yet another reduction in its requirement for Navy combatant vessels from 313 to 306.

Then, the budget request for '14 goes even further. It accelerates the retirement of 16 ships, reducing the combatant force structure to an all time low of 273, down from 289. I think -- I suspect that we'll hear some comments about that in opening remarks. If not, there will be some questions. In addition, while the department has identified a requirement for 33 amphibious ships to support the Marine Corps, the Navy only had 22 of those ships actually available, and fully mission capable and ready to go last year.

Marine Corps readiness continues to be a significant concern. Similar to other services, the Marine Corps has rightfully prioritized deployment and next to deploy Marines in the operations and maintenance accounts. This is at the expense of non-deployed units, and has already -- has resulted in a degradation of the Marine Corps readiness. By the beginning of the calendar year 2014, approximately 15 percent of the -- of Marine ground and aviation units will be below acceptable mission readiness levels. And of course, readiness, risk, lives are all tied together.

This all comes down to risk. As the world is becoming more dangerous, our Navy and Marine Corps are becoming less capable, and less prepared. We're going down a path where readiness and capability are being cut at such a rate, as General Dempsey has said, we'll soon be at a point where it would be immoral to use this force. So we've got problems, and I'm looking forward to your testimony. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much Senator Inhofe. Secretary Mabus, welcome?

MABUS:

Mr. Chairman, thank you. Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of this committee. I first want to thank you for your support for the Department of the Navy, our sailors, our Marines, our civilians, and our families. General Amos, the Commandant of the Marine Corps and Admiral Greenert, the Chief of Naval Operations, and I could not be prouder to represent those steadfast and courageous sailors, Marines and civilians. No matter what missions are given to them, no matter what hardships are asked of them, these men and women serve the nation around the world with skill, and dedication.

In the past year, the Navy and Marine Corps team has continued to conduct a full range of military operations, from combat in Afghanistan, to security cooperation missions in the Pacific, to disaster recovery operations on the streets of Staten Island. In each one of these, sailors and Marines have gotten the job done. As the United States transitions from two land wars in Central Asia, to the maritime-centric defense strategy that was referenced by the chairman, and which was announced 15 months ago, our naval forces will be absolutely critical in the years ahead.

This strategy, which focuses on the Western Pacific, the Arabian Gulf, and continuing to build partnerships around the world, requires a forward deployed, flexible, multi-mission force that is the Navy and Marine Corps, America's Away Team. Within this strategy, we have to balance our missions with our resources. We are working under Secretary Hagel's leadership on a strategic choices and management review to assess how we deal with budget uncertainty facing the department as we go forward. He has directed us to review the basic assumptions that drive the department's investment in force structure, to identify institutional reforms that may be required, including as we always should, those reforms that should be pursued regardless of fiscal pressures.

As he said during recent testimony, everything will be on the table during this review. 2013 has been hard because we began the fiscal year operating under a continuing resolution that gave us little room to be strategic, and to prioritize limiting our ability to manage the Navy and Marine Corps through this new fiscal reality. Thanks to the efforts of this committee, and to your congressional colleagues, we have an appropriation bill for this fiscal year. However, sequestration is still forcing us, as also mentioned by the chairman and the ranking member, to make across the board cuts totaling more than \$4 billion from our operation and maintenance accounts, and about \$6 billion from our investment accounts.

These cuts will have some real impacts. We have prioritized combat operations in Central Command, and deployments to Pacific Command. However, we've had to cancel a number of deployments into Southern Command. In order to maintain our priority deployments in 2013 and 2014, and to meet our global force management allocation plan, funding shortfalls will call our -- cause our units back home to cut back on training and maintenance. Pilots will get less flight time, ships will have less time at sea, and Marines will have less time in the field.

It will take longer for repair parts to arrive when needed. Our facilities ashore will be maintained at a far lower level. The department's 2014 budget request is a return to a measured budget approach, one based on strategy that protects the war-fighters by advancing the priorities I've referred to as four P's; people, platforms, power and partnerships. We're working to make sure that our people are resilient and strong after more than a decade of a very high operations tempo.

We're doing this with programs like Twenty First Century Sailor and Marine. With this program, we aim to bring all of the efforts on protection and readiness, on fitness, and inclusion, and continuum of service together as one coherent whole. This encompasses a wide range of issues

from preventing sexual assault and suicide, to fostering a culture of fitness, to strengthening the force through diversity, to ensuring a successful transition following four years of service, or 40.

In the Marine Corps, we continue decreasing manpower to meet our new end strength of just over 182,000 Marines by fiscal year '16. But we're doing this in a way to keep faith with the Marines, and to help retain the right level of non-commissioned officers and field grade officers, and their experience. We're working to make sure that our sailors and Marines have the tools and the platforms they need to do the missions they are given. One of the most important of these is our fleet. On September 11, 2001, the U.S. Navy had 316 ships. By 2008 after one of the largest build-ups in our nation's military history, that number was down to 278 ships.

MABUS:

In 2008, the Navy put only three ships under contract. Far too few to maintain the size of the fleet or our industrial base. And many of our shipbuilding programs were over budget, behind schedule, or both. One of my main priorities as secretary has been to reverse those trends. Today the fleet is stabilized, and the problems in most of our shipbuilding programs have been corrected, or arrested. We have 47 ships under contract today, 43 of which were contracted since I took office. And our current shipbuilding plan puts us on track for 300 ships in the fleet by 2019.

The way we power our ships and our installations has always been a core and vital issue for the Department of the Navy. We continue to lead in energy as we have throughout our history from sail to coal to oil to nuclear, the Navy has led in moving to new sources of power and every time, it has made us a better warfighting force.

Today, from Marines making power in the field to alternatives on land, on and under the sea and in the air, the Navy and Marine Corps are powering innovations that will maintain our operational edge.

Building partnerships, interoperability, capacity and capability is a crucial component of this defense strategy. The strategy directs that these partnerships be pursued in a low cost small footprint innovative way. This is exactly what the United States Navy and Marine Corps do.

The process we use to craft the department's budget was determined, deliberate and dedicated to our responsibility to you and to the taxpayer. And like the budget resolutions of both the Senate and the House, we do not assume in this budget that sequestration will continue in fiscal year '14.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the budget we are submitting supports the defense strategy. It preserves the readiness of our people and it builds on the success we've achieved in ship building.

For 237 years, our maritime warriors have established a proven record as an agile and adaptable force, forward deployed, we remain the most responsive option to defend the American people and our interests.

Thank you very much.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much, Secretary Mabus.

Admiral Greenert?

GREENERT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Levin, Senator Inhofe, distinguished members of the committee, it's my pleasure to appear before you today to testify on the Navy's fiscal year 2014 budget and our posture. I am honored to represent 613,000 active and reserve sailors, Navy civilians and the families who support them, all who are serving today.

This morning, I will address three points in my testimony -- in my oral testimony, our enduring tenets for decision making, our budget strategy for 2013 and the subsequent carryover that we'll incur and our intended course for 2014.

Two important characteristics of our naval forces describe our mandate that we operate forward where it matters and that we will be ready when it matters.

Our fundamental approach to meeting this responsibility remains unchanged. We organize, man, train and equip the Navy by viewing our decisions through three lens or I call them tenets and they are that war fighting is first, we have to operate forward and we need to be ready. Regardless of the size of our budget or our fleet, these three tenets are the lens through which we evaluate all our decisions.

If you refer to the chart that I've provided in front of you, you will see that on any given day, we have about 50,000 sailors and 100 ships deployed overseas. They are providing forward presence.

The orange bowties, if you will, on the chart represent what I call the maritime crossroads where shipping lanes and our security concerns intersect. A unique strength of your fleet is that it operates forward from U.S. bases represented by circles on the chartlet and from places provided by partner nations represented by squares on the chartlet.

Now these places are critical to your Navy being where it matters because they enable us to respond rapidly to crises and enable us to sustain forward presence with fewer ships by reducing the number of ships on rotational deployments.

The reverse side of the chartlet will describe the plan for our deployments showing the rebalance to the Asia Pacific while sustaining our Mid East posture.

In February, we faced a shortfall of about \$8.6 billion in our 2013 operations and maintenance account. Since then, we received a 3013 appropriation in March and I thank this committee for their work in that regard. In accordance with our priorities and tenets, we plan to invest our remaining 2013 operations and maintenance funds to fund our must pay items such as contracts, leases and utilities to reconcile our 2013 presence with our combatant commanders and to conduct a training and maintenance for forces next to deploy and to prepare to meet our 2014 global force management allocation plan responsibilities. And also, we'll restore critical base operations and renovation projects.

Although we intend to meet our most critical operational commitments to the combatant commanders, sequestration still leaves us with a \$4.1 billion O&M shortfall and a \$6 billion investment shortfall. This will result in our surge capacity of fully mission capable carrier strike groups, amphibious ready groups being reduced by two-thirds through 2014.

Further, we will have deferred about \$1.2 billion in facility maintenance as well as depot level maintenance for 84 aircraft and 184 engines.

Combined, our operations and maintenance and investment shortfalls leave us \$9 billion worth of carryover challenge for 2014. A continuation of sequestration in 2014 will compound this carryover challenge from \$9 billion to \$23 billion. Further, accounts and activities we were able to protect in 2013 such as manpower and nuclear maintenance and critical fleet operations will be liable to a reduction in 2014.

Our people have remained resilient in the face of this uncertainty and I have been amazed throughout this process with their patience and their dedication that of our sailors and our civilians.

Now our 2014 budget submission supports the defense strategic guidance and enables us to maintain our commitments in the Middle East and to rebalance to the Asia Pacific. We prepared this budget with the following priorities.

One, to deliver overseas precedence in accordance with our global force management allocation plan.

And two, to continue our near term investments and address challenges in the Middle East and in the Asia Pacific region.

Three, we want to develop long term capabilities at the appropriate capacity to address warfighting challenges in the Middle East and the Asia Pacific.

Our budget submission continues to invest in future fleet. We've requested \$44 billion in ships, submarines, manned and unmanned aircraft, weapons, cyber and other procurement programs such as the Joint Strike Fighter, littoral combat ship, unmanned aerial vehicles, the DDG-1000 and the P8A Poseidon, just to name a few.

These investments will deliver a fleet of 300 ships by 2019 with greater interoperability and greater flexibility when compared to today's fleet.

We also continue to fund important high technology and asymmetric capabilities such as the laser weapon system for small boat and drone defense which will deploy aboard the ship Ponce (ph) in the spring of 2014.

Also in 2014, we will deploy on the carrier George Herbert Walker Bush, a successfully tested prototype system to detect and defeat advanced wake homing torpedoes.

We continue to grow manpower by about 4,600 sailors in this submission compared to last year's budget and these new sailors will reduce our manning gaps at sea, will enhance our cyber capabilities and will improve our waterfront training.

We will continue to address our critical readiness and safety degraders such as sexual assault, suicide, increased operational tempo and our at sea manning.

Mr. Chairman, this budget places our Navy on a good course which enables us to meet the requirements of the defense strategic guidance today while building a relevant future force and sustaining our manpower for tomorrow. We appreciate everything you and the committee have done for the sailors and civilians of our Navy as well as the families.

And we again ask for your support in removing the burden of sequestration so that we can better train, better equip and deploy properly these -- for these brave men and women in our defense of our nation.

LEVIN:

Admiral, thank you so much.

General Amos?

AMOS:

Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Inhofe and members of the committee, I'm pleased to appear before you today to outline the 2013 posture of your United States Marine Corps.

I'm equally pleased to be sitting alongside my service Secretary, the Honorable Ray Mabus and my good friend and fellow shipmate, Admiral John Greenert, the Chief of Naval Operations.

For more than 237 years, the Marine Corps has been a people intense force. We have always known our greatest asset is the single individual Marine that is born true yet again during 12 years of hard combat.

Our unique role as America's principle crisis response force is grounded in the legendary character and warfighting ethos of the United States Marine. Today's Marines are ethical warriors forged by challenging training and made wise through decades of combat.

You can take great pride in knowing that as we gather here this morning in this hearing, some 30,000 Marines are forward deployed around the world promoting peace, protecting our nation's interests and securing its defense.

Sergeant-Major Michael Barrett, Sergeant-Major of the Marine Corps and I recently returned from Afghanistan and can attest to the progress there. Marines have given the Afghan people a vision of success and the possibility of a secure and prosperous society. I'm bullish about the positive assistance we are providing the people of the Helmand Province and I remain optimistic about their future.

AMOS:

Afghan security forces have the lead now in almost every single operation. Our commanders and their Marines assess the Afghan National Security Forces as overmatching the Taliban in every way and in every single engagement.

Speaking today as both a service chief and as a member of Joint Chiefs of Staff, the foundation of our nation's defense and the security of the global economic environment depends upon regional stability and international order.

Failing to provide leadership in the collective security of the global order will have significant consequences for the American people.

Worse, a lapse in American leadership and forward engagement will create a void in which lasting security threats will be left unaddressed and new security challenges will find room to grow.

The reality of today's security environment reveals the true value of forward-deployed naval presence. Sea-based naval forces support a proactive security strategy all while treading lightly on our allies' and our partners' sovereign territory.

Amphibious forces are a sensible and unmistakable solution in preserving our national security. Naval forces and the Marine Corps in particular are our nation's insurance policy.

We are a hedge against an uncertain and unpredictable world. A balanced air-ground logistics team, we respond in hours and days to America's needs not in weeks and in months. This is our raison d'être. It has always been that way.

This year's baseline budget submission of \$24.2 billion was framed by our following service level priorities:

Number one, we will continue to provide the best trained and equipped Marine units to Afghanistan.

Secondly, we'll protect the readiness of our forward-deployed and rotational forces.

Third, we will reset and reconstitute our operating forces as our Marines and our equipment return from nearly 12 years of combat.

Fourth, as much as is humanly possible, we will modernize our force through investing in the individual Marine first and by replacing aging combat systems second.

And, lastly, we will keep faith with our Marines, our sailors and our families.

We have remained committed to these priorities in fiscal year '13 despite the loss of \$775 million in operations and maintenance funding as a result of sequestration.

To guarantee near-term readiness, we have traded long-term infrastructure and non-deployed unit training to bolster the readiness of our next to deploy forces.

By doing so, we are capable of meeting all current (inaudible) requirements for the remainder of this fiscal year. However, we cannot continue to sustain this level of reduction in F.Y.-'14 without impact to our deployed and next to deploy forces.

Sequestration in '14 will mean that more than half of our non- forward-deployed ground and aviation units will have readiness ratings of C3 or below.

Ladies and gentleman, your Marine Corps is well aware of the fiscal realities confronting our nation. During these times of constrained resources, the Marine Corps remains committed to being responsible stewards of scarce public funds.

In closing, the success of your Marines and your Marine Corps is directly linked to the unwavering support of Congress and the American people. You have my promise that during our economic challenges, the Marine Corps will only ask for what it needs not for what it wants.

We will continue to prioritize and make the hard decisions before we ever come before Congress. We will continue to offer a strategically mobile force optimized for forward presence and rapid response.

Your Marine Corps stands ready to respond whenever the nation calls and whenever the president may direct.

Once again, I thank this committee for your strong support over the last many, many years and I look forward to your questions.

LEVIN:

Thank you so much, General Amos.

Let's have a six-minute round. I hope to get everybody in time. If there's a few minutes left, then we can see if there's additional questions.

Secretary, General Amos just talked about what the effect of continuing sequestration would be if the assumption which is made in the budgets that we have adapted, both the president's budget and the House and Senate budget that proved not to be true.

If, as you point out, the assumption that sequestration will not continue in 2014 proves to be a false assumption, can you tell us what the effect would be if sequestration occurs in the next fiscal year, the one that we're considering right now?

MABUS:

Mr. Chairman, the effects would be wide-reaching, deep and incredibly damaging. For the Navy, we have met all our deployments for this year following the passage of the appropriations bill.

We are training to meet all our deployments for next year. However, the risk that we are taking is that we are maintaining ships and aircraft in lesser amounts.

We are maintaining our bases at very low levels. Except for emergency repairs, we are essentially not doing repairs on those bases.

In terms of investments, for ships, there is a term cost-to- complete and it's things like documentation, all the government- furnished equipment being put on the ship, things like that, we have moved those further out so that they're not required to be paid for today.

But that bill will come due and it will be very difficult for us to complete ships or to get to the level of ship-building that we need to.

For the Marine Corps, they're -- as the commandant said, they have put their money into readiness today because they have to be our first to deploy, always ready force. They have to be ready every day.

If sequestration continues, the degradation to training would not only occur in units at home, it would begin to occur in the units next to deploy.

The harm of sequestration is number one, in its amount, but, number two -- and number two is in the fact that it allows us no planning time, no ramp time to get ready. And, number three, that it is -- does not allow money to be matched against strategy.

It's a fairly mindless way of cutting funds. And so while the effects are very real in '13, the effects will be far more damaging and far-reaching should it continue into '14.

LEVIN:

Thank you. The -- do you know how much the OCO funding is going to be or the request for OCO for FY14 yet? Has that number been established?

MABUS:

No.

LEVIN:

In the past, witnesses have told our committee that the Navy and Marine Corps will require at least two to three years of additional Overseas Contingency Operations, or OCO, funding after the end of combat operations just to bring equipment and personnel back to a state of readiness.

Is that your position as well?

MABUS:

That is and I'd like for both Admiral Greenert and General Amos to answer this, but the Department of the Navy has been moving funding previously expended under OCO back into our base budget very aggressively.

But we have OCO-related expenses for both Navy and Marine Corps, particularly in terms of reset for the Marine Corps, but also in terms of maintenance for our ships which is the Navy's version of reset.

LEVIN:

Admiral.

GREENERT:

As the Secretary said, a reset is the key term to cover those years following a completion of operations in the Middle East. For us, it's the depot work that didn't get done while we spent the extra time supporting operations in the Middle East.

We've captured that amount and quantified it. It's relatively modest compared to the Marine Corps' numbers, which I'll turn over to the Commandant.

But, as the Secretary said, my opinion, Mr. Chairman, we need a strategy in order to move ahead. Supplementals have been around for years and years, decades.

We've had supplementals for various reasons and I believe it would be a good idea if we could work through a strategy to -- as we move from this OCO, to determine what's an appropriate way to deal with emergent costs for emergent operations.

LEVIN:

General?

AMOS:

Chairman, two to three years is a good marker on the table. It's a function of physically being able to get all of the equipment -- the remaining equipment out of Afghanistan and actually getting it through the depots and back reset to the fleet.

If sequestration continues, and we're planning on it, that's going to be in the long run, a 75 percent reduction in our depot capacity. Because it's going to reduce civilian manpower, contractors and everything else to reduce -- so, I mean it is going to have an impact. That two to three years could go to the right, but for us it's two to three years, about \$2.3 billion to reset the Marine Corps, and get all of our equipment out.

LEVIN:

Thank you. Senator Inhofe?

INHOFE:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have two areas I want to, in this brief period of time, to address. One is during -- a couple of days ago during one of our hearings, I cited having to do with the Article 60, the incidents where a convening authority overturned a particular conviction, and I covered all four services. And I was -- mistakenly there was an article saying I didn't think that sexual assaults were a reality. That was wrong. That was corrected after that.

However, as far as the Marines and the Navy are concerned, the -- from the year 2010 to 2012 in the Marines, as you and I talked about General Amos, there were 1,768 court martials resulting in findings of guilty in seven out of those. That's 0.4 percent that were overturned by the convening authority. In the Navy it's a little bit more -- a little stronger a case in terms of the -- how things are working. 16,000, this is over a decade, 2002 to 2012, 16,056 special and general court martial cases resulting in findings of guilty, there are only two in -- in the Navy.

And I -- I -- I state that because I think we need to put it into perspective. So I am sending each of you a letter, and -- the letter actually to the chiefs and I wanted, Mr. Chairman to have this a part of the record at this point?

LEVIN:

It will be made part of the record.

INHOFE:

And then I would only, I think we can come down to a couple of -- of ideas, or conclusions that I feel strongly about. First, Secretary Hagel came out with a solution, it was a suggestion I guess it was, and I thought it was very generous. He was wanting to change the convening authority's jurisdiction on post conviction trials. And I -- I thought that that was giving up more than I thought should be given up and be considered. These commanders have the responsibility of -- of sending our kids in where -- where their lives could be lost, and certainly that's something that is very significant.

That's an authority that they have, and should keep. So, I would like to ask each one of you in terms of the suggestion that Secretary Hagel had on just addressing the post-sentencing authority, and -- and -- and then also, there's a review going on that's going to be convening this summer. Wouldn't it be better to address this after we get the results of this hearing and the -- the study that's taking place this summer? Those are the two questions I would ask each one of you, starting with you Secretary Mabus?

MABUS:

Thank you Senator. The legislative proposal that's being done under the direction of Secretary Hagel, is to take away the power of a convening authority to change the findings of a court martial, which is a very narrow exception. And I think -- and I support this, as do all of the -- the judge advocate generals of -- of all the services. And I think it's a representation of how our military justice system has matured over the past 50 or 60 years. You now have professional prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and a very strong appeals process.

What it does not do, and I know that General Amos and Admiral Greenert are concerned about this, and we'll talk more specifically about it, what it does not do is take away any authority in terms of convening, in terms of post trial sentence relief, or clemency. And it seems to be a very directed, and very fair and prudent change to make. Finally in regard to the panel that was set up by the NDAA, while it's true that it will begin meeting this summer, I believe the results will not be out for about 18 months, and this seems to be an -- an area, because of the attention that it's gotten, that needs to be acted on sooner than that. But it will be a congressional decision, and not a -- not a DOD decision.

INHOFE:

OK, I would say to the -- you generally agree with Secretary Mabus? Because I'm almost out of time here.

GREENERT:

I do agree.

INHOFE:

OK.

AMOS:

Sir, I'm probably just a little bit out of synch. I think we need to proceed cautiously. I support secretary's -- Secretary Hagel's panels that he's setting up. I think that's exactly the right way to go. And I just think we need -- that we just need to be cautious about what it is that we're trying to fix, what the problem is that we're trying to fix.

INHOFE:

I appreciate that and I do -- I'm in more agreement with you on this. And Secretary Mabus, I've been critical for quite some time over the over 400,000 gallons of fuel and all of this stuff in -- in terms of how much money it -- it costs. And this come out of the -- the budget, the war-fighting budget. The Department of Energy which was started in 1977, was set up for this very reason and I -- I'm going to put into the record the mission statement of that today, which shows that, in my opinion as I look at it, they are the ones who need to be making these determinations.

If our concern is to do away with our reliance upon foreign countries, we can do that quite easily just by developing the resources that we have right now. You've heard me say this, I'm sure you're -- you're tired of hearing it. But the one thing that I learned during our conversation, Mr. Secretary, was that you have -- that the Department of Defense will not make bulk purchases, I'm reading now, of alternative drop in replacement fuels, unless they are cost competitive with petroleum products. Is that the -- the commitment that -- that you would make at this time?

MABUS:

It's a commitment I have made. I made it to this committee last -- last year at this very hearing. But Senator, in terms of needing alternative sources, I applaud the fact that our resources are going up, in terms of fossil fuels. And we should certainly continue that. However, oil is the ultimate global commodity, and the prices are not set here, they are set around the world. In the last three years, the Department of the Navy has been hit with additional fuel bills, over and above what we had budgeted for of \$1.5 billion to pay for unexpected oil price shocks.

That -- that amount of money comes directly from our operations accounts or maintenance accounts and if the bill gets too big, it will come from platforms. And I simply think that that is unacceptable, and I think it's irresponsible for us not to address this sort of military vulnerability. And I am confident, I'm absolutely positively confident that by the time we begin buying bulk

amounts of bio-fuels, which is one important, but fairly small part of this whole -- whole effort, is that it will be competitive with -- with petroleum products.

INHOFE:

Yes, but we had the language in there to be sure that, that -- that, that is -- will be the case. And I'm old-fashioned enough to still believe in supply and demand. And once we open up our resources here, we're going to be -- I think that's going to positively affect the cost that are -- that we'll have to bear.

MABUS:

Well, you and I -- you and I, Senator, agree very enthusiastically on the free market. And I simply think that relying on one kind -- type of fuel, which is a monopoly today, is not a prudent thing to do.

INHOFE:

I think the safeguard you have is -- is satisfactory. Thank you.

MABUS:

Thank you.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much, Senator.

By the way, on the 18-month provision that you refer to for the first report on the powers of a convening authority, it says no more than 18 months and I hope it wouldn't take anywhere near that amount. Secondly, in terms of proposed changes in the legislation that follow that, there's another panel that we've created, I hope will review that. It's much too long a process, I think unnecessary, because there's a -- kind of a growing, I think -- if not a consensus, there's a growing understanding that we've got to do something at the end of the process relative to reversing the findings.

They have been rare, as I think Senator Inhofe has pointed out, and that means this would not be disruptive to just focus on that one narrow part of the process. And I hope we'll do that in this year's defense authorization bill.

LEVIN:

Senator Manchin?

MANCHIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Mabus and Admiral Greenert and of course General Amos, I thank you all for your service, and also for the quality of men and women that serve in the Navy, and in the Marines. I know a lot of people wouldn't know it, but in West Virginia, geography wise we're not maybe at the largest body of water, but we do have a -- a real close tie to the Navy, and -- and we cherish that.

Sugar Grove Naval Base in Pendleton County, as you know, is a strategic position and has been a strategic asset for a long time for the Navy and we know that might be changing and we look forward to working with you on -- as the changes come about to make sure that we're able to serve this country and the continued future.

We also have, in the Rocket Center, Navy at the Rocket Center at the Allegany Ballistics Laboratory, which I think you just designated as the Navy Enterprise Data Center, which is extremely important.

We appreciate that and we're proud of that designation and want to continue as that partner with you all.

Let me ask this to Secretary Mabus, if I may. I know we talked about sequestering and sequestering is now starting to hit and we're seeing the effects of it.

I think it was very Draconian how it's been implemented across the board. None of us run our lives that way. So we've talked about flexibility. And I know there's an awful lot of politics in this whole flexibility.

But I think when we look at the security of our nation, are you too far or are we too far down the road with sequestration since there's a \$42.5 billion cut between now and September 20th or October 1st? And, between that time, we've got to come up with a budget or we continue the way that legislation is written.

If we were able to vote, as a body, to give you the flexibility, the Department of Defense, to pick and choose where the \$42.5 billion of cuts would come from, are you too far down the road to make a difference or could you change quickly enough to stop some of the Draconian things that are happening?

MABUS:

I think the short answer is no, we're not too far down the road. The flexibility in terms of whether it's under the traditional reprogramming or something else would certainly be welcome.

What I don't want to imply is that that would solve anything for '14 because it...

MANCHIN:

Sure, we know that. I'm just trying to get you through this fiscal year, October 1...

MABUS:

And I appreciate that.

MANCHIN:

And to me it just makes sense, sir. As a former governor and we have a few former governors on this committee, we understand that it's tough sometimes, but working -- sometimes you can work through these things and we're just hoping that you're still in that position if we can make something happen for you.

MABUS:

Thank you.

MANCHIN:

The other thing I would ask is on the Sugar Grove, which we just talked about, and I think we've been asking you all for your assistance on that to try to help us find -- anyone can comment on that, to try to help us.

Maybe, Admiral, you might have more input on that.

GREENERT:

Well, I'll give you a better written answer, but my Fleet Cyber Commander Admiral Rogers and I are talking about that. How do we make that adjustment directed by Cyber Command, it makes sense.

So we use the civilian cyber warriors we have properly and make the best of an activity which has been around for quite some time supporting us. I'll give you a better written answer.

MANCHIN:

If you could do that and, also, if could ask, and I know this is - with your schedules, but if there's a time that we could meet there, myself and Senator Rockefeller, would love to meet with you all there.

If you haven't had a chance to visit there, the assets the Navy has there is unbelievable and we'd like to be able to work with you all.

GREENERT:

Yes, sir.

MANCHIN:

We do that -- maybe we'll schedule that with your staff.

And, Secretary, I think this might come back to you and really to General Amos and to the Admiral also.

I know there's - and, General Amos, the Marine Corps is reducing by 20,000 Marines and there are civilian -- I guess civilian furloughs that have been looming and hiring freezes in place for many of the DOD civilian positions.

Sir, I think you know my position on contracting. It's not real favorable. Do you know how many contractors we will still have and are they being -- are we downsizing our contracting fleet in proportion to our military fleet?

MABUS:

You ask a question that I asked, exactly how many do we have. The best answer that I've got is for the Department of the Navy we've got a little over 170,000 contractors or contracts out there.

And we are moving...

MANCHIN:

That's just the Navy, right?

MABUS:

The Department of the Navy.

MANCHIN:

I've got you. Yes, sir.

MABUS:

We're moving pretty aggressively to go into these things and we've set up something called "contract courts." It's got a more formal name, but that's what we call it.

And it makes every contracting officer come in every year and say here are the contracts I've got, here's why I need them, here's the best price I can get, this sort of thing.

And we're going to get more -- we're moving toward becoming more aggressive on that, which is instead of saying here are the contracts I've got, tell the contracting authorities come in at zero and say, here's what I need because I think that there's still some areas that we can make a difference here.

It's too opaque right now. It's too hard to get into.

MANCHIN:

Let me just real quick, my time's running out, but on auditing you know that myself and Senator Coburn have put in legislation to have the Department of Defense audited.

Would that -- does that cause a problem with the Secretary -- I mean with the Navy that -- to meet this auditing that we've been talking about?

MABUS:

Senator, I started my elective career as State Auditor of Mississippi.

MANCHIN:

Yes, sir.

MABUS:

I'm a big fan of auditing, but I'm going to brag on the Navy and Marine Corps right now. The Marine Corps audit is underway right now and we're expecting...

MANCHIN:

Thank you, General.

MABUS:

(inaudible) soon. The Navy's audit will be ready to go...

MANCHIN:

So that doesn't create...

MABUS:

We think by the end of the year...

MANCHIN:

The auditing does not create a hardship for you? The Navy can meet that auditing requirement.

MABUS:

We are meeting it. I don't know about adding a layer on there, but we're meeting it...

MANCHIN:

No, we're not going to put no layers on it. We just...

MABUS:

(inaudible)

MANCHIN:

Thank you, sir. I appreciate it. Sorry.

LEVIN:

Thank you, Senator Manchin.

Senator McCain.

MCCAIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the witnesses.

Admiral Greenert, due to sequester, the Navy is faced with the prospect of two-thirds of the fleet will not be fully mission capable by the end of the year. Is that correct?

GREENERT:

Yes, sir, those that are not on deployment. So if you're not on deployment or just ready to go, two-thirds will be what we call C3, and that's capability rating, or less.

MCCAIN:

So they will not be ready to replace those rotating back out?

GREENERT:

Typically, we have about a half the fleet at C3 or C4. They're in the progress of getting ready to deploy. That will increase to two-thirds from one-half.

MCCAIN:

General Amos, by the end -- you said recently by the end of this year, more than 50 percent of my combat units will be below minimal acceptable level of readiness for deployment to combat. Is that still the case?

AMOS:

Yes, Senator, it is.

MCCAIN:

If the sequester is not fixed, Admiral Greenert, are you ready to identify where you would have to cut your budget?

GREENERT:

We're not -- I can't give you specific program and budget line now, but we are working on that right now. We're working within the department and we're working with the Department of Defense staff. It's called a strategic concepts management review.

MCCAIN:

But you are working on the eventuality of actions that need to be taken -- budgetary actions that need to be taken in case sequester is not repealed?

GREENERT:

We are working that within the department, yes, sir.

MCCAIN:

General?

AMOS:

Senator, we absolutely are. We're under the assumption that sequester will stand. It's law and the pain of that will be a Marine Corps that's going to be below 182,000.

So the immediate impacts will be a drastic reduction, probably rifts in the Marine corps to some number below that once the strategic choices is leveled out and gives us the amount of money we have.

But it'll be civilians, it'll be military, it'll be programmatic and severe -- and the cuts will be severe.

MCCAIN:

Well, one of our problems is that the budget that has been submitted to Congress does not take into account the effects of sequestration, assuming that sequester will be repealed.

So I'm glad to hear that at least at your level, you are planning on actions that need to be taken if sequester is not repealed.

General Amos, earlier this week General Odierno testified that sequester will produce a hollow Army. Will it have the same effect on the Marine Corps?

AMOS:

Absolutely, Senator.

MCCAIN:

And, General Amos, from talking to -- and Admiral Greenert, to a lot of young officers, this is having a significant effect on the morale and willingness to retain high quality, noncommissioned, as well as commissioned officers -- junior officers.

Is that correct? Is that a correct impression that I have from conversations with our senior NCOs and captains and majors and lieutenant commanders and lieutenants?

AMOS:

Senator, we're not seeing that right now. In fact, the retention, both of our enlisted ranks, and our officer corps is very, very high, so -- but -- but I will say that with an err of caution because as we go through sequestration, the full impacts take place and we come back from 12 years of combat, there's going to be a sea change in the Marine Corps, and it wouldn't surprise me at all to find that the retention will become challenging.

GREENERT:

It's the word -- simple word, predictability. They ask us, so what's the predictability? How can I plan my future? And that's the case, Senator. What cause -- my retention rate right now is good, but there are some signs here, and there. I attribute it to increased operations right now based on the skill-set of the Navy Enlisted Classification Code, and pilots, nukes, that nature right now. But it's about predictability, Senator.

MCCAIN:

Secretary Mabus, the repositioning, or unfortunate word pivot that was used to Asia-Pacific, how much credibility do we have when we consider that we continue to have our Navy shipbuilding plan continue to decline now to 270 ships in fiscal year '15?

MABUS:

Well, actually Senator, I think that our credibility remains high. If you look at our shipbuilding plan that takes the -- the fleet up to 300 ships by the end of 2019, and the fact that we are forward-deploying for Littoral Combat Ships in Singapore. The first one is there on its maiden deployment today. The fact that -- that we are putting our new build and our most capable ships into the Pacific, and the fact that 60 percent of our fleet will be in the Pacific by the end of the decade.

MCCAIN:

So, we are planning -- you are planning on, by what year?

MABUS:

2019 to have 300 ships in the fleet.

MCCAIN:

We will remember those -- that testimony, Secretary Mabus, because it isn't going to happen. Admiral Greenert, 30 year shipbuilding plan reflects a reduction of the fleet to 270 ships in 2015. How many ships of the right capabilities do you think the Navy needs?

GREENERT:

I need 306 ships of the right capabilities to do the jobs assigned to me in accordance with the strategic guidance we have today.

MCCAIN:

So you need 306 and we're going to be down to 270 by 2015, and -- and you believe that we're going to add 30 more ships, plus those that need to be replaced by 2019?

GREENERT:

Based on the ships we have under construction today, yes Sir. That -- that -- we have 47 ships under contract or in construction today.

MCCAIN:

I'd like to see those -- those numbers for the record, please? I thank the witnesses, and it's interesting that we are now in a panic mode because the FAA is delaying flights. We don't seem to be concerned about the testimony that you, and other uniformed leaders have given to Congress about the devastating effect on our national security of sequestration. It's one of the more embarrassing moments for me in the many years that I have had the honor of serving here in this body. I thank you Mr. Chairman.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much Senator McCain. Senator King?

KING:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you all gentleman for being here this morning, and -- and for your service. Admiral, I'd like to begin by -- a comment about the Navy. I -- my hometown, is Brunswick, Maine. And for about 60 years, as you know, we were the home of the Brunswick Naval Air Station. Losing that station was a tremendous blow to our community, but it was a blow in a way -- certainly economic -- business, and the economic effect. But as a resident of

that community, with kids in the schools, the loss of the Navy personnel was -- was a tremendous loss for us because of what they contributed to the community.

Teaching in Sunday School, coaching in the Little League, kids in the schools. The Navy added so much to our community, and this is just a way of -- of complimenting you on the quality of people that you have. Because we -- they were our friends and neighbors for so many years. And the -- the economic loss we can calculate, but the -- the -- the community, the loss to the community of the -- the Navy personnel was -- was incalculable. And I -- I just want to convey that to you. We -- we regret that decision. Secretary Mabus and -- and -- and Admiral, talk to me about how you envision the future of the Navy's destroyer force?

We continue to retire frigates. The decision several years ago not to procure the next generation cruiser, it seems like destroyers will fill multiple roles in -- in the Navy. Can you give me, Admiral, a -- an idea of how you see the destroyer -- the future of the destroyer fleet?

GREENERT:

The -- we need 88, we call them large-surface combatants, and that's cruisers and destroyers. So, as we phase out the cruisers that we have, destroyers will, if you will, replace them. The destroyer of today, the -- the ones built for example in Bath, Maine. Very high-end ship, in fact much higher end, if you will, capability wise. Has more capability than a cruiser. It's multi-mission, it's a -- it's a fantastic vessel right now. So, the future is we need 88, we have 84. We're growing, and we'll continue to grow through this decade. And we need to sustain that. To do that into the '20's, we need to build about two and a half a year on -- on average of these -- these destroyers, or the ship like them.

Now I'd add to this that in 2016, we will add a capability, the Advanced Missile Defense Radar, which will make the -- the current Arleigh Burke vastly more capable, even more capable. Missile defense capable, in addition to anti-air capable. And we call it, Integrated Air Missile Defense.

KING:

How do you intend to -- to leverage the technology that's been developed for the DDG-1000? That's an amazing ship as well.

(OFF-MIKE)

GREENERT:

Yeah, we get a lot of engineering technology from -- from that ship. That is, its fuel efficiency, as well as the reduced manning. So we'll take that capability as well as the -- the stealthiness that the ship provides. There's a good element of ASW, the sonar, the whole mounted sonar, and the towed array sonar that we would want to back-fit as much as feasible in destroyers.

MABUS:

And we are putting the radar that came out of the DDG- 1000, the dual-band radar, on our aircraft carriers now.

KING:

So, that -- that technology is being used in other -- other areas?

MABUS:

Yes.

KING:

I -- I -- I think it was the admiral that used the phrase that I want to hear, these three words in the same sentence, reducing nuclear maintenance. Talk to me about the -- the impact on maintenance of the sequester, which we talked about today? I -- I find that -- to -- to me, not doing maintenance isn't a savings. It's simply deferring the cost to a later date, and it will probably be more expensive at that point. Your thoughts?

GREENERT:

Well, Senator it's -- if you're talking -- those numbers, which are the ones I was referring to, is \$23 billion. It's a balance of sustaining the force of today. That force -- and that would be the maintenance, and the readiness of it, the force structure today in, the number of ships and aircraft, and building the future fleet. To me, to do this in a balanced manner. If we -- if we defer all -- if we ensure that we do all of the nuclear maintenance that needs to get done, we bring all of the non-nuclear maintenance to kind of - to parade rest, to -- to very little, and I -- I can't do that.

We have to have a balance towards that. And those numbers at that level, make it difficult for me to see how we could preclude needing to -- to reduce the number of shipyard workers. We have that capacity, and therefore, the amount of ships -- ship maintenance that would go on.

KING:

Gentleman, I've been going to these hearings now for a couple of months, and every single uniformed and civilian official in defense and also on -- I'm on the Intelligence Committee, and the intelligence community has told me that they have never seen a more dangerous, volatile and complex period of threats to the United States. And yet at the same time, we are going through the sequester and hollowing out our services, which has been testified. What -- what are we doing to ourselves?

I -- I mean it -- I just don't understand it. And -- and I think Senator McCain made the point that, you know everybody knows about the delays at the -- at the airports, but what's happening to you are putting not only our soldiers and sailors at risk, but our people at risk. Am I overstating this -- this problem?

AMOS:

Senator, I don't think you are at all.

I had a little bit of an advantage. A couple of years ago I spent almost a year with a very elite team, working on trying to determine what the future security environment would look like. And -- and that was an international team so -- to include corporate America.

I think your -- your sense for the world we're in is accurate. I see no indication that the world's getting any nicer. I think all you have to do is look at the Washington Post on Sunday and you can start from the front and go all the way to the back and you can see that.

So from my perspective, it is every bit as dangerous and perhaps because it will be spread out, it could be considerably more dangerous in the future. From -- from my perspective as a service chief, I think that dictates -- it's a predicate for us to remain engaged in the world as we're the only global superpower on this planet. We have people that count on us for leadership. They expect us to be leaders and so that's part of why I said what I said in my opening statement. We are global leaders, we have a responsibility globally and internationally, quite honestly, very selfishly in my (inaudible). that's created what the Navy and Marine Corps teams are able to do is be out there engaging in, and representing the interest of the United States of , and representing the interest of the United States of America.

KING:

Thank you, gentlemen.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much, Senator King.

Senator Donnelly?

DONNELLY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Admiral, thank you; Mr. Secretary, thank you; General, thank you.

And as you know, our state of Indiana is proud to be a key center for naval operations at NSWC Crane and the dedicated people there work night and day to keep our servicemembers safe and we want you to know we are proud to be your inland Navy.

In regards to China, Admiral, when you look at the threats that are out there, can you give us an update on their development of anti- ship ballistic missiles and what the intention of that program is? And do you consider that a game changer in regards to our aircraft carrier reliance?

GREENERT:

My assessment would be they -- they want to be -- China wants to be able to influence what we'd call within the first island chain, roughly a thousand miles and in. The first island being -- if you're familiar with that...

DONNELLY:

Yes, sir.

GREENERT:

... the Philippine Islands (ph) (inaudible) -- they want to be able to influence that area and -- and to a great degree, it's a defensive measure for the -- for the mainland that -- they looking to that area as their -- they call it their near sea and they want to have the ability to -- to defend it if you will as they -- as they need to.

Is it a game changer? It certainly could be, it depends. But in a perhaps more classified setting...

DONNELLY:

Sure.

GREENERT:

... I could describe to you. We haven't been standing around wringing our hands.

There's a -- a series of events that has to take place for something like that. You have to find, you know, you have to have the right detection, you have to classify it, you have to be able to target, you have to know when to launch it, you have to have confidence in that launch, it has to go through its long sequence. Then do you shoot it down? Do you deceive it? Do you jam it? And then lastly, do you shoot a bullet -- with a bullet? All of these things go through what we call the kill chain and we study that very closely.

DONNELLY:

Well that was going to be my next question was, the current capability in regards to countering that, but as you said, perhaps a more classified setting would be more appropriate for that.

And in regards to the balance of power in submarines, you know, you hear of the Chinese bringing a submarine on and the discussion of other nations seeing how important this is. In regards to where we are today in helping to control the seas and the strength of our submarine

program, where would you -- has that -- has our premier position changed at all in the last year and -- and if so, how and what do you see five years from now?

GREENERT:

Well, Senator, simplistically, I'd say we own the undersea domain and we still do and I have empirical data that convinces me of that and I watch it very closely. And it is our job to keep that asymmetric advantage for the future.

I believe it is our asymmetric advantage -- one of our asymmetric advantages and it's our job -- my job to come to you and show you how we can sustain that.

DONNELLY:

OK.

General, your Marines have done an extraordinary job in Afghanistan and as we look toward the next year or two ahead, for instance, Helmand Province, do we have the confidence of the people in Helmand Province as we move forward in this process, that they have some confidence level that they'll be able to be protected? That they'll be able to have a life that they can protect their children and -- and have a decent life?

AMOS:

Senator, they do. The chemistry has changed dramatically over the last four and a half years. It's leadership -- it's leadership by the provisional governor, Governor Naeemi, the district governors, mayors and the Afghan National Security Forces.

The Taliban have been -- I'm not saying they're not there, they are there. But they have been marginalized to the point where the Afghan National Security Forces have become strong enough where they can -- they can handle this themselves. So we are -- we are today, turning over -- I've already said major operations belong to the Afghan National Security Forces. We don't write op plans any more, we just write supporting plans. So we're there as a backup.

But -- but the actual kind of control of -- of the -- the districts, the Afghans have got it. So in -- in Helmand, the answer is yes. The key will be the continued stable support of the central government. The ability for the central government to continue to put resources down in these various provinces to include the Helmand Province. And if that stays, the confidence of the people will remain. If that goes, then it will -- it'll evaporate quickly.

DONNELLY:

Do you think that the continued presence of -- and we don't know the exact number but 8,000 -- 10,000 or whatever that number is at the end of 2014 -- the continued presence of -- of those

Marines or soldiers or airmen, do you think that the Afghan people -- that the presence of those - those military makes them sleep better at night?

AMOS:

Senator, without a doubt. You talk to them personally face to face, whether it be in Kabul or whether it be in Helmand or any place else, and they are very, very worried. The normal Afghan civilian is extremely nervous that we will just completely come out as we did in Iraq.

DONNELLY:

Are -- are our servicemembers kind of viewed by the Afghan people as we move forward in -- in -- in those much smaller numbers as kind of the glue that will help hold things together?

AMOS:

Sir, I think so. At the -- at the very senior levels of government and military and whatever, we will help be that connecting tissue with -- with thought and resources that perhaps they wouldn't otherwise have.

DONNELLY:

Well thank you very much. And to all of you, thank you for your service.

LEVIN:

Thank you, Senator Donnelly.

Senator Kaine?

KAINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and -- and thanks to all of you for your service and your testimony today.

Secretary Mabus, your testimony -- written testimony really talked about something I'm very focused on which is that the challenges of the future require flexible force more than fixed force and the combined operations that you represent here in this hearing give the nation a great flexible force capacity to deal with challenges whenever and wherever they arise and that's why this is such an important hearing.

I stepped out for a few minutes to attend a foreign relations committee meeting on embassy security, and so I think I may just start, General Amos, with you on that topic.

I visited the Marine Security Guard program at Quantico within the last month or so and was very impressed. But certainly, there's a significant need in the aftermath of Benghazi, one of their recommendations from the review board was, you know, upgrading Marine Security Guard and

the foreign affairs security training and it looks like you've got a pretty significant, both capital expansion at Quantico as well as an upgrading of about an additional thousand Marine Security Guards to help our missions around the world.

I'd love to just know kind of how the current budgetary challenges of sequester, if it continues, will affect our ability to beef up the -- the needed Marine Security Guard presence and training?

AMOS:

Senator, none of that is going to -- it was all done in good faith for all the right reasons six, eight months ago.

The original intent the way -- my understanding is -- is that once the NDAA authorized 1,000 Marine plus up to the (inaudible) I think our number's at 1,449 Marines we currently have in that -- in that field. So it will be another 1,000 on top of that to perform the missions that -- that you talked about.

The -- the funding of that would follow basically on top of whatever funding I would normally get.

AMOS:

We're on our way down to 182, one (ph) as Secretary Mabus said, so to add another 1,000 Marine requirement on top of that, pulls those combat forces out of the 182 and kind of makes me a 181 size force. So, I would -- you know, I'm still hoping that we're able to sort through the funding of that. But right now, it's (inaudible).

We are pressing ahead, just so that you know, we're not sitting back. We -- in agreement with the State Department, we will stand up three new MSG DTS between now and June. We'll stand up -- stand up another seven, the -- by the end of this year. And over the next several years, we'll stand up another 26. So, we're proceeding as if we're going to have the money, because -- because the need is there.

KAINE:

Yeah.

AMOS:

So our intent is -- is honest, we just would appreciate the funding.

KAINE:

Well, and I think we have to be consistent in our message. You know I'm on the Budget Committee too, and we end up hearing a lot about the need to cut, cut, cut, and then at the other side, on the Foreign Relations side, we're telling you that, you know we need a dramatic

expansion of security presence at our embassies, and the Marines own part of that space. So we have to be consistent in the message that we deliver. You have a sizable price-tag for the retrograding of equipment back from Afghanistan.

I think the testimony I heard earlier -- not today, but earlier, was about \$3 billion or so just to retrograde equipment back for the Marines and then that equipment has to be retrofitted, improved, et cetera, before it's ready for additional use. So the budgetary environment in sequester affects both the retrograding, and the up- fitting of that equipment to make it available for its next use in the field?

AMOS:

Senator, you are 100 percent correct. In fact within our corps as a result of the sequester, we've gone back and we've said, OK what's good enough? What is it we currently own? What is it we've been driving, and using for the last 5-10 years? And whereas otherwise we might have -- we might have moved on to something new, we're actually taking that back through the depots right now. So, equipment -- we've got 60 percent of the equipment that we had on the ground in Afghanistan out as of today. I'm pretty pleased about that.

38,000 principal end items are working their way through the depots. All really important to reset the Marine Corps, and the bill is about \$3.2 billion to complete the mission and reset it. Just to give you a sense for -- for how we've done though, it wasn't but about four or five years ago, the bill was about \$15 billion. So Congress has been very good helping us out. We've been faithful stewards to get our equipment through. And now we're in the final -- final stages of that. To get the equipment out, once we finish the mission and to reset the corps.

KAINE:

Excellent. For Secretary Mabus and -- and Admiral Greenert, one of the things I noticed in the 2014 submission was that you're funding 80 percent of ship depot maintenance. But I believe it looks like it's 100 percent funding on both carrier, and sub. So this is surface ships I -- I gather. Is there an intent to put in an additional budgetary request through OCO for the -- for the -- for the remaining ship maintenance, or how -- how will you manage lesser maintenance on the surface ships?

MABUS:

That's correct. We would get from 80 percent to close to 100 percent based on our OCO submission and that's based on the fact that unlike the Marines, pull equipment out, send it through a depot and reset, maybe tends to reset every day through maintenance, through maintaining our ships. And so that OCO request, and as I said earlier, we are aggressively moving OCO into base, but this is -- that 20 percent of maintenance is still very much related to the operations tempo in Central Command right now.

KAINE:

How about just generally the sequester environment and future shipbuilding costs and scheduling? If -- if we don't find that solution that is assumed in the budget that the president has submitted, that you're testifying today, what will be the long term effect on the costs and scheduling on the shipbuilding side?

MABUS:

One of the things that we have done based on the -- the bill passed here in 2009 on acquisition reform, is we've pushed things like multi-year contracts, which save a great deal of money. We've pushed things like competition. We've -- and sequester would have a bad effect on -- on all of those things. Again as the CNO said, we're working through exactly what that effect would be. But, if we are unable -- we -- we have for example the Virginia-class Submarine Program now under multi-year, the DDG-51 under a multi-year.

The Marines, MV-22 aircraft under a multi-year. The -- the Hawkeye, the electronic surveillance aircraft for the Navy under a multi-year -- ending a multi-year. We cannot continue those multi-years. Or, if we can't execute on those multi-years the cost goes dramatically -- dramatically higher for fewer ships and aircraft.

KAINE:

Thank you. Thank you Mr. Chair.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much, Senator Kaine. Senator Shaheen?

SHAHEEN:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Gentleman, thank you all very much for being here this morning and for your service. I -- I want to begin by saying I share Senator McCain's frustration and outrage that this Congress hasn't yet addressed sequestration. And very much appreciate the challenges that we have given to all of you, as you try and deal with a budget that has so much uncertainty. One of the things that I do every week is to host a coffee for my constituents from New Hampshire who are here.

And several weeks ago I had a woman at the coffee who approached me close to tears because her husband works at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and she said, we don't know what we're going to do about our personal budget because of the furloughs that he is expecting. I know the Navy has been working on this issue, trying to address the furlough question. And clearly it's one of the things that has an impact on morale, which all of you have mentioned this morning. So I -- I wonder if you can give us any insights into whether you're going to be able to address the furlough, and how you might do that?

MABUS:

Thank you, Senator. That decision, as you know has not been made yet. It's being made at a DOD-wide level, and they're looking at the health of the -- of the whole force. But as you point out, we have civilian workers, shipyard workers is a great example, that have a direct operational impact on -- on the Navy. The CNO and I have both talked about this publicly, about how -- how that will impact the ships that go through these -- these depots, how it will impact the sailing schedules, the steaming schedules and our operational schedules.

And so that's part of the input that -- that we've been given. And Secretary Hagel said if we can do better, we will do better. And I think everybody recognizes just how crucial these civilians are. General Amos says that he considers them civilian Marines. We consider them civilian sailors, and they are absolutely crucial to the fleet, and to the Marine Corps.

SHAHEEN:

Well, thank you very much Mr. Secretary. I -- I know that the shipyard workers in -- at the -- Portsmouth and throughout the country appreciate the efforts that are being made to try and address their situation. I want to switch to energy because one of -- one of the best things that I've done since I've been in the Senate was to join with you in a hearing on the U.S.S. Kearsarge about the efforts that are being made by the Navy to address energy use.

And I certainly agree that we've got to reduce our, what has been almost a total dependence on oil in recent years. And I wonder -- I know that biofuels is something that you've been working very hard on, and I very much appreciate that. But I wonder if you could also address some of the other efficiencies that you're trying to achieve in order to address energy usage throughout the -- the Navy and the Marines?

MABUS:

I appreciate the opportunity to talk about it. And you're right, we're proceeding down two tracks. One is to change the type of energy we -- we use, but the other is to do the same amount with less energy. In the Navy, we're doing things like different hull coatings, stern flaps, different kinds of lighting on ships, voyage planning tools, this sort of thing, to use less energy. All of these things have a tremendous impact on the amount that we use. We have the U.S. Makin Island, the first hybrid ship that has electric drive for under 12 knots.

They made a deployment to Central Command and to Pacific Command. We sent them out with a \$33 million fuel budget. They brought \$15 million back that they did not use. Which is able to -- to put back into operation. The Marines through their ExFOB, their Experimental Forward Operating Base that they have twice a year, once at Quantico, once at Twentynine Palms, and get whatever industry is doing. And so Marines are lightening their loads by using fewer batteries,

and by charging their radios and GPSs with solar power. They're doing insulation. They're using wind power.

MABUS:

They're using hybrid generators at -- at their bases.

And so, we are bringing down the amount of energy that we use, and not cutting our -- our operations at all. In fact, we're increasing the amount that we can do on the same amount of energy. And I think we've got to keep proceeding down these two tracks because, as I've said in answer to a previous question, in the last three years, just from the spike in oil prices, the Navy -- the Department of the Navy has had to pay an additional \$1.5 billion in fuel bills that we didn't have budgeted and that money could have gone to operations or to platforms.

SHAHEEN:

Well, particularly in these challenging economic times, I think it's prudent for you to continue proceeding down this path and hope that we can provide you as much support in the Senate as possible.

General Amos, I'm almost out of time, but I wanted to go back to your comments about sexual assault and about the convening authority because I certainly appreciate your concern about proceeding with caution in this area.

But the fact is that there are over 3,000 reported sexual assaults in the military. The estimate is that it's more than 19,000. And you indicated that you're going to lead a cultural change within the Marine Corps regarding sexual assault.

How do you do that and do we not have to look at how the system addresses sexual assault in order to make that cultural change?

AMOS:

Senator, I don't want to confuse (inaudible). I'm working my way through the convening authority, Article 60, mentally as it relates to sexual assault because I don't want anybody to think for a second that this isn't important to me.

And if that's what it takes, if that becomes part of the solution set, then I fully support it. So I just want you to know that.

The institution -- to your question though about our institution, the United States Marine Corps, this has to be a culture change. We began last -- probably around the May timeframe, began with a General Officer Symposium. I brought every general in the Marine Corps back to Quantico for two straight days and talked nothing about where we were.

It was a cold dose of reality where we are in the Marine Corps because, quite frankly, and it's like the Gregg Zoroya article that popped in USA Today, two days ago, the numbers are shameful.

It's more than being embarrassed, I'm shamed of this thing. But that's not where we're headed and that's not where we are right now. I mean we had the entire senior leadership for the Marine Corps after this, I'm talking about officers and staff NCOs.

We've just really been after it since probably about the mid- summer. We started in the spring, but all the campaign plan, three phases of it, are -- and there's a host of things we've done.

And I know we're out of time. I'd be honored to come by and talk to you about it. But I don't want anybody to think for a minute that this culture change is going to be easy, but we are dedicated; my generals are, my sergeants majors are and we're going to succeed.

It's going to be hard, but we are going to succeed at this because it's the right thing to do.

SHAHEEN:

Well, thank you, General, I appreciate that. And I have other questions, but I'm sure my colleagues on the committee will follow-up. Thank you.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Reed.

REED:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen.

Just a quick follow-up question because both Admiral Greenert and General Amos indicated that they're looking at units that will be C3 towards the end of the year.

And, as I understand it, that is not -- that is several different components in terms of the rating, personnel, the equipment, et cetera. Can you sort of just go one step down and what's the problem?

Is it personnel readiness, the availability of sailors? Is it equipment? Just to give us sort of some texture for the rating.

GREENERT:

The fact that a unit is C3, Senator, onto itself is -- shouldn't be that alarming. It's not unusual. In other words, we have units that just before they're ready to deploy, they're fully manned, trained, equipped, they need to get their ammo on board, they pick it up and they go. So, for the record, they remain C3 until that point.

The point is it's a trend and it's a quantification of how the -- those that are ready to deploy, they are C1 and C2, those that are in the surge are drifting further from that C1, C2. It's like a slinky dog that goes further behind. It takes that much more to get it ready to deploy.

So what is the issue? It tends to be training so they don't have as many skill sets as they need to have when they're ready to deploy. If they're called to surge, we have to have a longer conversation to say, OK, here's what your unit will have to be; an air wing, could be a destroyer, but we have to have a better, a more in-depth conversation.

Whereas if they're where we want them to be and where they are typically in our fleet response plan, then that is automatic, that is the covenant that we already have.

REED:

Thank you.

General Amos, your comments about the Marine Corps.

AMOS:

Senator, the reality is it's equipment available. We've talked what C3 is; the exact definition is C3 is units trained to undertake many, but not all wartime missions.

We don't typically deploy units that are C3. We deploy them C1 and C2, as you know, and that's with the combatant commander so that's what they expect.

Would we deploy a C3 unit? Absolutely, yes. If a -- if war broke out, I'd deploy a C4 or C4 unit. So I want to be clear about that.

But what's causing - what's happening is the equipment readiness as a result of things going through depot. I've said when sequestration fully hits in '14 and '15, 75 percent of our depot capacity is going to be affected in one way or the other.

I mean that's going to have an effect on the equipment availability. It's training ranges, it's O&M, it's fuel, it's ammunition. It's the ability to be able to take a unit and fly it out to -- or move it out to Twentynine Palms to do its final integrated training exercise. It's all of that.

And, finally, the last, I guess, kind of litmus test is because the depot maintenance in aviation has had an impact as a result of O&M, we're going to have and I'll just -- I'll give you the exact numbers.

Today, I've got 102 of 257 F-18 that are out of reporting status which means they're not flyable, they're -- something's -- they need depot maintenance of some kind.

Twenty-three F-18s are not going to be inducted in the third and fourth quarter of this year. So the net result will be this, I'll have 125 out of 257 United States Marine Corps F-18s out of reporting status.

If you take all the -- you know, the squadrons that I've got forward deployed, which will have a full complement of airplanes; the ones on carriers, the ones that I've got in the Persian Gulf, they're my first priority.

The remaining squadrons back home by January 2014, will have 6 of 12 F-18s sitting on the fly line.

REED:

OK, thank you, sir. Let me do one follow-up question too because this was brought up previously.

As you retrograde equipment out of Afghanistan, some of that equipment, I presume, because it was specifically -- particularly some of the MRAPs and some of the vehicles were designed for the conflict in Afghanistan, do you have the flexibility to sort of bring them out but then deferring maintenance as a way to husband resources without affecting sort of the ability of (inaudible) to operate and conduct.

AMOS:

We do, Senator. For instance, we've got well over 2,500 MRAPs right now. Our long-term plan is to keep roughly about 1,200 of them. Those that -- and we're going to bring them all back.

REED:

Right. Yes, sir.

AMOS:

And we'll start parsing out those that need it and those that don't to be able to husband resources.

REED:

I understand.

Admiral Greenert, I was particularly impressed with the brilliance of Senator Donnelly's questioning about submarines and also the threat to surface ships.

And I think it raises an interesting question. As you know, and Admiral Locklear testified, there are a number of countries, particularly in Asia, China, Australia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Republic of Korea who are developing new submarines, much more capable submarines.

And, indeed, I'm also indicative that Russia and China are expected to soon field new ballistic missile submarines which adds another dimension.

And then you can join that with the surface-to-surface precision long-range weapons, particularly with the Chinese, which threaten the surface fleet, which raises I think sort of not only the necessity, but the criticality of the submarine fleet.

Is that a view that you support or take?

GREENERT:

I absolutely support that. As I testified last year, that 14 submarine was our number one priority.

REED:

Thank you very much.

Thank you all, gentlemen, for your service and your thoughtful testimony today.

LEVIN:

Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator McCaskill?

MCCASKILL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here very much.

General Amos, I know that you had expressed to my colleague that you want to get at this culture change and it's very important to you, as is sexual assault.

MCCASKILL:

But let me just say the quickest way to change the culture is to put these cowards in prison. The people who commit these crimes are sullyng your ranks and they are diminishing what you are as a powerful force in this country.

And I think the challenge around that is getting the victims to come forward. This has to be one of the problems that is foremost in your mind. How do we create an environment of professionalism and justice that gives victims the confidence that they can help you weed out

these cowards and get them out of our wonderful military that I know you are so proud and it is your life and you want nothing more than the Marines to be seen for the wonderful men and women they are?

So when you have a convening authority that picks five colonels and lieutenant colonels to sit on a jury and they do the thing that you always do in these cases and it is one thing you do as a jury, you decide who's telling the truth. Because all this case was about was who was telling the truth. What it the fighter pilot and his wife or was it the victim? And these five colonels and lieutenant colonels decided the victim was telling the truth and with one stroke of a pen, that convening authority said to every victim out there, that it is confident if they come forward, their either not going to be believed or they're not going to be supported or nothing is going to happen to the guy.

You know what he did when he did that? He told all of them they were exactly right to hide in the shadows. And that is more damaging to our military in the area of sexual assault than anything that could happen. All of the training in the world will not fix this problem if you don't give these victims confidence. And frankly, when he wrote the letter explaining how he did it and the first in his letter is that she hadn't taken a ride home from the party? Are you kidding me?

You know -- you know what every victim said? Oh my gosh, no matter what happens at the trial, no matter if they believe me, some general is going to decide that I'm a slut because I didn't take a ride home. That is the problem and until you guys at the top levels of the military get that, we're not going to fix it. I firmly believe that.

And I am so proud that the Joint Chiefs made the recommendation -- the Joint Chiefs made the recommendation to the SECDEF to change 60 (ph) and I'm going to work as hard as I can to change 60 (ph). I don't want to throw it all out, I get that the convening authority has a role in terms of the good of the order. I get that. But the idea that they can overturn a factual determination by a jury they handpicked? That's ridiculous.

And so I feel better.

Now, on to FA-18s. I think it's really an issue here that we're taking a real risk with our strike fighter inventory when it comes to JSF. I know that we now have a problem with them landing on the carriers with the tailhooks, that they're all going to have to be modified. This is a huge issue. We -- we now know another \$8.5 billion just to fix the tailhook problem. The FA-18 is going to end domestic production after the final procurement this year.

Doesn't the FA-18 line mitigate the risk of -- of this shortfall going forward? We're now not to full production until 2019 on the JSF. I -- I would like, Admiral or Secretary Mabus or any of you to -- to -- to speak to this issue.

You know, we can talk about how expensive it is. We can talk about how it's not doing what it should have done. We can talk about the capability being diminished. But at the end of the day, what about the inventory?

MABUS:

On the FA-18 line, in our budget, we're requesting 21 more Growlers, FA-18Gs be built in F.Y. '14 which would keep the line going through '16. And we do think that it's important to have that -- that capability there and I'll let Admiral Greenert talk about the -- the issues with the F-35 and -- and the tailhook and the inventory.

GREENERT:

Well simply, Senator, I need a tailhook, a helmet and I need a program that will deliver weapons equivalent to a Super Hornet so that it -- so that the F-35 comes into the airing. The airing can't turn around the F-35 and I've been pretty clear on that.

My airing in the future has to be Hornets, Growlers and a fifth generation so I do need the capability and in my view, unmanned. There's an unmanned element to that.

Does it mitigate? Yes, it definitely would mitigate the -- the need for the capabilities.

So it -- it all fits together into an airing of the future, what has to be able to deliver ordinance as well as jam and handle the electromagnetic spectrum which is huge, in the future.

MCCASKILL:

Well, in terms of extending the flight hours, I know that -- that the report came back from GAO saying that maybe we need an independent assessment about what the cost is going to be on extending the flight hours on existing Super Hornets. Can you speak to that? Do you -- do you, based on experience, we've not always gotten the right number when it's been an interior assessment as opposed to an independent assessment. Do you have any -- any...

GREENERT:

Well, let me get you a written answer.

But here's what my -- my nav-air systems commander is telling me that the extension on the Super Hornet looks very good, that the Super Hornet's performing very well and it's fatigue factors in those areas look well so that he was confident that we could be an extension.

But I'd prefer to -- and I -- I'll just give you something in writing that is...

MCCASKILL:

That would be great.

GREENERT:

... more deliberate.

MCCASKILL:

That would be great.

Thank you all very much and General Amos, I know your heart is -- wants to get this fixed and we'll work together and -- and -- and do -- and -- and get it done. I know all the military wants to do this.

As you can tell, this is -- this one hits close to home for me because of the years I spent doing this.

Thank you very much.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much, Senator McCaskill.

Senator Blunt?

BLUNT:

Thank you, Chairman.

Admiral and Secretary Mabus, I was here yesterday at the defense appropriation hearing, I didn't get a chance to ask the questions I wanted to ask then. I think maybe my colleague, Senator McCaskill has opened that door and asked some of them already.

Admiral, you're the last in line of the services to get the F-35s, is that right?

GREENERT:

Yes sir, that's right.

BLUNT:

And same things you mentioned today, I heard you mention yesterday that you've got to have some things happen before those are really usable planes.

Secretary, you mentioned that you've -- you've ordered the -- the Growlers -- you've asked for them in the budget, rather -- having already asked for them in the budget.

I guess one of my questions is, I -- I know your tactical aircraft, you're 29 or 30 short of what you think you need and there's no -- what's -- what's the risk of not moving forward and asking

for more of the Super Hornets at the same time or is there just not a shortage and the Super Hornet part of the -- of the tactical aircraft mix?

MABUS:

Senator, the TACAIR shortfall which the chairman mentioned in his opening statement has gotten significantly better. It's down to less than 20 aircraft in about 2023 now.

This is a result of a lot of things. Part of it is what Admiral Greenert said as we're doing the high flight hour inspections of the Hornets and Super Hornets. There is -- these inspections are turning out better than we had anticipated whereas less -- the repairs will be less and we -- we are currently planning to do the service life extension on 150 aircraft to -- to get us there.

The other thing is we're transitioning quicker to the Super Hornets from the legacy Hornets which are giving us more capability and more -- and more flight hours.

So I think that the -- the -- just in terms of numbers of TACAIR risk, the risk is relatively low as we're -- as we're going forward.

We're buying the extra FA-18Gs -- or requesting that we buy 21 additional Gs because of the electronic attack mission that the Marines are retiring their EA-6s and this would be required to make sure that we maintain that important capability of electronic attack in an expeditionary way so that we can have enough expeditionary squadrons to support electronic attack, not just for the Navy and Marine Corps, but across -- across the joint force.

BLUNT:

And -- and I'm hearing right, do you think that your shortfall is now less than you might have -- than the Navy might have thought a couple of -- it was going to be a couple of years ago because these planes are more serviceable and lasting better than they anticipated?

MABUS:

Yes.

BLUNT:

Admiral?

GREENERT:

Well, there's also -- we made it -- when we did the numbers that you refer to, the higher numbers as to what the shortfall might be, a big factor was the use. How many cycles are the aircraft being used? The -- that number has come down as we've operated in the Gulf.

So these -- two years ago the -- the use of the Super Hornet and the -- the legacy Hornets, if you will, was much higher than it is now.

So as we do the measurements, we're finding, hey, they're not as fatigued as -- as we originally thought. The assumptions have changed in the analysis.

BLUNT:

And I -- and I think there was this -- a significant request for maintenance and parts and maybe -- maybe beyond what I would have thought but, General Amos, do you have anything to say on this topic of your transition on planes?

AMOS:

No, sir. I -- I -- I'm in complete agreement with my secretary and the CNO on this thing. The -- the management of the -- of the shortfall has been mitigated by a large degree as a result of actually managing each bureau number of aircraft. Every -- I mean every single airplane, the number of carrier landings, the number of rested -- rested landings catapults, Gs on the airplane.

So the Naval Aviation Enterprise is actually managing each one of those aircraft by bureau number to mitigate -- mitigate the long-term effects of -- of -- of a lot of flying hours. So we're actually managing the fleet and that's what's helping us out.

BLUNT:

OK.

Thank you, Chairman.

LEVIN:

Thank you very much, Senator Blunt.

Senator Hagan?

HAGAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And gentlemen, thank you so much for your service. Thank you for being here. Thank you for what you do for our country.

Before I get into my questions, I did want to make one comment and it's echoing Senator Shaheen and Senator McCaskill and it's about sexual assault. And General Amos, I -- I really appreciate what you're doing but you made a comment saying that it is not going to be easy to change this culture. And I think if you look at the training, you look at the convictions, you look

at the punishments, we shouldn't be saying it's not going to be easy. This is something that has, as you said, has got the attention, you brought the generals together, you've discussed this.

I -- I -- I guess one question is, how many of those generals are women, percent wise?

AMOS:

I can't tell you...

HAGAN:

OK.

AMOS:

... percent wise, but we -- we have a -- we have a slice of our general officers who are -- 80-plus general officers that are females.

HAGAN:

OK.

I just think it is imperative that we understand that sexual assault -- sexual harassment has absolutely no place in our military and that it -- it is something that is -- is really affecting the -- the -- the culture, especially of our women who are in service and so I just echo the other comments how important this is. So I -- I appreciate what you're doing.

But General Amos, I did also appreciate the time that you've taken to discuss with me a lot recently on the -- the issue of notifying those affected of water contamination at Camp Lejeune. and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's recently released water model did find that the levels for some -- some contaminants was high as 150 times now what is considered safe, so it's very important to me that the Marines, the civilians and family members who were exposed to these contaminants are kept informed as key information is released. And I -- and I appreciate our discussion and your commitment to do so.

Can you update the committee on what the Marine Corps has done since we talked to notify those affected by this tragedy of -- of recent and future findings?

AMOS:

Senator, I can, I'd be happy. Thank you for the opportunity.

As you've said, the ATSDR released what they call a Chapter A Water Modeling and it became public and that was an official report and that's one of five phases of reports and it talks about the contamination started as early possibly as 1953 instead of 1957.

So as a result of that, we've advertised in national USA Today or national publications, full page ads talking about the report and with a link on there that you can link to get the report. We've notified 104,000 e-mail addressees that we currently have in our registry. We've sent them e-mails and we also mailed out 188,000 letters here just this month. All this has been done this month to notify everybody that we're in contact that -- that have come forward that are part of the registry about the results of the report.

I'll also say, Senator, we intend to do exactly that same type of -- of mass notification and -- and awareness for all of the other reports as they come out in the future over the next year or two.

So we're dedicated to this, we want to do it the right -- we are going to do it the right way.

HAGAN:

Thank you and -- and I appreciate us working together on that, I -- I really do.

The Department of the Navy's investment in amphibious warships represents a critical investment that also supports a keen -- a key Marine Corps mission. Citing fiscal constraints, you've decided to reduce the number of amphibious ships to a fleet of 33 with only 30 available at any given time due to maintenance requirements.

My understanding is that 30 ships is the bare minimum required for sea based forcible entry.

Secretary Mabus, do you consider it an acceptable risk to rely on the exact minimum number of ships needed to execute such a mission should the need arise? And then what is Plan B if there are not enough ships operationally available?

MABUS:

Senator, in the ship building plan that we've sent the tables the tables to Congress, we're building toward that 33 level and it would -- the commandant has said repeatedly that if he could have 50, he would, so would I. But given the fiscal constraints, I think 33 is a reasonable number with a reasonable amount of risk.

The other thing that is in there is that in terms of operations concepts, there perhaps are other ways we can transport things besides just amphibious ships, the float forward staging bases that we're building two of today and two more to be configured as -- I mean the last two will be a float forward staging basis, the first two are mobile landing platforms that can -- can -- can transport huge amounts of -- of equipment into -- to an amphibious assault area, the joint high-speed vessel that can move people and equipment around very quickly.

So, the Marines, I know, are looking at the concept of operations but also we find that these amphibious ships, the -- the three ship amphibious ready groups with the big (inaudible) the LPD and LSD are some of our most flexible and -- and important forces and we think that these -- the -- the gator Navy, the amphibs, are some of the most important things that we have.

And finally, we're exercising that as well. the -- the exercise Bold Alligator that happened off the coast of North Carolina last year and will be repeated next year to make sure that the Marines have the -- have gone back to their amphibious routes and have the training and the doctrine to -- to be able to perform the way that we know Marines do perform.

HAGAN:

We definitely know that.

Thank you all for your -- for -- for being here today and your testimony.

Thank you.

LEVIN:

Thank you, Senator Hagan.

Senator Ayotte?

AYOTTE:

Thank you, Chairman.

I want to thank the witnesses for their service during challenging times and for all -- all of those that serve underneath you are grateful.

And I wanted to ask Admiral Greenert and certainly Secretary Mabus about the fleet size. I know that you've testified about the fleet size and I believe you began with that if you look back to 9/11, our fleet size was 316 and now we're at 283.

We -- we know from your recent reporting to us the -- that what you believe you need is 306 to meet all of our needs.

And where -- as I look at this schedule, the schedule that you have put forward that would put us dropping down to -- a fleet of 270 in 2015, did I understand that correctly?

Is -- is that a schedule that is based upon the president's proposed budget? In other words, this -- this 270 by 2015 does not account for sequestration, do it?

MABUS:

That's -- that's correct.

The -- the reason that you have the dip is that there were a lot of smaller surface combatants particularly (inaudible) built in the 1980's during the big Cold War build up and they are reaching the end of their service life.

Now they are being replaced, as you can see from those charts, and we're going to go back to 300 ships by the end of this decade by far more capable, far more flexible ships in -- in the fleet.

And one of the things -- and I was the one that said -- that gave the numbers, is that we, today, have 47 ships under contract and 43 of those ships have been put under contract since -- since I got here.

AYOTTE:

But -- but just to understand, we don't meet 306, which is what we've said we'd need until 2037, is that right? And that is with -- with what we believe to be more robust appropriate levels of funding.

MABUS:

I believe that is correct, Senator...

AYOTTE:

And -- and so that's according to the P-14 battle force inventory, that's where I got that number. So as I look where we are, we have pretty great challenges of getting where we need to be for our naval fleet now even if we keep funding where we've -- where you've proposed it to be without sequestration.

So what happens to us if we go forward with sequestration in terms of the fleet number and capacity?

MABUS:

I'd like Admiral Greenert to also come in on this.

But sequestration looms over everything. And it will have impacts on things like multiyear programs that we're building -- submarines and destroyers (inaudible). It will have, obviously, an impact on the number of ships we can build.

But the president's budget and the Senate budget (inaudible) resolution and the House budget resolution all went forward saying that sequestration was not a good idea.

AYOTTE:

Well, Mr. Secretary, I'm looking around here and I don't see, unfortunately, people doing what needs to be done to resolve sequestration, so I want to make sure that everyone here understands that if we go forward with sequestration for our military, for our Navy, what size does our fleet end up being? Because we right now are at 283; we know we need 306.

As far as I can see -- and I'm sure you would agree with me -- the world's not getting any safer with Iran marching toward a nuclear weapon, with what's happening in the Persian Gulf, with our shift to the Asia-Pacific region, all of which needs naval capacity. And numbers obviously matter in terms of what we can cover around the world.

So Admiral Greenert, I don't know if you can share with me, what happens to our fleet?

GREENERT:

If we -- if we just apply sequestration -- and the number's \$50 billion (inaudible) through (inaudible) and they're prorated and you prorate it to the shipbuilding plan, and I have to reduce force structure. Again, this is linear extrapolation: Thirty less ships roughly by 2020. So you're looking at -- instead of 295 somewhere around 265.

You keep taking that out to a 10-year posture, we could be down as low as 235 ships.

AYOTTE:

Two hundred and thirty-five ships. Would you agree with me that that would take on tremendous risk given the challenges we face around the world?

(CROSSTALK)

AYOTTE:

And what would that do to our shift to the Asia-Pacific region?

GREENERT:

Well, number one, yes, I agree with you, would be tremendous risk.

The shift to the Asia-Pacific, it would slow it down, truncate it by a lot.

A point I'd like to make, ships are definitely important. Ships forward are most important. So we have to sustain our forward-deployed naval force: the Singapore initiative, you know, making sure we take care of lift for the Marines to Darwin. That is something I think would be most important to work out, so that we do the best we can to be forward.

AYOTTE:

I appreciate it.

I wanted to ask -- I know it was touched upon before, Secretary Mabus and Admiral Greenert, on the Navy's proposed -- as I understand it, you've submitted a proposal to OSD that would allow you to forego furloughs for 2013. And do you know when that decision will be made from OSD as to whether we can forego civilian furloughs?

Because, obviously, one of the concerns that I'd heard that seems to me to be a sensible concern is that we will get behind on the maintenance schedule, which will further exacerbate the difficulties and the strain put on our fleet.

MABUS:

Secretary Hagel said, I believe last week, that the decision had not been made, would not be made for a few weeks. And one of the things that both the commandant, the CNO and I have said during these discussions is that exactly as you pointed out, some of these civilians workers that we have, like our shipyard workers, have a direct operational impact in terms of maintenance and in terms of getting ships back out to sea.

AYOTTE:

Well, thank you. And I appreciate all of you being here.

And I know that it is a challenging time to serve. Sequestration is something that I think is particularly foolish with regard to our national security. And I think it's been clear from your testimony and the other service chiefs that if we continue with this we're going to really diminish the strongest military in the world.

So I thank you all for being here.

LEVIN:

Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Nelson?

NELSON:

And if we get out of our ideological stances here on both sides of Capitol Hill, we can get rid of the sequestration going forward. But it's baked into the cake between now and October 1.

Admiral and General, since you're not going to have as many flying hours, can you use simulators to try to keep your crews tuned up?

GREENERT:

We can, and in fact, during this phase we went through with the continuing resolution and sequestration, we turned to simulators to help keep our folks current, as current as feasible. There are some skill-sets that you can't replicate in a -- in a simulator. Some are getting better, the P-8 you're well aware of down there in Jacksonville, that's an excellent simulator and does magnificent things. But you can do some, but -- but it's very limited.

AMOS:

Senator, exactly we revamped the training readiness manual in our aviation squadrons some time ago, to incorporate more simulation as we -- as pressurization on flight hours increased. So, we are, and obviously we're going to have to continue to do even more.

NELSON:

Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you for your service. It has been extraordinary. And as evidenced by the female Senators that have spoken so emotionally, I want to point out that six and seven years ago, in another committee, I chaired hearings about the rapes that were occurring in Iraq among contractors. I did that through the means of the Foreign Relations Committee. And what we had was the dramatic testimony of a number of female contractors.

And they came to the committee, and told about how everything was swept under the rug. That in some cases, now this is only six or seven years ago, that they could not get medical attention. And of course they had to rely, not just on the contractor medical attention, but they were in the war zone -- the U.S. military. And in addition, that once they got home, they couldn't get the U.S. attorneys to prosecute because all of the evidence had been swept under the rug. It was so bad that they could not get rape kits. Can you bring me up to date on, what is the standard procedure, not only of this raw issue that has been brought out here with regard to active duty military, but with regard to the contractors as well, under the supervision of the military?

MABUS:

Senator, just as an overall thing, I want to say that -- and -- and this is the way I've put it, that -- I've asked (sic) if I'm concerned about sexual assault in the military and I've said, and I know I -- I speak for General Amos and Admiral Greenert here, we're angry. It's an attack. It's a crime. It's not -- it's not anything else. If -- if somebody was walking around and taking shots at random at our service, we would fix it. And this is the same thing. This is an attack. This is an attack from the inside.

We have made a lot of progress, I think. We're beginning to learn what works. In answer to your specific question, we -- we now have trained sexual assault responders, victim advocates. We've trained our medical personnel in sexual assault and rape. There is a requirement to keep evidence for very long periods of time, and not discard it after a certain amount of time. We -- we have other things that if -- to -- to encourage people to come forward. That if -- if they feel in danger we will transfer someone immediately to -- to -- to get them out of -- out of even that feeling of danger.

MABUS:

We are finding that -- we're beginning to figure out what works in a lot of these cases. I think we're doing a good job in terms of just training like NCIS investigators in this specific thing -- training prosecutors in this specific thing, training defense attorneys in this specific thing.

MABUS:

There's -- there's a lot more that can be done, but I do think that we have to make it clear, from the seaman recruit to the four-star that we won't put up with this. This is unacceptable.

NELSON:

Is this being applied now to the contractor personnel, as well as the military?

MABUS:

Senator, as far as I know, in terms of the contractor personnel, that the military supports intern -- in medical care and things like that, it is.

On the broader question, I simply will have to get back to you.

NELSON:

OK.

Well, that was the -- the situation that we examined in the committee years ago. And in some cases, some of the rapes were perpetrated by contractor personnel on contractor personnel. In some cases, active duty military on contractor personnel. And...

GREENERT:

Senator? Excuse me, Senator...

LEVIN:

Yes, Admiral?

GREENERT:

... if I may? It's just a tidbit. Contractors -- we can't compel them and order them to come to training when (ph) we're doing training, but (inaudible) the feedback is, they're attending the training. And they're quite interested in what we're doing. They're embedded in our people, and those that are embedded are coming to the training and everything (ph).

So, just thought you'd want to know that.

NELSON:

And I appreciate that. And I'm sure they are, because it all affects morale, and so forth.

But in your execution of a contract with them, I wish you would look into the fact that your contract could compel contractor training.

Don't forget those women.

Thank you.

LEVIN:

Admiral, could you get back to us about that last point of Senator Nelson about whether contracts can be amended to require the training which you referred to?

GREENERT:

Yes, sir, I will.

LEVIN:

Thank you.

Thanks, Senator Nelson.

Senator Blumenthal?

BLUMENTHAL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank each of you for your service, and most especially, the service of the extraordinary men and women under your command.

We're grateful to you for being here today, and proud of your service to our nation.

Let me begin -- Admiral Greenert, you were very kind to come to visit the sub base in London, and, Mr. Secretary, you've been there, as well.

I assume that you continue to be of the view that that submarine base is important, even central to our national security.

GREENERT:

Yes, sir, I do.

Both the piers and the support for the submarines, as well as the submarine training -- actually, the submarine learning center -- excuse me.

BLUMENTHAL:

And are you satisfied, Admiral, that the president's budget has sufficient funding to continue the submarine building program -- the junior (ph) class program at the present pace of two submarines a year for 2014 and beyond?

GREENERT:

Yes, it does. We have submittal and a funding mechanism in place that we proposed to the Congress with that outcome (ph).

BLUMENTHAL:

And I've -- I've noticed that mechanism -- which I fully support, because I think the submarine program, as you and the secretary observed, is absolutely essential to our continued undersea superiority, which, in turn, is vital to our national security.

Are you satisfied, Mr. Secretary, that there's enough funding for the Ohio class program?

MABUS:

I am, Senator.

At the place we're in, which is early design -- continuing to do some R and D, we -- we have the funding in place, and we are on track to not only begin construction on the timeline that we have laid out, but also working with our British partners under commonness (ph) of department. We're on schedule for their successor class, as well.

The one caveat that I would put in there is, sequestration has the potential to -- to change that answer considerably.

BLUMENTHAL:

My -- my hope is that sequestration has no effect on the submarine program because I think it ought to be clearly excepted from any of those cuts that could be contemplated, in light of all the considerations that you and others have stated so powerfully and eloquently,

So, I'm hopeful that we can avoid those effects. And also, with all due respect, I know that you may not be able to comment on this point in detail, but the proposal for another BRAC, I think, is probably destined to be doomed, or, as has been put, dead on arrival here in the Congress. But I -- I would certainly believe there are better ways to save money. Indeed (ph), the BRAC process has shown itself to be cost-ineffective, rather than a means of saving money. So, I'm hopeful that we can avoid that mistake, as well.

I know that you may not be in a position to comment on it, but I just want to state for the record that I'm -- I'm hoping that the president will reconsider that point (ph).

Let me...say to you that I take with complete trust and confidence the position that you have stated, all three of you, with great passion and commitment, to eliminating sexual assault. And I think that one of the aspects of this that deserves greater scrutiny is the reporting, which has to be encouraged. And I noted that the report released on Monday -- I believe it was on Monday -- the

2011 Health Survey -- stated that the percentage of reporting or responding to that survey in the Marine Corps was only about 22 percent, or in other words, 78 percent of troops declined to participate.

Now, that was before the -- the real reorganization, I suppose. So, perhaps the reporting rates would be higher now.

General, I must -- I wonder if you could comment on what more can be done to encourage reporting?

AMOS:

Senator, I want to make sure I'm clear here.

When I think of reporting, it's not so much a survey as it is actual victims coming forward and saying something bad happened. It could be male or female.

With the advent of -- of this surge effort -- it's more than surge -- this sustained, long-term effort that the Marine Corps has taken -- taken on since -- since the mid-summer of last year -- we've said all along that we expect the numbers of restricted and unrestricted reports to go up. That would be an indication to me that -- that my Marines actually have confidence in the battalion commanders and squadron commanders and the senior enlisted leadership, and that they will not be re-victimized. That they will not be humiliated. That they will be treated with dignity and respect, and they'll be -- and they'll be protected.

And that's what's happened. Our reports are going up. So, there's -- there's a sign (ph) to me that you go (ph) -- oh, I hate to see that, but that's the reality. And as I travel around and my sergeant major travels around, the feedback we get -- the anecdotal feedback we get from predominantly our females is that, OK, "We're more comfortable -- we see -- we have more confidence in leadership now."

A large percentage of the reports in this -- in this -- and I can't tell you how many, sir, because it's -- the information is convoluted. Our reports from two years ago -- in other words, my Marines have come forward, and they say, "OK, this happened to me two years ago." That's an indication that there is more confidence in the leadership's ability to be able to take this seriously.

So, that's the reporting I'm looking at, Senator.

BLUMENTHAL:

And -- and your point is very well taken, that -- that there are two kinds of reporting, and the reporting of actual crimes is what really probably is most important. And I would just suggest in closing, 'cause my time is -- has expired -- that the way to get more reporting -- the way to make this system more effective, the way to give confidence to the men and women under your command, is to increase the conviction rates.

And I say that, with all due respect, as a prosecutor, not as a -- as a career military person, as you are, but best deterrence is -- and I would just second Senator McCaskill -- is putting people away, putting them in prison, giving harsh, significant, but fair punishment. And I know that you're committed to that policy.

AMOS:

Senator, if I could just -- I realize time is of the essence. That's a very good point. I just -- as a result of the NCIS' help, and the result of the reorganization of what we -- what we pull together are complex trial teams, where we actually have the approach (ph) of overdoing (ph) this now.

Between -- from 2011 to 2012, we've more than doubled the amount of prosecutions and we've more than doubled the amount of convictions. So, I just -- we're headed in the right direction.

BLUMENTHAL:

Thank you.

AMOS:

Thank you.

BLUMENTHAL:

Thank you very much, (inaudible).

LEVIN:

Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

I'm going to leave. I think that Senator Inhofe will be leaving. We have that meeting of all senators.

Before I call on Senator Hirono, I would ask that she -- when she's completed and she's the last senator here, which I think she will be, if she could then adjourn the hearing.

Thank you very much for your testimony, gentlemen, and I call on Senator Hirono.

HIRONO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And gentlemen, thank you for your service.

I echo the sentiment of a number of my colleagues on this committee to focus on the need to do everything you can to end sexual assault in your service, and, of course, all the other services.

Admiral Greenert, you gave a response to Senator Ayotte regarding the number of ships. And I believe that you said that the reduction of the number of ships will slow our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific.

This is not a question. It's imply to say that we -- I share those concerns with you. And this is yet -- your response is yet another reason that we need to end sequestration and focus on going forward, come October 1st.

Secretary Mabus, I want to thank you for the -- the -- your noting that you are doing everything you can to use some other method than furloughing the thousands and thousands of civilian employees in our various shipyards and other places in order to meet your budget cuts. So, the thousands of our civilian employees at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and I commend you for those efforts, and please continue them.

Yesterday, the National Security Adviser Tom Donilon spoke on the critical link between energy security and national security. And he stated, quote, "Energy matters profoundly to U.S. national security and foreign policy," end quote.

I could not agree more. And I know that this is something that you, Mr. Secretary, have long recognized. And I want to commend your work as the secretary in aggressively pursuing a strategy of diversifying the naval -- the Navy SEAL sources and using energy more efficiently so that we would be saving significant amounts of money that can go for other defense priorities.

Now, as you know in your testimony, the Navy has historically been a leader in energy innovation. Given the successes you are seeing within the Navy and Marine Corps, what, in your estimate, would be the impact on the Navy's long-term capabilities if we were to reduce our investment and initiatives in energy security?

MABUS:

Senator, this is -- this is a military vulnerability. The -- the amount of fuel that people use, the types of fuel that we use, the vulnerability we have not only to supply shocks (ph), but also to price shocks (ph).

And I think that if we were to -- were to lessen that commitment to diversifying our sources, to becoming more efficient, that we would simply be making a military vulnerability first. And that one of the things that leaders of military services are required to do -- and we certainly should do -- is identify your adversaries', or potential adversaries' vulnerabilities, but also your own, and to work to -- to lessen those.

And that's what we've been trying to do. And we very much appreciate the support of you and your colleagues toward this -- toward this goal. And it's -- it's a wide range of things. It's -- it's the efficiencies that we talked about, but it's also putting some competition in -- putting -- trying

to develop sources of energy that are not influenced by world events, by somebody threatening to close a strait here or there and making the price of oil spike.

For every 10 -- for every dollar that -- that oil increases per barrel, it costs the Department of the Navy \$30 million in additional fuel costs.

So, for F.Y. '11, F.Y. '12, and then the proposed increase for F.Y. '13, that's a billion and a half dollars to the Navy.

And those sorts of impacts have impacts on our operations, they have impacts on our people, they have impacts on our ability to do what our missions are. And so, I would be very happy to literally go on about this all day, but to -- to get you some -- some of the figures that we have worked through in terms of benefits of this, in terms of where this will take us, and -- and as you point out, the fact that the Navy, in particular, but also in the military in general, has led in this and other technology changes.

HIRONO:

Mr. Secretary, I could not agree with you more, that we need to continue to make the investment in energy security, and you correctly identified this as a security vulnerability if we don't do that.

General Amos, it's good to see you again.

The Marines obviously play a major role in the Pacific, and are a significant part of the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific area.

Can you talk a little bit about the latest (ph) with regards to relocating Marine forces throughout the Pacific?

AMOS:

Senator, thank you.

Yes, I can.

We have -- we actually began this about a year and a half ago. And if you take a look at the amount of money (inaudible) -- there's about three and a half billion dollars, all total, money being focused on the reorganization of -- of the Marines in the Pacific.

So, that just gives you a sense for how committed we are. But last year, we deployed our -- our first rotating battalion back onto the island of Okinawa last year.

One of the companies of that battalion went down to Darwin, Australia, and began a Darwin detachment down there, which has just been reconstituted again this month.

So, that's going to begin an effort between our nation and Australia, gradually, eventually, growing to about 2,500 marines there.

We started again this year with another installment of another Marine battalion from Hawaii to Okinawa. So, today, we not only have the -- the kind of typical battalion that's affiliated with Okinawa. We now have two rotating battalions on the ground in Okinawa in support of the rotational forces.

This fall we're going to do that again. We'll triple down on that. So, we'll have three rotating battalions, plus one on the ground. We'll move more aviation assets into the Western Pacific.

So, we're committed on that. And -- and there's already this footprint increasing in the Western Pacific for the ship industry (ph).

HIRONO:

Thank you very much for that explanation.

And as I am the last remaining person on the committee here, I want to once again, on behalf of our committee, thank you all for your service and for being here with your testimony.

And the committee stands adjourned.