

**Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense Holds Hearing on the Proposed Fiscal 2013 Appropriations for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps**  
**March 7, 2012**

MIKULSKI:

Good morning. Today this subcommittee begins its hearings to review the fiscal year 2013 Department of Defense budget.

I want to announce there's been no coup.

Everybody could be OK to see me in the chair. It's I'm sure a surprise to me as it much it is to you.

Senator Inouye cannot be here this morning for an unexpected reason that arose so he asked me to chair the committee.

In the spirit of bipartisanship I think as characteristic of this committee I know it will run very smoothly.

Because we're expecting, really, active participation from members, we're going to stick to the five-minute rule. Members will be recognized in the order of arrival, but of course we're starting with Senator Cochran.

What I will do is wait until the very end, ask my questions then if there are any Inouye questions I will ask them.

Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Mabus, it's so good to see you again. I've got some questions for you as you can imagine.

The chief of naval operations, Admiral Greenert, is here. The commandant of the Marine Corps, General Amos.

General Amos, I understand you're recovering from surgery and you and your wife had determined the -- that you can appear today, but anything we need to do to accommodate your situation, sir, we'll be happy to do it.

We want to thank you for being here, and I'm going to just move right along.

And, Senator Cochran, why don't we turn to you for an opening statement, and then we can turn directly to Secretary Mabus and get along with the hearing. Does that sound like a good way to go?

COCHRAN:

Madam Chairman, thank you very much. It certainly does.

I'm delighted to join you in welcoming this distinguished panel of witnesses. Former governor of our state of Mississippi, secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, is doing an outstanding job in his new capacity. And Admiral Greenert and General Amos, who are leaders of our military forces - - Navy and Marine Corps forces -- we appreciate so much your cooperation with our committee and responding to our request to be here to review the budget for the Department of the Navy and forces at -- in the fleet and in the Marines Corps. And we look forward to our opportunity to question you about the priorities that we face.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

MIKULSKI:

Mr. Secretary, fire at will.

MABUS:

Senator Mikulski, Senator Cochran, Senator Reed, Senator Coats, let me start by thanking you all for your support of the sailors, and Marines, and civilians in the Department of the Navy and ensuring that they get what they need to do their mission.

I also want to say how happy I am to have my wingman, General Amos, back after -- I -- I think he is a -- yes, he's a winged man now, but after -- after his surgery last week and the fact that he's here today shows the level of dedication and resilience that the Marines have and the pride that he and I and the chief of naval operations, Admiral Greenert, take in leading the sailors, and Marines, and civilians of the Department of the Navy who selflessly serve the United States is exceeded only by the accomplishments of these brave people.

Whatever is asked of them by the American people through their commander in chief -- from Afghanistan to Libya, from assisting the stricken people of Japan to assuring open sea lanes around the world, from bringing Osama bin Laden to final justice, to bringing hostages out of wherever they may be hidden by terrorists or pirates -- they answer the call, they get the mission done.

The CNO, the commandant, and I are confident that the United States Navy and Marine Corps are well prepared to meet the requirements of the new defense strategy, maintain their status as the most formidable expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known. No one -- no one should ever doubt the ability, capability, or superiority of the Navy-Marine Corps team.

As we reposition after two long ground wars it was essential to review our basic strategic posture.

The new guidance developed under the leadership of the president and the secretary of defense, with the full involvement of every service secretary and service chief, responds to the changes in global security. The budget presented to implement this strategy which was also arrived after a full collaboration of all services ensures the Navy and Marine Corps will be able to fully execute this strategy while meeting the constraints imposed by the budget control act.

With this new strategy which has an understandable focus on the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf region maintains our worldwide partnerships and our global presence choosing innovative low-cost, light footprint engagements. It requires a Navy-Marine Corps team that is built and ready for any eventuality -- on land, in the air, on and under the world's oceans, or in the vast cyber seas -- now operating forward to protect American interests, respond to crises, and to deter or if necessary win wars.

The impact of two ground wars in the last decade on our Navy fleet and its force is unmistakable. Our fleet stood at 316 ships and an end strength of over 377,000 sailors. On 9/11/2001 it dropped to 283 ships and close to 49,000, fewer sailors, just eight years later when I took office. This administration has made it a priority to rebuild our fleet.

Despite the budget constraints imposed under the budget control act our plan assures that we will have no fewer ships at the end of the five-year budget cycle than we have today. Also, the fleet of 2017 will include more, more capable ships, also state-of-the-art technology and manned as always by highly-skilled people.

Although we are presenting one five-year budget plan one fit up this is certainly not a one fit all issue.

As the defense strategy states we're building a force for 2020 and the years beyond the current fit up we have a plan to grow our fleet and ensure capability and capacity continues to match missions. In fact our plan will have us again across the threshold of 300 ships by 2019.

Overall we will fully meet the requirements of the new status -- of the strategy and protect our industrial bodies.

The Marine Corps will also return to its maritime roots and resume its traditional role as the nation's expeditionary force-in-readiness. Marines will retain the lessons of a decade of hard and effective fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan as they transition back to a middleweight amphibious force optimized for forward presence, engagement, and rapid crisis response.

We will carefully manage the reduction in active duty end strength from 202,000 to 182,100 by the end of fiscal year '16 in order to keep faiths with our Marines and their families to the maximum extent possible.

This restructured Marine Corps, a plan was arrived at after a year-and-a-half of very careful study by the Marines will be smaller but it will be fast, it will be agile, it will be lethal. The number of Marines in certain critical jobs like Special Forces and cyber will be increased in unit manning levels and thus readiness will go up.

Both the Navy and Marine Corps will continue to decrease operational vulnerabilities in ways that are cost efficient. That means we will maintain our efforts to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and use energy more efficiently.

These efforts have already made us better war fighters by deploying to Afghanistan sola blankets to charge radios and other electrical items. The Marine patrol dropped 700 pounds in batteries from their packs and decreased the need for risky re-supply missions.

Using less fuel in theater can mean fewer fuel convoys which will save lives. For every 50 convoys we lose a Marine, killed or wounded. That is too high a price to pay.

As much as we have focused on our fleet's assets of ships, aircraft, vehicles and submarines they don't sail, fly, drive or dive without the men and women who wear the uniform and their families. They have taken care of us, they have kept the faith with us, and we owe them no less.

The commitments to sailors, Marines, and their families is there whether they serve four years or 40. It begins the moment they raise their hand and take the oath to defend our country.

It continues through the training and education that spans their career. It reaches out to their loved ones because it's not just an individual who serves, but the entire family.

It supports our wounded warriors with recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration. It continues the transition services for our veterans to locate new jobs and the G.I. bill for their continuing education or transfer for family member's education.

The list goes on and on and on as it should.

Our commitment to sailors and Marines can never waiver and can never end.

For 236 years -- from sail to steam to nuclear, from the USS Constitution to the USS Carl Vinson, from Tripoli to Tripoli -- our maritime warriors have upheld a proud heritage, protected our nation, projected our power, and provided freedom of the seas.

In the coming years this new strategy and our plans to execute that strategy will assure that our naval heritage not only perseveres, but that our Navy and Marine Corps continue to prevail.

Thank you very much.

MIKULSKI:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.  
Admiral?

GREENERT:

Thank you, Senator.

Chairman Mikulski, Vice Chairman Cochran, and distinguished members of the committee. I'm honored to appear before you for the first time to discuss the Navy's budget submission.

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

I'm honored to serve and lead the Navy in these challenging times and I thank the committee for your continued support.

This morning I'd like to address three points -- the Navy's importance to the nation's security, some enduring tenets and priorities that guided our decisions in this budget, and how these decisions shaped our budget's submission.

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

If you -- if you refer to the chart LED in front of you you can see that on any given day we have about 50,000 sailors and 145 ships underway with about 100 of those ships deployed overseas. These ships and sailors allow us to influence events abroad because they ensure access to what I refer to as the maritime crossroads. These are areas where shipping lanes and our security interest intersect.

They're indicated on the chart LED by blue-orange bow ties we can remain forward in these areas because of the facilities and the support from nearby allies -- allies and partners.

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

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

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

Around the Horn of Africa we depend on the airfield and the port in Djibouti to support our forces conducting counterterrorism and counter-piracy operations.

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

In our own hemisphere here our port and airfield at Guantanamo Bay will grow more important in the next several years as the Panama Canal is widened.

When I assumed the watch as chief and naval operations about six months ago I established three tenets which I call unambiguous direction for our Navy leadership. And they are warfighting first, operate forward, and be ready.

Warfighting first. This means the Navy must be ready to fight and prevail today while building the ability to prevail tomorrow.

This is our primary mission and all our efforts must be grounded in this fundamental responsibility. Iran's recent provocative rhetoric highlights the need for us to have forward deployed warfighting capability.

In our 2013 budget submission we redirected funding toward weapons, systems, sensors, and tactical training that can be more rapidly fielded to the fleet. This includes demonstrators and prototypes that could quickly improve our forces' capability.

Operate forward. That means we will provide the nation an offshore option to deter, influence and win in an era of uncertainty.

Our 2013 budget submission supports several initiatives to establish our forward posture at the maritime crossroads. This -- this include placing forward deployed naval force destroyers in Rota, Spain and forward stationing littoral combat ships in Singapore and patrol coastal ships in Bahrain.

One ship that is operating from an overseas location can provide the same presence as about four ships rotationally deployed from the continental United States.

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

That means we will harness the teamwork, the talent, and the imagination of our diverse first -- force to be ready to fight and responsibly use our resources.

This is more than completing required maintenance and ensuring parts and supplies are available. Being ready also means being proficient confident, and understanding our weapons, our sensors, command and control communications, and our engineering systems as well.

Applying these tenets to meet the defense strategic guidance will build our 2013 budget submission to implement three main investment priorities.

Number one, we will remain ready to meet our current challenges today. Consistent with the defense strategic guidance we will continue to prioritize readiness over capacity and focus our warfighting presence on the Asia Pacific and the Middle East.

We will also sustain the nation's most survivable strategic deterrent in our SSBN's.

Number two, we will build a relevant and capable future force. Our Navy will evolve to remain the world's preeminent maritime force and our shipbuilding and aircraft construction investments will form the foundation of the future fleet.

In developing our aircraft and ship procurement plans we really focus on three approaches.

One, to sustain the serial production of today's proven platforms including Arleigh Burke destroyers, Virginia class submarines and our F/A-18 Super Hornets. But also, number two, to promptly field new platforms in development such as the littoral combat ship, the joint strike fighter, the Ford class carrier, the P-8 Alpha Poseidon aircraft and the America class amphibious assault ship. And three, we're going to improve the capability of today's platforms through new weapons -- through new weapons, sensors, and unmanned vehicles including advanced missile defense radar, the Firescout, and its follow on, the FireX.

New payloads like this will help ensure we project power despite threats to access as described in the new defense strategic guidance.

We will also enable our continued dominance in the industry environment and support our goal to operate effectively in cyberspace and fully exploit the electromagnetic spectrum.

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

And priority three. We will enable the support of our sailors, civilians, and their families.

I'm extremely proud of our people. We have a professional and a moral obligation to lead, to train, to equip, and to motivate them.

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

I support the compensation reforms included in the Defense Department's 2013 budget submission which I believe our appropriate changes to manage the cost of the all-volunteer force.

In closing, your -- your Navy will continue to be critical to our nation's security and prosperity by assuring access to the global commons and by being at the front line of our nation's efforts in war and in peace.

I assure the committee, and the Congress, and the American people that we will focus on warfighting first, we will operate forward, and we'll be ready.

I want to thank you -- Senator Mikulski and the -- the committee, and your staff that are behind you and around this room for helping us in preparing our submission.

Thank you -- the committee -- for your support.

Thank you.

MIKULSKI:

General Amos?

AMOS:

Madam Chairman, Vice Chairman Cochran, and members of the committee, I'm pleased to speak today on behalf of your United States Marine Corps.

As we sit today in this chamber 30,000 Marines are forward deployed around the world defending our nation's liberty, shaping strategic environments, engaging our partners and allies and ensuring freedom of the seas while they deter aggression.

Over the past year alone the forward presence in crisis response of America's Marines work in concert with our most important joint partner, the United States Navy, has created opportunities and provided decision space for our nation's leaders.

Your Marines were first on the scene to provide humanitarian assistance in disaster relief in Japan in the aftermath of last year's monumental natural disasters. The first two fly airstrikes over Libya, they've evacuated nine combatants from Tunisia and reinforced our embassies in Egypt, Yemen, and in Bahrain.

While accomplishing all of that your corps continued to conduct sustained combat and counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan.

Having just returned a little over three weeks ago from visiting many of the nearly 20,000 Marines and sailors currently deployed there I can tell you firsthand that their professionalism and morale remain notably strong. There is an indomitable spirit displayed in all that they do. Their best interest and the needs of all our joint forces in combat remain my number one priority. History has shown that it is impossible to predict where, when, and how America's interest will be threatened. Regardless of the global economic strain placed on governments and their military forces today, crisis requiring military intervention will undoubtedly continue tomorrow and in the years to come.

As a maritime nation dependent on the sea for the free exchange of ideas and trade, America requires security both at home and abroad to maintain a strong economy, to access overseas markets, and to assure our allies.

In an era of fiscal constraint the United States Marine Corps is our nation's risk mitigator with certain force during uncertain times, one that will be the most ready when the nation is the least ready.

There is a cost maintaining this capability, but it is nominal in the context of the total defense budget and provides true value to the American taxpayer.

This fiscal year I'm asking Congress for \$30.8 billion, a combination of both base and OCO.

Your continued support will fund ongoing operations around the world, provide quality resources for our Marines, our sailors, and their families. It will reset the equipment that is worn-out from more than 10 years at sea, and lastly it will posture our forces for the future.

When the nation pays the sticker price for its Marines it buys the ability to respond to crisis anywhere in the world through forward deployed and forward engaged forces. This same force can be reinforced quickly to project power and contribute to joint assured access anywhere in the world in the event of a major contingency.

No other force possesses the flexibility and organic sustainment to provide these capabilities.

As our nation begins to direct its attention to the challenges and opportunities of a post-Afghanistan world, the world where the Middle East and the Pacific takes center stage, the Marine Corps will be ever mindful of the traditional friction points in other regions and prepare to respond accordingly as needed.

The strategic guidance directs that we rebalance and reset for the future. We have a solid plan to do so and we have begun execution already.

As we execute strategic pivot I have made it a priority to keep faith with those who have served during the past 10 year's war. Through judicious choices and forward planning ever mindful of the economy in which we live we have built a quality force that meets the needs of our nation.

By the end of F.Y. '16 your corps will be streamlined down to 182,100 Marines. This active duty force will be complemented by the diverse depths of our operational reserve component that will remain at 39,600 strong .

Our merging Marine Corps will be optimized for forward presence, engagement, and a rapid crisis response. It will be enhanced by critical enablers, special operators and cyber warfare Marines all necessary on a -- on a modern battlefield.

To build down the Marine Corps from its current end strengths of 202,000 I will need the assistance from Congress for the fiscal resources necessary to execute the drawdown at a measured and responsible pace of approximately 5,000 Marines a year. A rate that guards against the precipitous reduction that would be harmful to our force.

As we continue to work with our nation's leadership and my fellow joint partners, you have my assurance that your corps will be ever faithful in meeting our nation's need for an expeditionary force and readiness. A force that can respond to today's crisis with today's force today.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. Madam Chairwoman and fellow members, I look forward to your questions.

MIKULSKI:

Thank you for your testimony and, of course, for your service.

With Senator Inouye's absence the way we're going to do this is we're going to turn to Senator Cochran first, I'm going to call upon members in their order of arrival, and we're going to ask that we stick to the five-minute rule because there are others -- and we know there are multiple hearings going on.

So, Senator Cochran as the ranking member and a naval officer yourself as I believe. Weren't you a naval officer?

COCHRAN:

I certainly was. One of the proudest periods of my life on a heavy cruiser operating out of Boston, Massachusetts.

Thank you.

Let me join you, Madam Chairman, in welcoming this distinguished panel. We appreciate your service, we appreciate your leadership, and we want to be sure that we understand the needs that are of highest priority to all of you as we endeavor to help assure that our Navy and Marine Corps are the strongest as any in the world, stronger than any in the world, and fully prepared to protect our interest from around the world and our safety and security here at home.

I know that one of the challenges that we face is keeping an up-to-date naval force with ships and equipment ready to be used in an emergency and I wanted to ask Secretary Mabus who is probably familiar with shipbuilding in our state of Mississippi, but in his new responsibility how are the needs of the U.S. Navy. Could you comment about how well we are. Are we not meeting the need for an up-to-date modern naval force?

MABUS:

Yes, sir. And thank you, Senator Cochran.

There's something about political figures in Mississippi serving on cruisers in -- out of New England, you know, since both Senator Cochran and I did that several years ago now.

As I said in my opening statement, Senator, the -- the Navy that was here in 2009 when I took office was 30 ships smaller, down from 316 ships on 9/11/2001 to 283 ships in 2009. You know, we were down almost 47,000 sailors in that time so during -- on the great military buildups in America, that the United States Navy actually got smaller.

One of the primary focuses has been to rebuild the fleet and increase the size of the fleet. Today we have 36 ships under contract, you know, to come in to the -- into the naval fleet.

And I do want to point out that they're all firm-fixed price contracts. That that was one of the challenges that we face, was making sure we got the right price for -- for our naval vessels.



Moving forward, you know, we will -- we have 285 ships in the battle fleet today. At the end of the five years we will again have at least 285 ships. And by 2019 we will again pass the 300 ship mark.

We've done this by working with industry. We think that we owe industry certain things -- stable design, a mature technology, and some transparency in the point ships we hope to build and when.

In response we think industry owes us some things. To invest in the infrastructure and the training that will be necessary. To have a learning curve so that every ship of -- a class of the same type ship that the design does not change, that the number of man hours and thus the cost goes down. And in all our shipyards today -- virtually all of our shipyards today -- that is the case.

Your colleague sitting to your left, Senator Shelby, working with Austal in mobile. We have a fixed price contract for 10 littoral combat ships from Austal and the last one will be -- the 10th ship will be significantly cheaper than the first ship.

So I think that your fleet is in -- it is -- it is positioned to do everything that the new defense strategy requires it to do.

The CNO may want to comment because we're going to have to use our ships differently or deploy them so that one ship will do the job of many more that were -- if they were tipped in the United States. But -- but the CNO, the commandant, and I have no doubt that this fleet that we have today and the one that we're taking forward will meet all the requirements of the new defense strategy and everything that we need to do to keep the United States safe and secure.

COCHRAN:

Admiral Greenert?

GREENERT:

Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

What I would add I'm a -- I'm a capabilities kind of end to this and I'm very satisfied with the capabilities delivered.

The Virginia class submarine is the finest submarine in the world and I have empirical data to -- to attest to that.

The DDG 51 remains a multi-mission. Very relevant ship.

The -- the LPD-17 class and the Makin Island, you know, is on deployment now and they are doing fabulous. The LPD-17 is a quantum leap over its predecessor.

As we bring in littoral combat ships and the joint high-speed vessels, these are relevant ships for relevant future and they resonate with the need out there. We will operate them forward and they will -- they're -- I'm very high on them getting the job done. Volume and speed and modularity, and that's the way to the future.

Thank you for the opportunity.

COCHRAN:

Thank you very much.

I'll reserve my time and ask General Amos a question later but yield to other members of the committee.

MIKULSKI:

Thank you.  
Senator Reed?

REED:

Thank you for my time.

MIKULSKI:

Now he's a West Point guy.

REED:

Senator Cochran and Secretary Mabus and I have something in common. One of my predecessor in West Point was a Senator from Mississippi, Jefferson Davis.

And so, this is a small, small world.

Mr. Secretary, thank you, General Amos, thank you, Admiral Greenert, thank you, for your service and your dedication to the sailors and Marines that you lead so well.

I want to begin Admiral by saying that the Virginia class submarine is the finest submarine in the world. I agree with that, I'm glad you do too.

I think it also has -- you talked about operational capabilities particularly in the Pacific where access is the the critical issue. Some of our services the submarine is far more capable of access and delivering fires and delivering personnel, and getting intelligence, et cetera. And in that regard your -- probably Admiral would -- have said the same e thing and I just for the record you -- I pressure you agree with that, as special role in terms about access.

GREENERT:

Yes, sir, I do.

REED:

The Virginia class submarine we're doing two boats here in F.Y. '13. However, in F.Y. '14 because of budget constraints ship is being slipped back to F.Y. '18.

Given the capabilities, given the new mission in the Pacific particularly with the big anti-access component this is not -- I think this is as you said before budgetary decision not a strategic or operational decision. Having said all that and without getting a new specific negotiation are you working on a plan with the contractor to see if there are ways that we can go forth, some construction so that the fleet does not lose a valuable asset for six years or so?

GREENERT:

Yes, sir, we are. We're looking for any fiscal means, if you will, acquisition means, and contractor performance incentives that we could.

As you know we have a block buy of nine and if we could get to a block buy of 10 during those years, '14 through '18, that would be terrific. And by all means we will work by any means capable to do that.

REED:

And that will require, I presume, some help by out -- by this committee in that regard.

GREENERT:

Yes, sir, it would.

REED:

So I, for one, will be very happy to help. I think this is important for the Navy and for the nation. There's another aspect of the submarine program that is sort of the replacement of the higher class. And that has been slipped two years in terms of proposed construction. Design work is going on, we have a partner with the -- the British, and one of the issues that always comes in mind when we talk about the Ohio class replacement is ballistic missile. Will -- is that -- this is really in my view a DOD asset not just a Navy asset.

So, Mr. Secretary, have you had discussions with DOD in ways that they can help you ensure that this slippage is not a -- not a -- it's temporary not a sign of failure upon the program?

MABUS:

Senator, I can assure you that the slippage is two years and -- and that's it. We have also -- as you pointed out we've been in discussions with our British counterparts to make sure that -- let the schedule meet s up with their requirements as well. And as you know we've committed a substantial amount of money now for the research development and engineering work that will be necessary to begin the build in 2021.

I think that this most survivable leg of our triad, the strategic weapon that we have in the Ohio class replacement that our discussion needs to be head on exactly how we do pay for that. That discussion would not only include DOD but also the Congress, you know, in how -- how that is best to be handled because the -- the flipside of that is that our industrial base for the rest of ship building during the time that the SSBN-X, the Ohio class replacement is being built could be seriously harmed, you know, including our attack submarine industrial base. And during that time in -- and I don't know of anyone anywhere that would want to do that.

REED:

You know, I hope that.

And just -- and a quick follow on, I -- and it's more of a comment -- require a comment from you is that as we go forward there's a larger issue that is the -- the nuclear triad. How it's going to be constituted, what elements might be bulked up, what elements might not and that's in the context in both the budget and strategic policy and non-proliferation policy.

And my view is that the submarine has always seemed to be the most significant part of this in terms of its invulnerability relatively speaking, its ability to deploy, it's stealthiness et cetera. And so in those conversations about the future of the triad we hope that the submarine would be in the forefront.

Thank you.

Thank you, I yield .

COATS :

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, first I want to start by thanking -- for visiting the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Crane in Indiana. People say what in the world is the Navy doing in Indiana -- center of Indiana. But as you found out and as expressed to me that it's a little gem out there. Not so little, but it's a gem out there in terms of electronic warfare, special missions a whole number of pretty cutting-edge stuff that's important to not only the Navy but the Marines, Army, and Air Force.

So we thank you for that visit and I would extend that to Admiral Greenert and -- and General Amos because what -- what happens there affects both of your services. So -- we'll throw in an Indiana University basketball game and -- if we can get our timing right. I'd be happy to travel with you for -- for that visit.

But that really doesn't go to my question. My question is this. Shortly after the conclusion of Desert Storm I was flying back in Indianapolis with then Secretary Cheney and we spent the entire flight talking about the -- how the history of Congress support and military readiness has gone through the ups and downs of post-conflict drawdowns.

And I asked him -- and this was in response to the question I'll ask of what is your biggest challenge now we've had this success. And he said, "Avoiding hollowing out or drawing down too fast too far. That's the biggest challenge in front of me."

And when you go all the way back to World War I and the hollowing out afterward and the cost that it was to our country to rebuild, to be prepared to address World War II and then following that with, the world's problems and Korea came along following that Vietnam and Desert Storm and so forth it just seems like -- well, I guess they are just really reacted when -- General Amos when you said history showing it's impossible to predict the how, when, and where of what might come next except history tells us. It's coming somewhere and to be prepared.

So my question is this. The military has stepped up to the plate relative to nearly half -a-trillion dollars of cuts over the near people of time when we discussed some of that in terms of how we get there. My concern is the potential impact given the kind of conflicts that we can potentially predict in the future, but there's always the unpredictable.

But my -- my question to you is this. We have this sequester sitting there about to add additional half-a-trillion dollars unless Congress addresses this before the end of the year.

That was presented as something that would never happen because it would force decisions relative to how we deal with our budget. But it did -- but it never did happen.

And so my question to all three of you, really, is, what is your reaction to this possibility and what would it mean for the ability to be prepared and not to be so hollowed out but we're not prepared for that next how, when, and where.

MABUS:

I'll quote Secretary of Defense who said it would be a disaster if sequestration happens not only in terms of the amount of money that would be taken out of defense but also in the way it would be taken out.

The -- the \$487 billion in cuts over the next 10 years, you know, the Department of Defense has worked very hard over the course of several months to make sure that the -- that this was done carefully to make sure that we avoided hollowing out the force in your term to -- to make sure

that we had the -- the training, to make sure we have the manning, to make sure we -- that our force structure could be maintained and it -- it was an effective and lethal force structure that we -- that we continue forward because the very nature of sequestration what you would have is automatic percentage cuts to -- to everything without regard to strategy, without regard to importance, without regard to any sort of setting priorities. And so, both those items would make sequestration.

I think very difficult. And, you know, again in the words of Secretary Panetta, disastrous cuts.

COATS:

Admiral Greenert, do you want to tell us how it would affect the Navy?

GREENERT:

Senator, the -- the way Secretary Mabus said, you know, there's going into each and every account. We -- we would have to prepare for such a thing probably a few months ahead of time. That I'm just talking about the mechanics of trying to figure out how to recoup pay so we can pay our people, pay our civilians, then get contracts which would I assume being -- we'd be in breach because all of a sudden there's no funding for commitments that we've made, the federal government has made.

And so my point is, we would -- we would have our people distracted for months. Just to -- just to do the execution of such a thing there's requirements that the federal government is -- is held to and that bothers me a lot.

I mean, we talked in the past about, you know, when we've had a threat of a -- of a government shutdown and we stopped everything for a week weeks to prepare for such a thing. This would be -- that, you know, to the nth degree.

And so I -- I think that is just really not understood. As I sit down and think about just the mechanics of this, the amount we needed totaling the strategy for an amount of this kind and we cannot -- never do what we're doing today under that kind of funding. We need a new strategy as our bosses have testified.

Thank you.

COATS:

General Amos?

AMOS:

Senator, thank you for asking that question. That's -- that's a tough one and one we have talked about often within the Department of Defense as you're all aware.

I want -- I'd like the committee to under -- to believe that where we sit today -- and I can speak for my service -- we have built a force as we come down from 202,000 which is where we sit today down to 182,100.

We will do that by the end of '16. That force will be very capable. It will be anything but a hollow force. That force will be -- the readiness will be high, the manning will be high, the equipment readiness will be high. So that -- that force that we have built for this -- for this budget control act is anything but a hollow force. So I want to -- I want to put -- I want to put -- ally any fears there.

To go beyond that and to sequestration, it's my understanding it could happen a couple of ways. One, it can come with either -- either we're going to a preserved manpower and not take any cuts out of the manpower account, in which case that leaves only two other areas that you can really - - that the cuts will come from. They'll come from procurement. Things, ships, equipment. They'll come from my reset of equipment that I spoke about in my opening statement after 10 years of combat it will -- it will -- it will stunt if not completely -- negate my ability to rest the Marine Corps.

So, if the manpower account is set aside it's -- it's procurement of things and then it's operations and maintenance. And -- and what that means to the committee is, that's training. That's the ability to go to -- in my case 29 Palms, to go to the rangers in the Philippines to train with the Philippines. So to be able to train with the Australians, to be forward deployed and forward engaged, to buy fuel, to buy ammunition, to buy the kind of equipment that we need to train with. So -- so training and readiness will become what I consider to be almost the recipe for a hollow force if we end up in sequestration.

If you leave manpower in it and you say we're going to just take a percentage cut across manpower, operations, and maintenance, and the procurement of things, then you're going to end up with the forward cities, significantly less dense than the one we have today. And what that means is less capable.

Well, I have to go back in, review the strategy because the strategy we've developed for the last six months is a strategy based on the current budget.

COATS:

Well I thank all three of you.

Madam Chairman, my time has expired, but I think it's a good reminder to all of us that we've got pretty big challenge lying ahead here between now and the end of the year.

MIKULSKI:

And that was a good question. I think it's on -- all of the questions have been very good, but yours, I think, is the one that we all wanted to ask. So thank you.

Senator Shelby?

SHELBY:

Thank you.

Secretary, welcome.

Mr. Secretary, you know very -- all of this stuff, the joint high speed vessel which is the Navy's vessel. I believe it's a valuable addition to the Navy's fleet. Just for the record it has an expensive mission bay of some 20,000 square feet which enables the ship to move 600 tons of cargo at over 35 knots -- that's movin' -- while carrying over 300 combat-ready troops.

The Navy spreadsheet request for 2013 stops production of the joint high speed vessel at 10 ships rather than continuing to build for the 21 ships that was projected. I know budgets are tight, we really know that. But what -- it -- it seems it's a pretty good price, and as you know the more you build the better price you'll be able to get in this environment.

What drove the Navy's decision to use the JHS decision that we could revisit as the ships enter service if you see the needs there.

MABUS:

Couple of things drove -- drove this decision, Senator.

One was as you said finances. We had the fund -- money particularly out of procurement accounts to meet the -- to meet the \$487 billion cut in over 10 years.

Second is that when you look at our war plans you look at the requirements for these joint high speed vessels. The 10 that we have under contract today will meet all those requirements.

Third, as we were looking at ships to defer we first look at support ships like the joint high speed vessel instead of combat ships like the LCS.

And so, given that combination of factors we thought that stopping the buy at 10 in this would -- would make sense. The -- the thing that we give up is engagement capability using the joint high speed vessel to go around places like Africa or South America to do partnership training engagement and those sorts of things.

The final thing that we looked at was the health of the industrial base. And since the joint high speed vessel was made at -- in the same shipyard that the version two of the littoral combat ship is made then since the -- the -- the gear up of that workforce has done -- required the hiring of at least 2,000 or more people over the next couple of years we thought that it was a very healthy industrial base and that at least for this five years could be -- that contract could be -- ended the 10 without any harm.

SHELBY:

Thank you. You mentioned LCS earlier.

The Navy had to move two LCS ships out the five year ship building plan. I -- I hope we can work together. I know the Navy has -- has said good things about them.

I'm concerned that issues relating to LCS mission modules have delayed sea trials for the vessel and that's very important. How do you plan on dealing with the troubles affecting the module program?

MABUS:

Right now, Senator, the module program is on schedule. It's exactly where we thought it would be.

MABUS:

It's always been a sparrow development. We're doing, in fact, testing today off Panama City on the unmanned underwater system for LCS. We're -- we're using LCS-2 to -- to do that testing and we're -- we're absolutely confident that...

SHELBY:

I feel good about where you're...

MABUS:

I feel very good, yes, sir.

SHELBY:

Admiral?

GREENERT:

Yes, sir. They -- you know, we took Freedom, the mission modules...

GREENERT:

...weren't ready. The special -- the surface module is going to come up first so we took Freedom and we said, we'll go on down to the Gulf of Mexico and we needed to shake the ship down and figure out the concept of operations. So, she got involved in drug operations and took part in two busts.

Then we sent her over to RIMPAC, Rim of the Pacific, and we had a lot of inquiries about the ship, this new ship that you brought. That has, I think, subsequently led to -- but I can't be completely sure of it because the RIMPAC -- that the Singapore government offered us, invited us to bring Freedom -- in fact, encouraged us to bring Freedom to Singapore to operate there. And we're going to do that in about a year. And so we're -- we're moving out that with -- those -- those -- we're calling sea frames because we got a lot of work to do with the concept down.

At the same time as Secretary Mabus said the commission modules moved a pace as we need them to be integrated.

SHELBY:

Good.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

MIKULSKI:

Thank you.

Senator Murkowski and then Senator Kohl.

MURKOWSKI:

Thank you. Madam Chairman.

And gentlemen, welcome and I too join with my colleagues in expressing my appreciation for your leadership to our country. Greatly -- greatly appreciated.

Secretary, I want to ask you some questions about the north. Probably not going to be a surprise to you, but with the discussion about the shifting focus within the military towards Asia and the Pacific, when you look at Alaska we're sitting right up there on top, we've got larger interface with the Asia Pacific theater than -- than any other state out there. We've got 5,580 miles of coastline attached to the Pacific and the Arctic Oceans. And as we all know this coastline is becoming certainly more accessible. It presents great opportunities, but it clearly presents some real challenges as well.

Can you inform what the Navy has been doing over this past year to -- to essentially get up to speed on the changing Arctic and -- and what the near-term future holds for Navy involvement?

MABUS:

Senator, in 2009 the Navy laid out the roadmap for the Arctic. Things that we plan to do and we are following that roadmap.



Last year -- almost exactly at this time -- I was at I6 off the -- off the coast of Alaska where we set up a -- a camp as you know to do some scientific work but also bring last year two submarines up through the ice and to do exercises in the Arctic.

We also operate with -- with our Canadian allies and Operation Nanook. We have at least three operations on an ongoing basis, on a routine basis in the Arctic.

The -- the one area that we have said before that would be helpful to us is for the United States to become a signatory to the law of the sea, you know, treaty, you know, because it would make dealings in the Arctic, it would give us easier -- it would give us a seat at the table, it would allow us to state claims on the outer continental shelf that -- that are certain under the law of the sea. And as -- as we go forward because the Arctic as you pointed out as -- as the -- the Arctic will become ice free, it appears, within the next quarter century -- at least in the summer -- there will be increased shipping, there will be increased tourism, there will be increased commerce of all types through there, the naval requirements in things as diverse as search and rescue as well as purely military functions will increase every year. And we are very focused on our responsibilities in the Arctic. And I'll just repeat, one thing that would help us -- would be the law of the sea.

**MURKOWSKI:**

But I would certainly concur we want to be able to work with you to -- to try to. That I believe it's critically important.

I am concerned, though, that while other Arctic nations are -- are moving forward with policies that build out infrastructure, that provide assets, that we are not -- we're not prioritizing it to the extent possible. But I appreciate your -- your commitment.

It's amazing to me to see the -- the volume of -- of shipping traffic, that crew ships that are travelling through these northern waters and we recognize that -- that there's not -- there's not a lot up there if -- if -- if there were an incidence so it's something that we need to remain vigilant.

I wanted to ask -- I've got a host of different questions, but I don't know whether we'll have a chance to go to a second round, but I -- I do want to ask about an -- an article that was in -- in yesterday's news and this relates to a -- a new federal lawsuit where -- excuse me, eight members of the military, seven of whom were -- who served in the Navy and the Marine Corps, have made allegations of -- of -- of sexual assault and the -- the allegations contained in -- in -- at least the report that I read are -- are pretty serious. A high tolerance for sexual predators in the ranks fostering a hostile environment that discourage his victims in sexual assault from coming forward and punishing them when they do.

What are we doing not only within the Navy, but what are we doing within the military to ensure that there is a level of -- of -- of safety. That if in fact one is a -- a -- a victim that they're not further victimized by -- by retribution when they come forward.

Are -- are we making any headway on this?

**MABUS:**

One of the things that I've committed to when I took this job and one of the things that I have focused on the most intently is sexual assault in -- in the Navy and Marine Corps.

It's a crime. It's an attack. It's an attack on a shipmate. And we have a force that is willing to lay down his life for other shipmates.

This should be no different. We have to make sure that the force understands the severity of this and is willing to intervene to stop this before it happens.

I will give you some specific things that -- that we've done.

I set up a sexual assault officer who reports directly to me. And I get reports on a -- on a very routine basis and that office has been going around the fleet, around the Marine Corps, to, number one, find out exactly the size of the problem and what we can do about it.

Some of the things that have come out of that is that now in boot camp -- coming out of boot camp we found the programs inside boot camp we're not that effective because there are just too much things coming at people when they were at basic training. But that every sailor going to ASCU and every sailor does go to ASCU. They will get three 90 minutes sessions on sexual assault, on how to prevent it, on how to intervene.

Secondly, I announced the Monday of this week that we're undertaking a major initiative. Help 21st century sailor and Marine. And that it has four -- five different areas in it and one of them is that people should feel safe.

Some of the things we're doing there is doing everything we can to remove the stigma of reporting including -- and this is a DOD-wide effort -- some federal forms that you had to fill out now for things like security clearances you would have to put down counseling that you received after an attack. We've got in that -- that requirement including -- if -- if -- if the victim wants to go to another command immediately that person can go to another command immediately to -- to get away from any sexual predators that they may have come in contact with.

And the one that got the most press was we're instituting breathalyzer for alcohol on duty stations coming on-board our ships, coming to work at our surface locations. And the reason we're doing this is because alcohol has been shown to be the common factor in sexual assault, in domestic violence, in suicide, in fitness, in readiness. And we've a pilot program with SUBPAC, Pacific Submarines in Washington State and we've also run a pilot program at the U.S. Naval Academy using these breathalyzers.

The incidents of sexual assault, and instance of domestic violence, of everything across the board has gone down dramatically when we have done that. And I just thought if -- if we have that opportunity and we know that that -- that that sort of -- we could get that sort of response in these pilot programs then we have an obligation to put this in fleet wide to guard against any -- not only sexual assault but also the other risk that sailors and the Marines face.

MURKOWSKI:

Well I appreciate that and the -- the -- the attention, the focus on the safety. I look forward to welcoming you too to Anchorage this summer when the USS Anchorage is commissioned. We're looking forward to that visit.

Thank you.

MABUS:

And we were at least bright enough to do that this summer.

MURKOWSKI:

Much better weather and good fishing.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

MIKULSKI:

Thank you, Senator Murkowski.

Before I turn to Senator Kohl I just want to add and amplify the gentlelady's remarks and yours, Secretary Mabus. All of the women in the Senator -- and we don't have a caucus, we just come together where we can find common ground -- we're concerned about women in the military, their ability to serve and to be promoted and utilized in every capacity.

But this issue of alcohol is something that runs true all of the services. And for having the naval academy at -- in Maryland, not in the board of visitors, one of the things we find because there's unwanted sexual -- there's a continuum. The unwanted sexual contact which will be very aggressive coming on, but it's not assault, it's not harassment, to harassment all the way up to violent -- violent situation like rape.

And 90 percent of those situations at the academy, again, is alcohol, alcohol, alcohol. We would hope that the -- the secretaries of all the service and academies would look at alcohol on their campuses the way the naval academy is looking at theirs. Lessons learned from civilian universities.

But I really want to encourage you to look at this, but we're not prohibitionists. We're -- we understand human behavior, et cetera. So, you know, that people are people and human beings are human beings.

But where there is an excessive -- there's two things that contribute to the kind of comment that Senator Murkowski raised. One, a cultural comment of hostility and I think the military has dealt with that and has been dealing with that with more than 20 years. And certainly this administration and I believe, Secretary, that President Bush did as well.

But this alcohol problem is big and it also impedes the ability to serve and to be fit for duty. So we just want to encourage you on that. I wanted to just congratulate the gentlelady for raising that question because it was going to be one of mine as well.

So, having said that I'm going to turn to Senator Kohl, Wisconsin.

KOHL:

Thank you very much.

Secretary Mabus, the Navy's budget fully funds the current plan to split the purchase of 20 littoral combat ships evenly between the variants build in Wisconsin and Alabama. I support this approach and commend you for requesting the funding necessary to carry it out.

However, the Navy's five year budget window cuts two LCS ships after the 20 ship purchase plan is completed. In light of that proposed cut in future years does the Navy still support long term plans to purchase 55 littoral combat ships?

MABUS:

Absolutely, Senator. The -- the two ships -- and it goes from three to two each year. We lost one ship in the '16, one ship in the '17, but it was just to the right. We want to build out the 55 ships as -- as quickly as we can. We still believe in that number and that need for -- for our fleet.

KOHL:

Good.

Just to push it to a final comment from you. Would the Congress sort of delay the Navy's plans to bring these ships into the fleet if the Navy's effectiveness would be hurt? I hope you would agree with that. We understand that the LCS is going to replace an aging fleet of frigate and minesweepers and that Navy readiness would suffer without them. Is that true and what will happen if the LCS is delayed?

MABUS:

Yes, sir. The LCS is one of our -- one of the backbones of our fleet today and for the future. As the CNO mentioned a little bit earlier Singapore has invited us not only to bring the first LCS there next year but also to forward deploy LCS' in Singapore, you know, in the future and that is something that we're certainly planning to do and certainly is going to be one of the prime capabilities that we have in the -- in the Pacific.

KOHL:

All the hopes that you have for LCS are on plan and following a -- moving along as you guys had discussed?

MABUS:

Yes, sir. We're -- it's an amazingly capable ship, shallow draft, very fast. But, also, I think, it's one of the ships of the future because of its modularity. Because every time the technology improves, every time we get a different weapon system, you know, that we don't have to build a new ship. We simply pull out the weapon system or the -- whatever system off the ship, put in a new one, a different one, and go back to sea.

And I think that -- that capability, the first three systems as you know are any surface, any sub, any mine and if you look at some of the things that we're facing in the world today, you know, that we're relying as you pointed out on patrol boats and minesweepers. On mine countermeasure ships to do we need this capability very badly.

KOHL:

And you're pleased that you're building two variants on that LCS?

MABUS:

Yes, sir, I am.

Think that they give us a -- a wider range of options for our operators. As -- as you know, and thanks to this committee and the Congress we were able to -- to buy both variants at a greatly reduced rate.

The -- both variants are on firm fixed price contracts. The price is going down for each successive ship and we are -- we're very pleased with the shipyards that are building them, we're very pleased with the product that's coming out.

KOHL:

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

MIKULSKI:

Senator Collins?

COLLINS:

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I apologize for being late. The armed services committee is having a hearing with Secretary Panetta on Syria even as we're meeting today and I clearly need a clone, but I've yet to figure that -- that out.

Mr. Secretary, first of all it's good to see you again. As you know Bath Iron Works is building the first two Zumwalt class destroyers and will commence construction of the third DDG-1000 later this year. The first ship was 60 percent complete when the keel was laid. The construction rework rate is less than 1 percent which is astonishing for the first ship and a new class. And the Navy retired a significant portion of the programs task restraint the last year.

I think it would be held both for the record in light of the department's commitment to maintaining combat capability and anti-access/area denial environments if you would comment on the combat capabilities that you expect these three DDG-1000 ships to bring to the fleet.

MABUS:

I'd be happy to, Senator. And I'd also like to ask to follow -- follow along after -- after I do.

These ships with their new stealth technology with the fire support for ground troops that they bring with their any air, any surface, any submarine capabilities certainly fit very precisely into the anti-access/area denial areas that we have planned to use these -- these ships in.

As you know because of the truncation from 10 ships to three a Nunn-McCurdy breach occurred but it was solely because the number of ships weren't down.

At that time the program was recertified as crucial to national security and the -- the -- the building, the fabrication of that has gone along very well and I'm happy that we now have the -- the -- the further two 1001 and 1002 now under contract so that we can move forward with them to -- to join the fleet.

COLLINS:

Thank you.

Admiral, is another advantage the smaller crew size that can be used on these ships given the high cost of personnel?

GREENERT:

Yes, Senator.

We're talking 100 less on a ship of a comparable capability, 150 versus 250 for example. The DDG-1000 being 150.

We don't talk a lot about its under sea capability. It has a dual frequency sonar capability which means it can be searching for long range underwater vehicle or submarines, but at the same time tracking something closer. Eighty cruise missile capability. A lot of people talk about that. That's -- that's extraordinary so it has a -- a good land attack mode. The long range gun which we're really excited about, what it will bring, two of them advance long range projectiles and it also maintain three drones when going unmanned. It's very important.

So they can employ three unmanned systems. VTU of the Firescout or FireX as well as a helicopter. So, it's quite capable and on radar it looks like a fishing boat.

COLLINS:

Mr. Secretary, your strategy to introduce competition into the restart of the DDG-51 program earlier than planned reaps some significant savings for the taxpayer and I applaud you for that effort.

In addition it's my understanding that the Navy estimates -- that estimates that it could save up to \$1.5 billion by exercising multiyear procurement authority for the DDG-51 program during the next five years. I understand that Senator Reed mentioned some possible uses for that -- those savings so I would be remiss if I did not also follow that line of questioning.

That amount as luck would have it would be sufficient to procure one additional DDG-51 in the five year budget window. And currently the Navy intends to procure nine ships over the five years, but the Navy's own requirements plus the fragility of the industrial base call for an absolute minimum procurement rate of two large surface combatants per year.

So, Mr. Secretary, if the Navy does reap the saving as expected from the multiyear procurement authority and the increased competition and you have the opportunity to reinvest that funding, would adding an additional destroyer in the five year budget window also be one of your priorities?

MABUS:

Senator, we will certainly be requesting multiyear authority for the DDG-51. I think it's exactly the type of program. And your numbers are -- are accurate in terms of the savings that we forecast.

What we have done, however, is we've already used those savings to get the nine ships. Without a multiyear we would only be able to procure eight. And so we've taken the savings that we -- that we anticipate from the multiyear to procure the ninth ship.

COLLINS:

I am concerned particularly -- and I realize my time has expired, but particularly with the focus on the Asia Pacific that we're not going to have enough ships to really do the job. And I hope that's something that we can focus on as we set priorities.

I also for the record will be -- with the Chairwoman's permission -- submitting some additional questions involving investment in our public shipyards. There's a long, long backlog which the GAO has documented and unfortunately there -- I believe that's only one new military construction project identified in this year's budget request for Norfolk and the needs are great at the Portsmouth Naval shipyard and elsewhere. So it's something we need to look at as well.

MABUS:

Madam Chairman, if I could...

MIKULSKI:

Sure.

MABUS:

...just -- in terms of numbers of ships, you know, and I share the concern even though the -- the fleet we have today is far more capable than any fleet we've had before.

But one of the things that I'm -- that I think is important to note is that at the end of this five years of this we will have the same size fleet in spite of the -- some early retirements of ships and in spite of the requirements of the budget control act, in spite of having to defer the building of some ships, and that by 2019 we will be back at 300 ships. We will build the fleet to -- to -- to 300 ships and because at some point as we've discussed quantity becomes quality also.

Thank you, Senator.

COLLINS:

Thank you. Thank you very much.

MIKULSKI:

Senator Collins and also to other senators -- I know their staffs are here -- the record will remain open for subsequent questions of members and also Senator Inouye will be submitting his questions for the record.

I have some questions of my own. What -- and I really wanted to be at this hearing because we in Maryland we're a Navy state.

We love our Army presence whether it's the National Security Agency at Fort Meade or Aberdeen or its bases. We love the Air Force because, but we are crazy about the Navy.

We have the naval academy, naval...

MABUS:

Your ardor is returned, Senator.

MIKULSKI:

... the naval Bethesda, Pax River, and Office of Naval Intelligence.

And we think we offer a fantastic set of home ports. We're the home -- we're the home port to the Constellation. We're the homeport to the 10th Fleet, the dynamic Cyber 10th fleet that has no aircraft carriers, submarines, or whatever, but is defending the -- defending the fleet.

And we're also the home to the Comfort.

Now, we feel really bad that we're going to lose the Comfort. And in fact we feel so bad in Maryland that it -- it has the same magnitude. If you were in Baltimore when we heard the Comfort was going to leave us we had the same feeling as when the Colts left us. And I'm not joking. We love the Comfort, the hospital ship that we've watched since 1987 steaming down the bay for really significant missions serving the nation. Whether it's been to respond, to Desert Storm and we were there along with the hospital ship Mercy. Whether it was responding to 9/11 off the coast of New York where Senator Collins stood side-by-side working with the wreckage and the debris and someone.

So, I want to know how we can keep the Comfort in Baltimore.

MABUS:

Senator, the decision to move Comfort was purely financial. The pier in Baltimore is a private pier that we pay a little over \$2 million a year to keep the Comfort berthed there. The pier that

we'll be moving to is a Navy pier that -- so we will save in excess of \$2 million a year to -- to move the Comfort.

Two other things went into the -- into the decision. One was the facilities at the new pier for -- for the ship and its permanent crew, the 57 permanent crew members. And the other was, as Comfort is manned by medical professionals..

MIKULSKI:

You have two manning. You have those who keep the ship afloat and operational and then you have this extraordinary medical team that joins. Really, it's just -- I've been on the Comfort, it's just amazing.

MABUS:

Me too.

MIKULSKI:

You know.

MABUS:

And that manning has changed over the years so that most of those health professionals now -- doctors, nurses -- come out of Portsmouth, Virginia, the hospital there instead of where they used to out of Bethesda.

And so those were the things that went into -- into the decision but it was primarily financial.

MIKULSKI:

Well, I have a couple of questions about that.

First of all let's go to the pure art of it. And I -- I understand we're in a frugal environment. That's been the point of the testimony and many of your comments that you support the secretary of defense and the president's initiative to have a more frugal but still muscular defense. We understand cost. But tell me about this pier. Don't you have to build a new pier for the Comfort?

MABUS:

No, ma'am, we have -- we upgraded the pier.

MIKULSKI:

And how much did that cost?

MABUS:

To provide for the Comfort?

MABUS:

\$3.5 million.

MIKULSKI:



So it cost \$3.5 million to upgrade it?

MABUS:

Yes.

MIKULSKI:

Now, let's go to the mission. And I understand the fact that we used to get -- the man power used to be at naval Bethesda so I don't dispute that. But have you looked at the hurricane impact?

Let me -- let me be specific. So this isn't a trick question.

The Comfort has deployed since 1987 I think 10 times. Nine or 10 times. Two-thirds of that has been during hurricane season. Literally, it went down in the bay, and it's been hurricane season.

What ships have to do when hurricanes come is they have to go to sea.

OK. So the president says, send the Comfort to wherever. It's been to Haiti, you know, and God knows what lies ahead given the turmoil in the world.

So have you looked at the hurricane impact statement that while its berthed at Norfolk you're in a hurricane, the Comfort is out at sea riding it out, what you have to do get ready to deploy. Have you looked at the hurricane impact?

GREENERT:

I can't tell you that we have, Senator. What -- what we do is we'd sortie the ship like we do with the others and I think that's your question. The cost of the sortie...

MIKULSKI:

I don't know the military lingo. I just know...

GREENERT:

You know, underway. When the ship is...

MIKULSKI:

...because while we're looking at a hurricane we're up the coast at Ocean City and so on. So we're all kind of in -- in it together.

So go ahead.

GREENERT:

I -- I have -- I have taken for the record so that I can -- because I want to make sure I understand your question.

I believe it is -- this ship will have to get underway like the other ships in Norfolk do when there is a hurricane in their region. And -- and so have we accommodated the -- that factor as opposed to remaining in Baltimore, the number of times ships sortie because of weather in Norfolk versus weather in Baltimore. I think that's your question, Senator.

MIKULSKI:

Yes.

GREENERT:

I have to get back to you on that and see what that would be.

MIKULSKI:

Well Admiral I would really appreciate this.

You know, it's my job to fight to keep the Comfort both for economic reasons and jobs and yet we have developed a -- it's just an affectionate relationship and I think the crew of the Comfort feels the same, that we're a welcoming home port.

So Mr. Secretary, with the cooperation of the Admiral, I'd like you to look at that impact and see if it affects your judgment so we get to keep the Comfort.

If we cannot -- if we cannot, and facts must speak for themselves, would you also take the opportunity to look and see if there are other home port opportunities for us? Because we have a 50- foot channel, we now have port capacity that's going to welcome the new ships coming through the Panama Canal. And if we can welcome these new ships from the Canal, we sure would like to welcome a vessel from the United States Navy.

We have the Constellation, the older ship, we'd welcome a new ship, and we'd love to keep the Comfort.

MABUS:

We'll look at both of those.

MIKULSKI:

Yes. Senator Cochran?

COCHRAN:

Madam Chairman, thank you.

General Amos, there is one question that I omitted asking for the record to you and it relates to amphibious warship fleet lift capacity. What I'd like to have for the record is what is the current inventory of amphibious ships in the fleet and what is the maximum lift requirement and are there operational readiness concerns and are you aware of any unmet combatant commander demands for amphibious ships?

AMOS:

Senator, I can answer, I think, all of those or at least give a head start on those things and we'll fill -- we'll -- we'll come in off the record -- excuse me, on the record for the rest of it.

But I believe the current inventory Jon -- Admiral Greenert can just keep me honest here. I think our current inventory is at 29 today, amphibious ships.

We have a few decommissions coming underway. We have some, as you know, new construction.

I made a comment about two weeks ago that the -- the agony that -- that -- that the CNO and the commandant and the secretary of the Navy went through in this fit up cycle to cut Solomon's baby to try to determine, " OK, what ships are we going -- now, where are we going to spend our

money," was I think very responsible and I think from -- from my perspective, I mean, I'd like to add 55 amphibious ships but we can't afford it.

Now, my sense right now is that I'm very satisfied with we've done inside this fit up. There is going to be an airport underway over the next little bit to take a look at what is our real requirement.

We know how much it takes to put a Marine expeditionary brigade on a ship. I take 17 amphibious ships. So -- so if you just say, "OK, let's put one of these brigades on board," what's it going to be, it's 17.

Well, our nation has a -- agreed upon requirement for two of these and a forcible entry operation. Well that's a lot of ships and we can't afford that. So -- so we're working right now. You know, what is it we can afford, what -- what are the elements of risk as you come off of the number, and then how do you mitigate that risk. And because there are ways that you can mitigate risk, but as the secretary said quantity has a quality on its own, but does reach a point. There's a -- there's a bent -- there's a knee in the curve where we want to make sure that we have the ability to be able to -- to put these -- deploy these -- these forcible entry force.

It's hard to imagine that it could ever happen. It's almost out of the -- out of the realm of our imagination, but let me give you a sense for magnitude.

When we surrounded the town of Fallujah in the fall of 2003 -- excuse me, 2004, we put five Marines infantry battalions around there, three Army battalions and two Iraqi battalions. Ten infantry battalions. What we're talking about here for this forcible entry capability for the entire United States of America are basically six battalions, two brigades worth of Marines coming ashore.

So when you think of relativity it's a pretty nominal capability for a nation that's a global power. That somewhere down the road we may have to -- we may have to exercise this forcible entry capability.

Did that answer your question?

COCHRAN:

Yes. Thank you very much.

Thank you.

MIKULSKI:

Mr. Secretary, General Amos, and Admiral Greenert, first of all I'll take the opportunity very much to thank you for your service and for your leadership. We want to thank -- in thanking you we want to thank all the men and women who serve in the Navy and the Marine Corps.

So, for those who are active duty, reserves, and part of our civilians work force that supports the Navy we really just want to say thank you and in every way and every day.

I want to ask a question, really, that then goes to deployment.

One of the things we know that the health and vitality of our military personnel -- the individual soldiers, sailor and Marine -- often depends on the frequency of the deployment. With the drawdown of personnel, the fact that we're -- we're still in combat -- intense combat situation, we know the president has these policies that you're implementing, the threat and other threats, continual and persistent, some escalating, my question to you is, given this current manpower that is being recommended in the appropriations, how do you see this affecting the deployment

where they deploy more frequently, where they deploy less , what n-- which shore -- which shore do you want that.

Admiral, can we start with you and then go to General Amos?

GREENERT:

Yes, Senator.

The demand signal which defines our deployment is called the global force management allocation plan. It's the distribution, the allocation on forces around world.

And one of the ongoing foundations if you will are givens for our budget is submitted and that we signed up to, was -- what we call the -- the -- my process is called the fleet response plan and I responds to the global force allocation plan.

We established what that is and I'm comfortable that we can -- and then we'll be less deployments than today subject to the world voting and -- and things changing.

The -- the thing -- the key in this is, the combatant commanders having a request for forces. This is a supplemental to the plan if you will.

Today we're living with a fairly extensive number of requests for forces. These are deployments over and above what the budget has laid up to -- to give in and due to the generosity if you will, the support of this committee and the Congress through the OCO appropriation we're able to -- to reconcile that.

So what I'm telling you, Senator, is with the plan -- the global force management plan that is laid out there, I am comfortable if we are unable to -- if you will -- sustain that appetite for additional forces then there's going to be a stress on that and we're going to be deploying more than what is assumed in this budget and that will be difficult.

MIKULSKI:

General?

AMOS:

General Shelby years ago, I remember asking -- answering a question about what would be the ideal -- I want to call deployment to dwell ratio. And that's ...

MIKULSKI:

That's really part -- that's exactly what I'm trying to also get at...

AMOS:

It's deployment to dwell and -- and that was at the height of -- of -- when the Marine Corps -- my service was essentially almost on a one-to-one. So you're gone seven months and you're home seven months. And while you're home at seven months you're training and you're doing all these things so it's not like you're home in your house for seven months. But that becomes a one-to-one.

We're sitting today in our infantry battalion which is the standard unit of measure in the Marine Corps. Everything else is built around an infantry battalion. At about 1.1 to 1.5 which means you're gone for seven months and you're home for 10 -- 11.

Now, I -- now I will tell you that -- that we're -- that's going to change dramatically this year. As the Marine forces come down, as that surge force comes down in Afghanistan that -- that we've talked about, our deployment to dwell ratio will -- will increase but we'll have more time at home.

So as I look in a post-Afghanistan world and I think about now being forward deployed and forward engaged in the Pacific and being, you know, in Okinawa and being in Guam and being down on Australia and doing all the things that Marines do, my sense is that even at a 182.1 force -- now, where's that force that we're going to down to -- that we will when it's all said and done. We will settle down to something more than a one to two deployment to dwell.

So it will probably be we'll have some units that are one to three. Now, where is your -- your guns. Now, we'll get out of the seven-month performance, we'll get back to six.

Your gone six months and your home 18 months. And Marines get bored and quite honestly they like to deploy and they like to -- they like to be of the cutting edge.

So that's the one to one, two, three that we would probably as a nation like car services to all kind of, are we going to ever see that again? I don't know. Well, I'll be happy if I see 1.0 to 1.2 as a commandant, yes.

Will the Marines, they'll be happy? I think so. And I think -- I think we're going to -- and that's where we're headed so our ticket for just patient for about another year will get this re-cocked and reset. Now back to where I believe where you'd like to see us, Senator.

MIKULSKI:

Well, what I like to see is that I know that our -- our Marines and our Navy like to fight. That's why they joined the military. I mean, to protect and we got them for it what we really do.

And part of that, both for them, is to protect them while they're protecting us. Our job is to protect them. And deployment and the rate of deployment ratio of deployed to dwell has a dramatic demonstrable effect now. We had noticed from our experiences when their physical and mental health.

So I'm for that. And I know you are. God knows. I know you are.

And so I want to be sure that as we look at the forces that we're going to have, how we protect them as they protect us.

And Mr. Secretary, and I would hope the service secretaries and the secretary of defense also speak out at hearings that if we're going to reduce the number of our military we need to be careful with that rhetoric about where we to just send them -- just send them.

So, just know that. But I really want to work. I think all of us want to work with you on it.

And then that goes to my last question.

After they serve and they're ready to be discharged I worry that they have jobs. I just worry about that. And I know many of the members still, the women have talked about this.

So often when they're discharged is there a natural plan that helps them sort out where they can work.

And also, something that I think Mr. Secretary you in your old hat as a governor, sometimes they had these fantastic skills in the military and service so well and bravely, but it doesn't cut towards licensing in their home state. So we've heard about just wonderful people that's done in credible -- the credible medical force service in the most grim and violent where -- where

performance has been amazing to prevent -- more challenging, and then it didn't count for anything when they came home to get a job where we had those civilians workforce shortage. EMT's.

MIKULSKI:

Nursing. Et cetera.

Could I ask you, Mr. Secretary and someone -- I know I'm going over my time. Really, first of all I think their service ought to count and I think it ought to come in every state in the United States of America.

Are you looking at that and then, also, can you tell me about the discharge planning that goes on so that we help them be able to -- to find their way in the civilian workforce.

MABUS:

I'd very much like to -- to talk about that.

In terms of credentialing, you know, whether it's for things like nurses or other things, two -- two things spring to mind. One is the First Lady's Initiative to make sure that every state in the union signs up to accept credentials from particularly military spouses because we ask our military to move a lot and military spouses who are nurses or realtors or anything else who require a certificate or a license, you know, sometimes have to wait six months or a year when they get there.

Secondly, for the members of the service we have a thing called Navy COOL which is credentialing opportunities online.

MIKULSKI:

You're a COOL guy?

MABUS:

You're a COOL guy.

MIKULSKI:

OK.

MABUS:

Now it's COOL, Navy COOL. And what it will...

MIKULSKI:

I notice it's not CNO.

MABUS:

Well he's a pretty cool guy too.

MIKULSKI:

Yes.

MABUS:

The Navy Cool allows -- sailors to go online, get the certificate that they need from -- to match the job they're doing in the military with the civilians credential. And we have -- we have this lined up with every naval job what -- what is the -- what is a comparable civilians job. And if you need a credential -- and if you're leaving the Navy we will -- we will pay for the things that you need to do to get that.

MIKULSKI:

Get that credential.

MABUS:

Yes, a credential.

The other thing I want to talk about and the CNO and the commandant may want to give some more detail too. As people separate from either the Navy and the Marine Corps we're taking that transition very seriously. We're giving one-on-one counseling. We are doing things like if -- if you want to go to a job fair anywhere in the United States we'll pay for you to go there. If you're overseas when you're being separated we guarantee you 60 days back in the United States before that separation.

The Marines have a four door process that tell us where you want to aim forward. Do you want to aim for more education? Do you want to aim for apprenticeship? Do you want to aim for a certificate or do you want to aim to go right in to the job market? And we will send you through the preparation to so that.

And the last thing I would like to say is that the Navy itself has taken it very seriously.

Last year we hired in the Navy almost 13,000 former sailors and Marines to come in as civilians. Once their service was finished because they have a lot of the skills that we need. So far this year we've hired almost 3,000. And we feel a special obligation to our wounded warriors.

And we have had two hiring conferences with private employers for wounded warriors both of which all three of us have spoken at.

The second thing though is that the Department of the Navy, through Naval Sea Systems Command, NAVSEA, had to go last year of hiring at least one wounded warrior per day for the entire year and we've exceeded that. We hired more than 500 wounded warriors into -- into NAVSEA.

MIKULSKI:

Mr. -- Mr. Secretary, I'm going to ask you not only for the record but for me personally if I could have whatever your policy papers on this because I'm going to talk to my colleagues about how we can promote the First Lady's Initiative not only in the budget to make sure, you know, words are deeds and all the excellent things you said. And I know both the Admiral and General could elaborate, but the hearing is getting longer.

And then the other, really, I think there will be some of us who will want to take this on ourselves.

You know, when World War II ended and some of our other combats we were an industrial nation, we had a tremendous demand for workers and so on. And, again, as part of, if you're

going to get out there and protect us and be in the front line. And so we would like to work with you to really, really ensure that.

I think we've -- and I'd like to have the policy papers and -- and do that.

So, Mr. Secretary, Admiral Greenert, General Amos, we want to thank you for your testimony and for your service.

Senator Inouye also said, please, to commend his regards to you.

The defense committee will reconvene on Wednesday, March 14 at 10:30 and we're going to hear from the Department of the Air Force.

This committee stands in recess.