

Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
FY 2015 Navy and Marine Corps Budget Hearing
March 25, 2014
Opening Statement As Prepared

The Committee will come to order.

This morning the Committee conducts an open hearing on the posture and budget request of the Department of the Navy.

I would like to welcome:

- Secretary of the Navy Raymond Mabus;
- Chief of Naval Operations, Adm Jonathan Greenert;
- Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen James Amos.

Welcome to you all and thank you for being here today. I'm sure I can speak for every Member of this subcommittee in thanking you for your valuable service to our great nation.

Gentlemen, this Committee has constantly heard about all the difficult choices that had to be made to prepare the FY 2015 Defense Budget. Your choices set the stage for the difficult decisions that lie ahead for this Committee in coming weeks.

The Committee is anxious to hear from you this morning on how your budget request will deter future conflicts with fewer Marines, fewer ships and a smaller Naval presence in parts of the world where adversaries and potential adversaries are expanding their military capabilities every day.

We are aware that China plans a 12-percent increase in military spending for 2014 and has already delineated areas where they challenge our naval power every day.

As my predecessor Bill Young would constantly remind us, "it's all about risk" and how much more we are all creating as the result of CR's and sequestration.

And, gentlemen, the Committee realizes that all the "re-balancing and re-pivoting" to the Pacific and the size and capability of the fleet are dependent on an industrial base that needs to be as robust as we can make it.

I am also somewhat alarmed about the frequency of reported misconduct by members of Navy leadership teams. Just since the beginning of this year, we have been notified of nine separate commanding officers, executive officers, or command master chiefs being removed from their leadership position for some type of misconduct. That is a disturbing frequency of nearly one incident per week.

And then there's the suspension of 30 nuclear reactor instructors and the shutdown of the Navy's training reactors in Charleston in connection with an exam cheating scandal.

And I have to add that – as a newly retired member of the Naval Academy Board of Visitors – I have the sense that the institution must do more to attack the sexual assault/sexual harassment syndrome that is too prevalent in our military academies today.

Despite these challenges, as we have always done in the past, this Committee will work hard to ensure the Navy and our Marine Corps are ready and able to conduct their very important missions. This year, more than ever, we will have to work together to ensure the best possible budget outcome.

So welcome – we look forward to your comments and an informative question and answer session.

Now let me turn to Mr. Visclosky for any comments he may want to make.

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