

Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
United States Pacific Command and United States Forces Korea Hearing
March 26, 2014
Opening Statement As Prepared

This afternoon, the Committee will hold a hearing on the status of the United States Pacific Command and United States Forces Korea.

We are pleased to welcome: Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, U.S. Navy, Commander, United States Pacific Command; and General Curtis M. Scaparrotti, Commander United Nations Command; Commander United States – Republic of Korea Combined forces Command; and Commander, United States Forces Korea.

Admiral, welcome back and thank you for your service. You have been in command over two years and you bring a wealth of knowledge to this hearing. We look forward to your views on a broad variety of topics in the Pacific area.

General Scaparrotti, welcome to the Subcommittee on defense, and thank you for your service. We look forward to your candid assessment of the situation in Korea.

As everyone here is aware, last year General James D. Thurman was our Commander on the Korean Peninsula, and he was asked by President Obama to stay close to home in Korea until the situation there calmed down. General Scaparrotti, we are happy that the situation today permits you to be here with us. However, we are reminded that we can never be completely sure what will happen next in Korea, or for that matter in the Taiwan Straits, or in Indonesia. As our forces in Afghanistan return home, and the services downsize to a peace time structure, we are aware that China is modernizing its armed forces and that China will have more ships that are significantly improved over earlier versions, including submarines and an aircraft carrier.

Long standing disputes over territory can bubble to the surface with little or no warning. The recent Russian annexation of Crimea may encourage similar actions in the Pacific AOR.

The pivot to the Pacific will involve shifting as much as ten percent of our Navy's warships into the Pacific AOR. However, some of the Army's increases in military assets will rotate forward into the Pacific to train but will actually be based in the continental United States.

When discussing readiness, the Committee is not convinced by catchy slogans. A force that is smaller but more agile is still smaller. Whether or not the force is adequate and how much risk is being taken requires the judgment of experts, which is why we have asked you distinguished field commanders to this hearing.

One more topic that we must discuss and about which we want you to understand our position. Sexual assault will not be tolerated. It must be addressed in training, in policy, and in

disciplinary actions. Leaders at all ranks must lead by example and improper conduct must be dealt with swiftly with punishment that fits the crime.

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