



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

Subcommittee on Defense, House Committee on Appropriations

FY 2016 Budget Hearing - Pacific Command and U.S. Forces Korea March 18, 2015 Opening Statement as Prepared

This morning the Committee conducts a hearing on the posture 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 many years of distinguished service. The Committee notes that you assumed command of PACOM in March 2012, and this is your fourth time testifying before this Committee

We also understand that this may be your last appearance before this Committee. Whatever the future holds for you, we certainly wish you “fair winds and following seas.”

Today we look forward to your update on a broad variety of topics in the Pacific AOR.

General Scaparrotti, welcome back and thank you for your service.

General Scaparrotti assumed command of U.S. Forces Korea in August 2013. Two years into your command, you have amassed a wealth of experience in working with our Allies in the Republic of Korea, and with the “other side” of the DMZ. We look forward to your candid assessment of the situation on the Korea peninsula and its environs.

Gentlemen, we are pleased to have you both here today. We are constantly reminded that the situation in Korea is, to say the least, “fluid”. In fact, we can never be completely sure what will happen next in Korea, or for that matter in the Taiwan Straits, in Indonesia, the South China Sea or Sea of Japan.

China continues to modernize its armed forces and adds to its fleet in both numbers and quality including submarines and is working on a second aircraft carrier.

Longstanding disputes over territory can surface with little or no warning. Frankly, many people wonder if the recent Russian annexation of Crimea may encourage similar actions by other nations in the Pacific AOR.

We are aware that the ongoing pivot (or re-balance) to the Pacific will involve shifting as much as ten percent of our Navy's warships into the Pacific. The build-up of assets on Guam continues. However, some of the Army's increases in military assets will "rotate" forward into the Pacific to train but will actually remain based in the continental United States.

Of course, the Committee will continue to ensure that our armed forces have the resources they need to be well maintained and trained. But we are reminded that our Naval, air and land forces cannot be in two places at once: a force that is smaller, but more agile, is still smaller.

We look forward to a robust question and answer session this morning. It is important for this Committee to have a clear picture of operations in the Pacific, in general, and on the Korean peninsula, specifically.

We are particularly interested in the readiness of forces that are assigned, or which rotate, through Pacific deployments, and the many potential hot spots you monitor.

We want to hear about your ISR requirements, our space architecture and efforts by our adversaries to deny sea and air access.

Before we hear from our witnesses, I would like to ask the distinguished Ranking Member, Mr. Visclosky, for any opening comments that he might have.

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