

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

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BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL  
ON  
SENIOR LEADER MISCONDUCT

FEBRUARY 07, 2018

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished members of the Sub-Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on senior leader misconduct. As you might imagine, conduct, decision making, judgement and character are developed over years of instruction, experience and learning in the Navy. From the first day of an officer's career, the Navy works towards two objectives outlined in our Leadership Development Framework: to build highly competent warfighters and to shape the character that enables leaders to be ethical stewards of the public's trust. Along the path of a career, we emphasize the importance of our oath, to defend the Constitution and to bear true faith and allegiance, and in doing so we imbue in our senior leaders the highest ethical standards of personal and professional conduct. Those who fail at these important standards are held appropriately accountable.

Flag Officers who lead our various warfare and support communities and who are responsible for implementing clear strategies to develop leaders in accordance with the Leadership Development Framework's pillars and principles are required to report their progress to the Chief of Naval Operations on a regular basis. We continually build upon instruction through experience, and by the time an officer reaches the highest levels, we demand they act as standards-based leaders who aspire to raise levels of behavior instead of rules-based followers who simply conform to minimum levels of performance.

Long before becoming Flag Officers, senior officers have led in command at multiple levels and have attended our Command Leadership and Ethics Course prior to any assumption of command. After selection for Flag Officer, every leader attends a New Flag and Senior Executive Training Symposium, and a Strategic Thinking course at the University of North Carolina, as well as an optional Navy Senior Leader Seminar. All of these courses and programs provide substantive ethics training with an emphasis on the ethical decision-making process. Flag Officers continue beyond this initial training through a variety of leader development courses, including a newly instituted 2-star course and a soon to be initiated 3-star course where the principles of ethical leadership are discussed in great detail and where each officer is provided with effective self-assessment tools intended to challenge their unconscious biases, and learn from past experiences.

Leaders at all levels of the Navy are taught that with authority comes a commensurate level of responsibility and accountability – this is reemphasized with each professional development opportunity for Flag Officers. We ensure that they, their staffs, and their spouses are aware of, and attentive to, the ethical demands of their position. In addition, as Vice Chief of Naval Operations, I issue Annual Standards of Conduct Guidance to all Flag Officers and Navy Senior Executives that provides specific and timely guidance on a broad spectrum of conduct risks. Using my guidance as a foundation, all of our Flag Officers Navy, Senior Executives and their staffs must receive in-person ethics training on an annual basis, complemented by a mandatory ethics audit. They are made fully aware that even the appearance of impropriety will severely degrade our ability to maintain and grow the public trust.

The Navy operates with transparency, maintaining a history of publicly reporting criminal and administrative misconduct by our senior leaders. Our commitment to holding senior leaders appropriately accountable in a transparent manner is evidenced by cases like those from the Glenn Defense Marine Asia, or GDMA. In addition to our fulsome cooperation with the Department of Justice, the Navy created a Consolidated Disposition Authority, or CDA, to thoroughly investigate and hold accountable all misconduct not pursued by the Department of Justice. In the past 10 years we have seen an 88% reduction of substantiated allegations of misconduct – Navy wide. Transparency is an essential characteristic of any trusting relationship and it also deters imperfect human beings when they are tempted to lean in the wrong direction. By transparently prosecuting misconduct and reenergizing our professional development and reporting mechanisms, we are a stronger force, today.

### **Summary**

Fostering ethical leaders through character development will never be taken for granted. The Navy has a robust and thorough leader development framework that instills the values we want our senior leaders to reflect, emulate, and exemplify. As an institution we remain committed to developing leaders that have a strong ethical foundation that focuses on values-based decision making, demanding strict compliance when the rules are clear, and sound judgment when the rules are ambiguous. When

our senior leaders fail to meet these high standards – legally, ethically, professionally, or personally – we will hold them appropriately accountable in a fair but firm manner. As leaders, we are conferred with public trust, and it is our mission to maintain that trust. On behalf of our Sailors and Navy civilians, thank you for holding us accountable, and thank you for your continued partnership and support.