

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUB-COMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**

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Introduction

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and military personnel subcommittee members – Thank you very much for having us here today to discuss senior leader misconduct.

In the Navy, we take pride in setting, training to, and enforcing the highest ethical standards for our leaders. We, therefore, take very seriously any allegations of misconduct on the part of our senior leadership.

Senior Official Investigations

My Investigations Division has exclusive jurisdiction to conduct administrative investigations into credible allegations of misconduct against one and two star Admirals. DoD IG normally conducts investigations on three star Admirals, and they have exclusive jurisdiction for investigations of four star admirals. Our senior official investigators are highly-trained and experienced professionals who rigidly adhere to Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) standards.

Process

Sailors, civilians and their families can submit a senior official allegation to us via the Naval Inspector General website, email, telephone, fax, in person, DoD IG, or a Member of Congress. My belief is that the system is properly designed with a presumption in favor of initiating an investigation. Our well-trained and experienced investigators are extremely thorough and we believe our process assures a fair, unbiased and accurate result. We constantly strive to produce ever more timely reports, without sacrificing professional due diligence. All of our completed Senior Official

investigations are submitted for oversight review and have been approved for closure by DoD IG. We report all investigations to the Secretary, CNO and Flag Matters. If we report that any allegation is substantiated, we attach a request to the Office of the VCNO to request corrective action be taken and documented. We receive a copy of the documented corrective action, record it in our database, and provide a copy to DoD IG. Corrective action can range from verbal counseling through formal disciplinary action under the UCMJ.

Trends

Since 2008, we have received 282 complaints alleging misconduct by flag officers. Ultimately, we determined 193 warranted an investigation, and 44 were substantiated. From 2008 through 2010, the most common categories of substantiated offenses were misuse of public funds, official vehicles, or personal staff. Those categories have all but disappeared in the last seven years. Since 2011, we've seen a few cases of misuse of government vehicles and drivers for personal use, improper use of official travel, improper gift acceptance, and prohibited personnel practices. There has been a general downward trend in complaints against flag officers since 2013. Over this ten year period, we have conducted 11 investigations into allegations of reprisal against flag officers. Only two were substantiated, six were not substantiated, and three are still in the investigation process. The most notable trend in all categories of flag officer investigations is the gradual decline of substantiated cases since 2013.

Prevention

I have a practice of visiting, either in-person, or virtually, nearly every class of Prospective-Commanding Officer/Executive Officer Leadership training given at Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island. Similarly, I try to make contact in person or virtually with the flag officers attending every week-long New Flag and Senior Executive Training Symposium (NFLEX) and the Navy Senior Leadership Seminar. I use senior official investigation case studies to illustrate the type of problems Navy leaders have faced in the past. I emphasize the need to carefully avoid any actions that might imply a restriction against communications with the IG or with Members of Congress. I further emphasize avoiding even the appearance of impropriety, and I stress proper behavior as a foundation of our Navy culture.

Conclusion

I believe that our investigation process is a necessary and effective tool to address questionable ethical behavior by our senior leaders. An independent, objective and timely investigation, in turn, provides visibility and awareness to our most senior Navy leadership to ensure the right leaders are in place and are effective in the future success of the Navy.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Speier, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your continued support to our Sailors, Navy civilians, families and Veterans. I look forward to your questions.