

Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
Fiscal Year 2014 Navy and Marine Corps Budget Hearing
May 7, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

The subcommittee will come to order.

This morning the subcommittee will hold an open hearing on the posture and budget request of the Department of the Navy. We will focus on Navy and Marine Corps personnel, training, and equipment readiness and will also touch on acquisition issues to gain insights into the Department's priorities and decision making.

I would like to welcome Secretary of the Navy Raymond Mabus, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jonathan Greenert, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General James Amos. Welcome to you all. General Amos, we missed having you with us last year, but General Dunford filled in for you very ably and we recently saw him again in his new role as the Commander of International Security Assistance Force and U.S Forces Afghanistan.

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

Gentlemen, we look forward to hearing how you were able to craft a workable budget for fiscal year 2014, although we understand that it remains very much a work in progress depending on how the sequestration reductions are absorbed in fiscal year 2013.

I am very concerned with the state of the Navy's shipbuilding program. The Navy's new stated requirement for fleet size stands at 306 ships, down from the long stated but never achieved fleet size of 313 ships. The long term shipbuilding forecast submitted with this budget shows that the Navy will reach its requirement of 306 ships in 2037, a full quarter of a century in the future. It seems that every year this subcommittee is assured that the shipbuilding plan is sufficient for our Nation's requirements and just as frequently the satisfaction of those requirements shift further into the future.

Secretary Mabus, you've been quoted as saying that the Navy has placed 43 ships under contract since you've been in office. But a good portion of those ships don't seem to be the classic combatants such as large cruisers, guided missile destroyers, or submarines normally associated with the U.S. Navy's dominance. While some of those ships certainly are that classic type, several of them are small combatants like the littoral combat ship, or auxiliary ships like the mobile landing platform, or transport vessels like the joint high speed vessel. There are likely even a couple of oceanographic research vessels being counted.

Also of concern in this request is the incremental funding of a Virginia Class submarine. There have been 18 Virginia Class submarines appropriated and authorized prior to this one. I fail to

see what makes this submarine so special and critical that it requires you to violate your own long standing full funding policy that is spelled out so clearly in your own financial management regulations. Incremental funding of end items equates to buying merchandise on a credit card and letting balances accumulate. Since the practice started with aircraft carriers several years ago, it has certainly not resulted in the Navy's ability to purchase more ships. In fact, I'd say the opposite is true. In this case, \$950 million of fiscal year 2015 funding that could go to purchase new equipment will now be required to pay off the Navy's fiscal year 2014 debt, accumulated as a result of incrementally funding this submarine.

This will be further exacerbated by the sequestration as I understand that \$300 million of requirements for the fiscal year 2013 submarines have been deferred to the outyears and will require payment in future years. Additional outyear requirements will most certainly result from other shipbuilding programs as a result of sequestration, further eroding what the Navy can purchase in the future. I think these times of budget uncertainty more than ever will require budget discipline and not funding gimmicks.

Despite all of these challenges, as we have always done in the past, this subcommittee will work hard to ensure the Department of the Navy is ready and able to conduct the very important mission that you've been given. Although this year more than ever, we will have to work together to ensure the best result possible is achieved.

So welcome – I look forward to your comments and an informative question and answer session. Now let me turn to my good friend and partner, Ranking Member Pete Visclosky for any comments he may want to make.

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