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SENATE ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE**

STATEMENT OF  
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BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
READINESS SUB-COMMITTEE  
ON CURRENT OPERATIONS IMPACTS ON READINESS  
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## INTRODUCTION

Chairman Akaka, Senator Inhofe, and other distinguished members of this Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to be with you today. It is a privilege to report to you on the status of our great Navy. I thank you for your continuing support of our Fleet and Sailors.

Operation *Enduring Freedom* has demonstrated that America has the most responsive and combat capable Navy in the world. Because we place readiness at the top of our agenda, September 11<sup>th</sup> found the Navy well equipped, superbly trained, forward deployed, and ready to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations in defense of America. The day after the attacks on New York City and the Pentagon, two carrier battle groups (CVBGs), 25 ships, 177 aircraft, and 18,000 members of the Navy-Marine Corps team were on station. The Navy's contributions to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) have highlighted the value of projecting force deep inland from the sovereign and secure operational base provided by aircraft carriers and other naval combatants. This autonomous capability is increasingly important in an era of precarious access to terrestrial military bases.

The Navy has been at the forefront in taking the fight to America's adversaries. On day one of Operation *Enduring Freedom*, submarines and surface ships crippled enemy air defenses with Tomahawk cruise missiles while carrier strike forces launched long-range attacks against Al Qaeda terrorists and the Taliban regime. Flying 80 strike sorties a day at the peak of Operation *Enduring Freedom*, carrier-based F-14 and F/A-18 aircraft accounted for more than 70 percent of all U.S. strike missions. We were able to disrupt terrorist organizations, destroy critical enemy infrastructure, and prevent further

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attacks on America and her allies. Operation *Enduring Freedom* has illustrated that we have clearly moved into a new era of effects-based warfare, in which military success is best measured by the timeliness and value of targets destroyed and not by the mass of ordnance expended.

While naval strike forces were projecting U.S. power hundreds of miles into Afghanistan, other combatants were controlling the seas and performing vital operations around the globe. An unprecedented number of interceptions and inspections were conducted to interdict the maritime avenue of flight for terrorist leaders and restrict the flow of terrorist materials. Naval aircraft have conducted the vast majority of manned airborne reconnaissance flights in the Afghan theater and Navy SEALs have provided approximately half of our SOF capabilities on the ground. All of these operations are being well supported by our hard-working replenishment ships.

The Navy's response at home to the attacks on New York City and the Pentagon was equally indicative of our culture of readiness. Off America's coasts, aircraft carriers, cruisers, and destroyers rapidly took station to protect the maritime and air approaches to the United States in the wake of 11 September 2001. Within view of "ground zero" in New York, the hospital ship USNS COMFORT and the auxiliary USNS DENEbola provided food, berthing, and medical care for the heroic first responders ashore.

While protecting America's interests overseas and providing additional security at home, the Navy has also implemented more stringent Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection measures to safeguard our people and infrastructure. More than 5000 reservists are reinforcing the security of our ships, naval bases, and other military installations. The

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Navy's response to the events of 11 September is testimony to the dedicated service of our Sailors and to the agility, lethality, and reach of our naval forces.

Thanks to our Navy's civilian and military leadership and the strong support of the American people and Congress, we have made solid progress over the last few years in addressing long-standing readiness issues. As a result of our priorities and this committee's support, FY 02 was the best readiness budget in a decade. The FY 03 budget will likewise flow more resources where they are most needed: to warfighters in the Fleet. However, the ongoing Global War on Terrorism has the potential to stress our Fleet considerably and there is little elasticity in our force structure to permit growth in the naval missions required to take the fight to the enemy while protecting the maritime approaches to the United States.

In my testimony, I intend to describe the impact of recent and on-going operations on Navy readiness, provide a qualitative assessment of the Navy's ability to continue the conflict, and discuss how the Navy is planning to manage its resources and risks to maintain a high state of readiness as the Global War on Terrorism continues.

### **IMPACT OF THE GWOT ON NAVY READINESS**

The Navy routinely maintains a forward-deployed expeditionary posture. This posture, combined with the fact that we have added nearly \$5 billion to our key readiness accounts over the past two years, has minimized the impact of the war on current readiness. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, approximately one-third of the Fleet has been deployed on any given day. This percentage of deployed units is similar to our historic peacetime profile, with 40-50% of our Fleet underway, and approximately 30% of our forces forward deployed to support the requirements of regional combatant commanders

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(CINCs) in areas such as the Persian Gulf, Europe, and the Pacific Rim. In order to meet these commitments, we have a rotational force in which ships, air wings, and personnel are either on deployment or in the process of preparing themselves for the next deployment.

Although the number of ships underway and deployed has not dramatically increased during Operations *Enduring Freedom* and *Noble Eagle*, the operational tempo (OPTEMPO) of deployed front-line units has. For example, USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT recently completed a record-setting 159 consecutive days at sea and U.S. surface combatants, in general, are steaming 50% more days per quarter than they would during a normal deployment. The increased amount of time at sea translates into fewer port calls and maintenance availability periods. The greater operational demands have been felt even more acutely by carrier air wings that were flying 250 hours per day at the peak of operations, and are still flying approximately 190 hours per day compared to an average of about 115 hours during a typical peace time deployment.

Despite this high operational tempo, we have not yet observed a significant degradation in readiness. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, we have actually witnessed a slight increase in the percentage of units reporting the highest level (C1) for overall readiness. Most key metrics of current readiness have remained stable since the GWOT began. The Mission Capable rates of naval strike aircraft remain comparable to historic averages, at around 70%. The cannibalization rate of naval aircraft in FY 01 was the lowest in five years, this trend does not appear to be reversed. The rates that our deployed units are reporting mission-critical material failures (CASREPs) have also not increased appreciably. However, the pools of spare aircraft engines and our inventories of

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precision-guided munitions have been depleted significantly. We are taking steps to address these negative readiness trends.

It is too soon, however, to have a complete grasp of the total impact that higher OPTEMPO will have on readiness. More frequent operation of ships and aircraft entails additional wear and tear. For example, the F/A-18 has been flown well in excess of planned rates, and more than 300 of these aircraft will require service life extensions earlier than planned. The consequences of greater usage may not be fully apparent until these units are available for more thorough material inspections and assessment. In summary, there is no overwhelming evidence that the higher OPTEMPO required by the GWOT has significantly degraded material readiness, but we must closely monitor our key readiness metrics as the war continues.

Personnel readiness has improved significantly over the last few years and this trend has not been reversed by the war. These gains are largely attributable to recent increases in Base Pay, housing allowances, and Career Sea Pay. Last year's retention of first-term Sailor was the best in more than thirty years and the first months of fiscal year 2002 were on a similar pace. Although we have not observed an increase in recruiting success since September 11<sup>th</sup>, neither have we seen a downturn. However, Sailors are spending a greater percentage of their time at sea, especially on deployment and this could eventually have a negative impact on manpower. We continue to manage personnel tempo carefully while meeting war exigencies.

## **SUSTAINING THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM**

It is quite probable that the Global War on Terrorism will continue for several years at a pace similar to, and perhaps periodically greater than, that required to date for Operation *Enduring Freedom*. Based on this probability, we are in the process of assessing our ability to continue the war at various levels of effort as well as studying what change would be required to sustain those levels. The Navy would be able to sustain the recent pace of operations for the next few years with greater funding for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and a few adjustments to how we normally maintain, train, and operate the Fleet. O&M requirements will grow commensurately with increased steaming days, flying hours, and a higher demand for parts and depot maintenance. Mission Capable/Full Mission Capable rates for aircraft will probably decline slightly and fewer aircraft will be available for the training of non-deployed carrier wings during the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC). From a geo-political standpoint, focusing available carrier battle groups and amphibious ready groups (ARGs) on one or two regions will often mean that other key areas, not directly implicated in the GWOT, will have fewer forces available for presence and engagement missions.

Operating slightly above our current level of effort is sustainable, even with periodic surge requirements. Sustaining this OPTEMPO would require additional increases in O&M funding for labor and for higher costs required to reduce the wait time for parts. Deployments would likely be extended, in some instances, beyond the Navy peacetime goal of six months, and turn-around times shortened between the deployments of certain combat units. Although additional surface combatants would not necessarily be required to sustain this operational pace, we might have to increase the inventory of

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aircraft to concurrently meet the demands of forward-deployed units and those of air wings in the IDTC. Finally, it is likely that the increased OPTEMPO of our ships and aircraft would result in less frequent non-operational periods, which would increase the already large and growing amount of deferred maintenance and retard key modernization plans to equip our ships and aircraft with improved sensors, avionics, information systems, and weaponry.

Operating the Navy at a pace slightly above that required so far in the GWOT may also have personnel implications. Special care and management will likely be necessary to ensure that civilian workers with special skills, a group already in short supply, are recruited, trained, and retained in our shipyards and intermediate maintenance activities. We are currently analyzing our civilian and military manpower needs for the war.

Expanding the commitment of naval forces significantly beyond our current level is possible for short periods of time, but not sustainable without changes to our force structure, manpower, and infrastructure. As we demonstrated during the first months of Operation *Enduring Freedom*, the Navy can surge its forces to place four aircraft carrier battle groups on station. While this peak level of effort would again be achievable in the future, it requires a significant period of reconstitution and cannot be sustained on a routine basis with our current Fleet. Sustaining this high OPTEMPO would require more resources and, more importantly, might require an expansion of our industrial infrastructure.



## **MANAGING RESOURCES AND RISK IN A WAR TIME NAVY**

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have proven that we live in a new security environment that demands a reassessment of how the United States trains, equips, organizes, and operates its military. The Navy is conducting that review, and exploring the best methods to manage resources to sustain the Global War on Terrorism while minimizing risks.

### **Manpower**

Manpower remains the Chief of Naval Operation's top priority. Although gains have been made in improving recruiting, retention, and attrition, these advances are perishable and we must continue to provide the best possible Quality of Service to our Sailors and civilian workforce. Since the attacks on the Pentagon and New York City, we have mobilized more than 10,000 Reservists to ease the burden on our Active duty personnel. About half of these Sailors are helping implement more stringent Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection measures. The other half brings key expertise to the Fleet and major staffs in the areas of intelligence, logistics, construction, meteorology, and base support. However, paying Reservists to remain on active duty is costly and may require additional funding as the war continues. In order to minimize this impact, we are currently validating the jobs being filled by Reservists with an eye toward demobilizing those who are not essential.

We are also studying several options to provide alternative manning to the Fleet. These possibilities include rotational crewing that would allow ships to spend more of their time in forward areas without reducing the Quality of Service of our Sailors. The Navy has a successful history of providing rotational crewing to ballistic missile

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submarines. These models should help us develop the right plans to provide more ships-days to our regional CINCs.

### **Compressing the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC)**

Meeting a higher demand for deployed naval assets may require a compression of the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle. The typical 24-month deployment cycle consists of the following:

- 6 month deployment overseas
- 1 month post-deployment leave and upkeep period
- 6 month intensive maintenance period
- 10 month training period
- 1 month of leave, upkeep, and stores load-outs prior to deployment

The nominal cycle provides 18 months between six-month deployments for a turn-around ratio of three. Although that number can be reduced, the CNO has established a minimum turn-around ratio of 2.0. Two major activities comprise the period between deployments: training and maintenance.

Our Navy is the best largely because of our most important asymmetric advantage: highly trained Sailors. Developing the range of skills required to operate safely at sea and conduct combat operations entails training at sea and in port. In order to improve Quality of Life, the at-sea training required during the IDTC has already been reduced by about one-fourth over the last five years. Simulators and other applications of information technologies are being speeded to the Fleet, but can only replicate and replace a portion of the real-world drills and exercises that give us an edge in combat. Our recently established Fleet Forces Command, located in Norfolk, is working with our operational forces to develop ways to decrease the training periods required in IDTC as well as to tailor them more closely for missions demanded by the GWOT. However, we

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do not expect to achieve a significant compression of the training requirements. We must also remember that reductions in the training of our air and ship crews may imply a risk to safety and combat effectiveness, especially in scenarios more challenging than the GWOT.

As we consider compressing training between deployments, the need to “train as we fight” will increase. However, some environmental laws and urbanization increasingly impact this warfighting imperative. When urban encroachment and environmental concerns restrict our use of training ranges, our Sailors miss out on valuable training opportunities that can improve combat effectiveness and reduce risks on the battlefield. In order to guarantee that in the future we’ll be ready for the first day of combat, we must all recognize the value of our training ranges and provide for their continued use, including the use of live-fire training. We are analyzing the feasibility of relying more upon simulators that should reduce costs and training time, as well as decrease wear and tear on ships and aircraft. Although simulators and non-live fire exercises are an important part of military training, there simply is no adequate substitute for live-fire training.

Maintenance is the second component of the IDTC. There are two major options for reducing the time required to perform maintenance between deployments. The first involves deferring maintenance that is not absolutely essential to ship operations and combat effectiveness. However, we already have deferred maintenance amounts whose growth we have recently slowed, but not stopped, with increased funding. Although we are developing options to increase the capability to conduct forward-deployed repairs, all

maintenance availabilities, whether conducted stateside or overseas, reduce the number of days that our combat platforms can operate and fight at sea.

Another option is to speed up the pace of maintenance performed between deployments. It is, however, an expensive proposition to provide the around-the-clock shifts necessary to shorten maintenance periods. Additionally, the pool of qualified laborers, especially regarding the skills required to maintain nuclear propulsion plants, has little over-capacity and is fairly inelastic. The acceleration of maintenance is also often constrained by the limited availability of suitable shipyards, dry-docks, and other key components of our maintenance infrastructure. Finally, our Sailors accomplish much of our ship and aircraft maintenance and retesting themselves, and increasing the pace of repairs could degrade their Quality of Service and training opportunities during the IDTC.

Much of our ship maintenance revolves around our propulsion plants. Reducing or accelerating the maintenance on propulsion systems is often simply not prudent due to stringent, time-tested procedures and retesting requirements. In all cases, the deferment of maintenance or the taking of shortcuts can put readiness at risk at critical moments during combat operations.

### **Changing the Way We Organize and Deploy our Forces**

We are also studying alternatives on how we provide combat-ready ships and naval aircraft to the regional CINCs. Although the carrier battle group will remain the preeminent naval task force, we are looking at options to provide responsive, sustainable, and long-range strike forces composed of fewer and different units than those in our CVBGs. One construct is to complement ARGs with cruise missile capable surface

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combatants and submarines, producing “Expeditionary Strike Forces” tailored and equipped to destroy terrorist elements. These forces would provide distributed firepower when and where they are required by the regional CINCs.

### **Replenishing Inventories of Precision-Guided Munitions**

Precision-guided munitions represented a fairly small fraction of the air-dropped weapons employed during the Persian Gulf War. Over the last decade, they have developed into the weapon of choice. The high demand for these weapons during Operation *Enduring Freedom* has depleted our inventories. To address this issue, we have added \$973 million to procure more PGMs. However, our ability to replenish our inventories will depend primarily upon the ability of industry to meet the growing demand as well as upon usage rates in the future. Increasing the production rate will take time and there is no quick fix to this challenge. The Navy is committed to working through these challenges and obtaining the full wartime requirement for precision-guided munitions.

### **Managing Long-Term Risks**

As this committee well understands, there always exists a tension between funding current readiness today and investing in future readiness for tomorrow. This tension is likely to increase as the GWOT continues. In FY 03, the Navy plans to purchase 83 new aircraft, build five new ships, and reconfigure two ballistic submarines as SOF-capable SSGNs. This procurement pace is well below what would be required later in the FYDP in order to maintain the Fleet’s present strength above, on, and beneath the world’s oceans. We will need to be careful, and maintain the appropriate balance between the funding of current readiness and investing in tomorrow’s Fleet.

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The modernization of our ships and aircraft is vital to maintaining our edge in combat since about 60% of the ships steaming today will still be in the Fleet in 2020. The Navy's modernization plan could be placed at risk by two factors as we continue to protect America and its allies from terrorism. Similar to recapitalization, we must guard against under-funding modernization in preference to funding the GWOT. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the higher expected OPTEMPO of our combat platforms means that there will be fewer opportunities to upgrade them with advanced sensors, avionics, offensive and defensive weapons systems, and information technology.

Meeting the imperatives associated with our near-term security needs could put the Navy's transformation plans at greater risk. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the lessons learned during Operations *Enduring Freedom* and *Noble Eagle* demonstrate that we clearly are faced with a new security environment that demands fundamental changes in our military cultures, doctrine and tactics, and combat systems. As with the other key components of future readiness, we must make every effort to ensure that we can operate in defense of America's freedoms today while concurrently preparing the Navy for an uncertain and extremely challenging future.

Finally, we must ensure that funds remain available for the recapitalization of the Navy's infrastructure. Quality infrastructure is a vital part of ensuring both current and future readiness. Unfortunately, the Navy's shore infrastructure condition is less than satisfactory. While the FY 03 budget makes modest increases in Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization and Military Construction accounts, there remains much to be done. We are studying this problem and working on a plan to provide out-year

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funding to help mitigate these significant challenges. While funding the war, we must not forget about the infrastructure that sustains our Sailors and ships.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Global War on Terrorism has clearly demonstrated that the U.S. Navy is the world's best, and that our focus must remain on current readiness. The Navy's response since September 11<sup>th</sup> is a testament to the agility, lethality, and reach of maritime forces and to the dedication and sacrifice of our Sailors. Because the Navy operates as a rotational expeditionary force, makes current readiness a top priority, and has had the strong support of this committee, we can sustain the current pace of operations for the foreseeable future. The Navy can also surge forces quickly and maintain that level of effort for a few months. However, should the pace of the GWOT accelerate, we would be required to modify our deployment cycles and reexamine many of our plans and programs in light of the changing security environment. If we increase the war effort at sea, we would need to make some hard choices that might put the Fleet's recapitalization, modernization, and transformation programs at greater risk. While not ignoring the future, a Navy at war must focus on maintaining current readiness. The Navy will, with the continued support of this committee, meet whatever challenges lie ahead in defense of America. On behalf of our Sailors and their families who proudly serve our nation, thank you for your support.