

**Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert
House Armed Service Committee Oral Statement**

February 13, 2013

Good morning, Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, members of the -- distinguished members of the committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

When I last appeared before you, I declared that there are two important qualities of our naval forces. And they are, one, that we will operate forward where it matters at the maritime crossroads of the world, and that they will be ready when it matters. This remains our mandate. Your Navy and Marine Corps are uniquely qualified to respond immediately to crises, to assure allies, to build partnerships, to deter aggression, and to contain conflict.

But these qualities and their value are at great risk by the fiscal uncertainty that we now face. Although our primary concern with sequestration and the lack of an appropriations bill is the impact they have on the readiness during this fiscal year, make no mistake, it's going to have an irreversible and debilitating impact on Navy's readiness through the rest of the decade. We will not be able to respond in the way the nation has expected and depended, and we should make that kind of decision consciously and deliberately.

Three symbolic, but not really all-inclusive examples, of the impact of the delays -- are the delays of the deployment of the Harry Truman, the delay in the overhaul of the Abraham Lincoln, and the delay in the initial construction of the John F. Kennedy. These were not inconsequential decisions or the only decisions that we will have to make, and that we're going to make over the coming weeks. They did not come without significant -- excuse me -- they did not come without significant consequences to our people, to the defense industry, or to local economies.

The impacts of funding that we realign today will cascade into the future years. The \$8.6 billion shortfall confronting us in operations and maintenance has compelled us to cancel ship and aircraft maintenance, reduce operations, curtail training for forces soon to deploy, and plan for the furlough of thousands of civilians. These actions enable current missions of forces forward deployed, but subject to congressional action, will have inadequate surge capacity at the appropriate readiness to be there when it matters, where it matters.

We ask that the Congress act quickly to replace sequestration with a coherent approach to deficit reduction that addresses our national security interests. We need an appropriations bill for this fiscal year that will allow the department to allocate resources in a deliberate manner. Without these actions, the condition and expected service life of our ships and aircraft will further degrade. Our sailors will not be proficient and they won't be confident to do the job. And we will be forced to cancel or slow procurement of relevant platforms and systems needed to preserve our warfighting superiority -- platforms such as the Joint Strike Fighter, the P-8 maritime patrol aircraft, the littoral combat ship. All those and even more will be in jeopardy.

Mr. Chairman, I know are dedicated to the men and women of our military and to their families. But our folks are stressed by the uncertainty about their jobs, their operational schedules, and more importantly, their future. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on their behalf and I thank you in advance for your efforts in this, and that of this body in trying to avert the very real readiness crisis that we face today.

Thank you.