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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

"My job down here is managing scarcity"
- Capt. Stearns

May 20, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR HASC MEMBERS

RE: Hearing on Navy Force Structure and Readiness: Perspectives from the Fleet

On Thursday, May 26, 2016, at 10:00AM in Rayburn House Office Building 2118, the House Armed Services Subcommittees on Seapower & Projection Forces and Readiness will meet in open session to receive testimony at a joint hearing titled "Navy Force Structure and Readiness: Perspectives from the Fleet." An opening statement will be provided, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

Should you have any questions regarding this event, please contact David Sienicki (5-4469) and Phil MacNaughton (6-4532) of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee staff or Margaret Dean (6-3229) and Vickie Plunkett (5-3432) of the Readiness Subcommittee staff.

WITNESSES

Captain Gregory McRae, USN
 Deputy Commander, Submarine Squadron Six
(Norfolk)

Captain Paul Odenthal, USN
 Commander, Naval Construction Group Two

Captain Scott F. Robertson, USN
 Commanding Officer, USS Normandy (CG-60)
Homeport Norfolk

Captain Randy Stearns, USN
 Commodore, Strike Fighter Wing Atlantic

USS Albany overhaul 43 + months going to take

Seabees only getting 12 mos. between deployments

*Crew never deployed
 → Not what they signed up for*

Ocean → strike fighter short Fall

Deployed for 313 days last yr. 4 to 10 ± months!

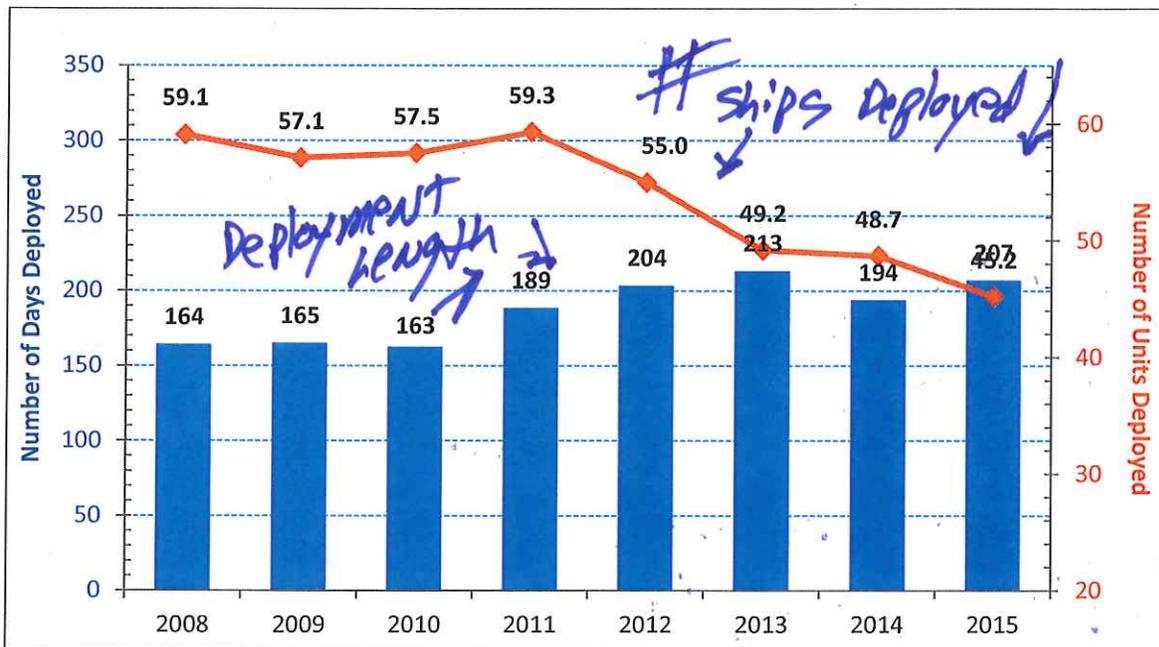
Overall Force Structure.

As of May 13, 2016, the Navy’s force structure consists of 272 battle force ships. The Navy has 56 ships deployed and an additional 101 ships underway for local operations.¹ In January 2013, the Department of the Navy indicated a requirement for 308 battle force ships. Over the past three administrations, the Navy’s fleet has shrunk by 40% to 272 ships, including 10 aircraft carriers.

In its December 2015 report, the Congressional Budget Office estimated the total costs of carrying out the 2015 Navy shipbuilding plan — an average of about \$20 billion in 2015 dollars per year over the next 30 years — would be one-third higher than the funding amounts that the Navy has received in recent decades.² The Navy’s ability to achieve the required force structure within the current fiscal limitations and to support growth in key investment areas (e.g., Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine replacement) are matters of concern to the committee.

As to Navy readiness, average deployment length has increased as the number of deployed units has decreased. As shown in the chart, “OPTEMPO - Average Deployment Lengths & Average Number of Units Deployed”, ships and sailors are being worked harder than ever before; an average deployment has gone up 32%, from 5.5 to 7 months. → some ships much longer

OPTEMPO - Average Deployment Lengths & Average Number of Units Deployed



Note: The data in the slide above is in Calendar Years

→ normally 313 days!
 Result = more stress on ships, sailors, families

¹ U.S. Navy Fact File. <http://www.navy.mil/navydata> of February 18, 2016

² An Analysis of the Navy’s Fiscal Year 2015 Shipbuilding Plan. <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/50926>. October 2015.

The Navy developed the Optimized Fleet Response Plan to alleviate extended deployments and make maintenance and training cycles more predictable and more standardized, yet the USS Harry S Truman carrier strike group was recently extended an additional 30 days to meet operational requirements.

As to meeting current combatant commander requirements, the Navy can meet fewer than half of the demand for ships from U.S. commanders around the globe. According to the Navy, "In FY17, Navy will source approximately 42% of all un-adjudicated combatant commander (CCDR) demand for major afloat force elements."³

U.S. Navy Operation and Maintenance Budget

The U.S. Navy (USN) FY17 request is \$139.5 billion. This comprises a base budget request of \$132.0 billion, a decrease of \$4.9 billion base funding from the FY16 enacted level, and an Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) request of \$7.9 billion, an increase of \$0.3 billion OCO from the FY16 enacted level for an overall decrease of \$4.6 billion from FY16 enacted to the FY17 budget request. The OCO request includes support for ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and in support of an "enduring baseline mission"⁴. According to the Navy, this year's budget request will "balance force structure for today and future, [with] near term recoverable risk in readiness, return to historic risk in facilities, [and] balance on support accounts."⁵

The Navy is also having budget difficulties in executing within the Operation and Maintenance appropriations provided in FY16. The Navy comptroller has completed a mid-year review of the overall budget and has identified almost \$848.0 million in Operation and Maintenance shortfalls. Specifically, the three main shortfalls include costs associated with: USS Truman extension in Central Command (\$91M); Flying hour program (\$255M) which includes depot-level reparables and some operational costs; and ship depot maintenance (\$500M) due to growth in scope of availabilities and throughput delays.

Aircraft Carrier and Associated Carrier Air Wing Force Structure

The current 10 Nimitz-class aircraft carriers are the largest warships in the world, each designed for an approximately 50-year service life with one mid-life refueling. The Gerald R. Ford class is the future replacement class for the Nimitz-class carriers. USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) was ordered from Newport News Shipbuilding on Sept. 10, 2008, and is scheduled to be delivered in 2016.⁶ With the delivery of the Ford, the Navy could once again meet the

³ U.S. Navy response to request for information dated May 12, 2016

⁴ Department of the Navy briefing *Operation and Maintenance, Navy; Operation and Maintenance, Navy Reserve Budget Overview: FY17 Presidents Budget*. February 25, 2016

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=4200&tid=200&ct=4

cost \$91M for extension
commanders getting less than half the ships they need

Insufficient Force Structure - Reduced Readiness

Need more CG both

Law requires 11 carriers
Really need more

statutory requirement to maintain 11 aircraft carriers. The Navy currently operates just 10 carriers under a temporary waiver granted by Congress.⁷

→ Accelerate Carrier Production

As to overall warfighting requirements, Navy has indicated a requirement to support two carriers forward deployed with three carriers available to surge forward in a major contingency. Currently, the Navy would be challenged to sustain three of the five carriers needed in the event of a major conflict.

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) daily operations require a continuous aircraft carrier presence in the Middle East. During two months in late 2015, the U.S. Navy did not provide a carrier to the CENTCOM area of responsibility). This left the CENTCOM with less capability in its campaign against the Islamic State. USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) left U.S. 5th Fleet on October 13, 2015, to head to its new homeport in San Diego after an 8 1/2-month deployment. USS Harry S Truman (CVN-75) left Norfolk on November 16, 2015, and reported to 5th Fleet on December 16, 2015. Due to the increased demand for carrier presence over the past five years, carrier maintenance deferred to meet the increased demand, and the introduction of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan, Navy officials have stated that future shortterm carrier gaps are likely to persist.

Truman still deployed

→ Extended

The Navy in its fiscal year 2017 budget submission proposed to disestablish Carrier Air Wing 14, an Naval Air Station Lemoore (CA)-based carrier air wing, in fiscal year 2017 in contravention of Public Law 112-81, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2012, which states:

1 month

NUMBER OF NAVY CARRIER AIR WINGS AND CARRIER AIR WING HEADQUARTERS

The Secretary of the Navy shall ensure that the Navy maintains—

“(1) a minimum of 10 carrier air wings; and

“(2) for each such carrier air wing, a dedicated and fully staffed headquarters.”⁸

The Navy historically has advocated a need for one less carrier air wing to support the total number of aircraft carriers. The Navy expects to accept delivery of the eleventh aircraft carrier later this year. The FY17 budget proposal – which was rejected by the committee in H.R. 4909, the House version of the Fiscal Year 2017 NDAA – would have reduced the number of carrier air wings from 10 to 9, one less than the previous standard.

Large Surface Combatants

Need to Build up Naval Aviation, Not manage its decline
NDAA - more Supps Hornets

⁷ 10 U.S.C. 5062(b) refers

⁸ Pub. L. 112-81, div. A, title X, §1093, Dec. 31, 2011, 125 Stat. 1606

Capt. Robertson: USS Normandy
Deployed for 313 days last year

The Navy has a requirement for 88 large surface combatant ships. Congress has authorized funding to support construction of two new destroyers per year over the past five years. Large surface combatants have a typical service life of 35-40 years.

↳ going to need more

In fiscal year 2015, the Navy proposed the phased modernization of half of the Navy's cruiser force structure that would place these cruisers in an inactive status for up to 11 years. Congress rebuffed these plans and directed "the Secretary of the Navy ... to induct no more than two cruisers per year into the phased modernization period, beginning with two cruisers being inducted in fiscal year 2016."⁹ In a fiscal year 2017 legislative proposal, the Navy again proposed that these destroyers be placed into a long-term modernization. In their respective bills for fiscal year 2017, both the House Armed Services Committee and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense both denied the Navy's request to lay up cruisers for an extended period.

for future CSB response

→ can't inactivate cruisers when only

Small Surface Combatants

meeting 39% of commanders' needs

The Navy has indicated a requirement for 52 small surface combatant ships. The Littoral Combat Ship, and the eventual transition to the frigate in fiscal year 2019, are the ships that will be used to meet the Navy's small surface requirement. Congress has authorized 26 Littoral Combat Ships to date. In contravention to the Navy requirement of 52 small surface combatants, the Department of Defense indicated its intent to reduce the number of small surface combatants to 40. In commenting on this reduction, Defense Secretary Ash Carter stated, "This plan reduces, somewhat, the number of LCS available for presence operations, but that need will be met by higher-end ships, and it will ensure that the warfighting forces in our submarine, surface, and aviation fleets have the necessary capabilities and posture to defeat even our most advanced potential adversaries."¹⁰

Capt McRae: sub maintenance problems lost 1,000 operational days in Atlantic, 1,500 in Pacific

Attack Submarines

Navy has indicated it requires 48 attack submarines and currently has 52 submarines in the inventory. The approaching retirement of the Los Angeles-class submarines and prior limited build rates of new attack submarines will result in a force of 41 attack submarines in the late 2020s. Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr., the commander of U.S. Pacific Command, confirmed the Navy is currently able to provide only 60% of the overall attack submarine operational requirement.¹¹ Because submarine demand is increasing and inventory is being reduced, Navy predicts its ability to support global requirements in fiscal year 2017 will drop to 42 percent.¹²

↳ Equivalent of having some subs

Aviation Programs

Actually worse

⁹ Section 8105 of FY2015 DOD Appropriations Act (Division C of H.R. 83/P.L. 113-235)

¹⁰ Secretary of Defense letter dated December 14, 2015.

¹¹ Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr., U.S. Pacific Command, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee. February 22, 2016.

¹² Navy Request for Information. May 12, 2016.

Russia
China

Capt. Sparks
"My job here is managing scarcity"

Not enough parts, planes, flying hours

The Department of the Navy's (DoN) validated strike fighter inventory requirement is 1,240 aircraft, of which 820 were in the Navy and 420 were in the Marine Corps. For wartime planning, the DoN has a validated requirement for 10 aircraft carrier air wings containing 50 strike fighter aircraft each, manned by squadrons from both the Navy and the Marine Corps. However, due to budgetary constraints, the DoN maintains a wartime planning force structure of 44 strike-fighters per air wing but provides only the necessary resources to maintain each at approximately 39 aircraft due to efficiencies (what the Navy terms "productive ratio") that are achieved through sharing aircraft among Navy air wings.

No surge capacity or spare

Based upon information provided by Navy officials to committee staff on March 12, 2015, the Navy anticipates a shortfall of about 134 aircraft in 2020, with an average shortfall of about 100 aircraft between fiscal years 2015 and 2020. This number is about 100 aircraft higher than the Navy had anticipated in 2014. The higher number is due to increased airframe use for Operation Inherent Resolve, a reduction in F/A-18C depot throughput in fiscal years 2013 and 2014, and a reduction in the procurement of F-35Cs in the future years defense program. The Navy considers a 65-aircraft shortfall to be "manageable."

50% of Hornets
"trained carrier"

As to aviation readiness, the Navy has attempted to address a significant backlog in its aviation depots; however, to return aviation readiness, the Navy must address a number of depot-related issues, including manpower shortfalls, lack of parts availability and engineering expertise, and management challenges which are slowing depot throughput. According to the Navy, 51% of F/A-18 A-Ds were "Out Of Reporting" in 2016.¹³ "Out of Reporting" is used to define the portion of aviation force structure that is not available because insufficient parts or depot capacity limits aircraft availability. In just the past five years, the backlog of aircraft engines awaiting overhaul has grown from 11 to 539.¹⁴

Challenges
coming up
2-3 years out

Naval Expeditionary Combat Command Structure

The Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) was established in 2006 to align expeditionary combat forces and their missions. The Navy's expeditionary combat forces include construction forces, navy diving, coastal riverine, expeditionary logistics, cargo handling, combat camera, and expeditionary intelligence. To maintain a core operational capability as well as the ability to surge forces to meet unique operational needs, NECC integrates Active and Reserve Component sailors with Reserve Component Sailors accounting for "approximately 50%"¹⁵ NECC forces.

200 Reservists deployed

Naval Construction forces, nicknamed "the Seabees", represent NECC's combat surge capability, sustained operational need, and Reserve integration. The Seabees have a history of building bases, bulldozing and paving thousands of miles of roadway and airstrips and

seabees "Don't have surge for the high end fighters"

¹³ Navy Aviation Maintenance/Supply Readiness Reporting
¹⁴ U.S. Navy: Aircraft and Engine Depot Maintenance (1A5A) Data
¹⁵ Cragg, Jennifer. "U.S. Navy Expeditionary Combat Command." TNR Feb. 2016: 9. Print

51% Hornets + carrier

only 1 in 4 fighters

"Fully Mission Capable"

accomplishing myriad other construction projects in a wide variety of military theaters dating back to World War II. Their core command element is a naval mobile construction battalion which is composed of 600 Seabees. Five years ago, the Navy supported 9 Active and 12 Reserve battalions. Today, the Navy provides 6 Active and 5 Reserve battalions. Seabees rotations are 6 months on deployment and 12 months in homeport resetting and training for their next deployment. With these force structure reductions, Navy is taking risk in supporting other Department of Defense missions including U.S. Marine Corps direct-support missions.

Typical
Seabee E-6
Has 3-6 Deployments
↳ strain on
Force & Families

used to have
21 Seabee
battalions
↓
today 12