



PRESS RELEASE

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Opening Statement of Chairman Roscoe Bartlett *Hearing on the Evolving Missions of the U.S. Navy and the Role of Surface and Subsurface Combatants*

Washington, D.C. – We are meeting today to receive testimony on the Evolving Missions of the U.S. Navy and the Role of Surface and Subsurface Combatants.

First, I want to state that the committee is committed to work with the Department of Defense to ensure that our Navy remains the best in the world, properly manned and equipped to defeat any adversary and successfully defend the United States. I want to congratulate you for the outstanding job the Navy and Marine Corps have done prosecuting the “long war” and projecting American military power around the globe as well as providing humanitarian aid both at home and abroad.

Of particular interest today is the Navy’s recently stated goal of developing a stable shipbuilding plan that will eventually build us a 313 ship Navy by the year 2020. Not only will this provide some predictability to the shipbuilding industry regarding Navy procurement plans but it will also give us in Congress a clear understanding of the capability that we are buying.

The Chief of Naval Operations’ (CNO) 313 ship fleet of the future has been recently published in the Annual Long-Range Plan for Construction of Naval Vessels for FY2007. This document briefly describes the process by which the CNO’s 313 ship plan was developed; however, we hope to gain more insight into its development during our hearing today. We are particularly interested in hearing about how threat assessments were translated into capabilities and then how those capabilities were assigned to particular components of the fleet.

Undoubtedly, the development of the long range shipbuilding plan was a multi-variable problem, a balance between providing the desired naval capability, for an affordable price, while sustaining the shipbuilding industrial base. I want to focus today's hearing on the capability piece of the equation, in an attempt to understand how the Navy plans to carry out its evolving missions with the CNO's 313 ship Navy of the future. Hearings planned over the next month will concentrate on the affordability and the industrial base implications of the plan. I realize that the 3 issues are inter-dependent; however I want us to try to keep our focus on capability today.

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