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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON

THE FUTURE OF THE MILITARY SERVICES AND CONSEQUENCES

OF DEFENSE SEQUESTRATION

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Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the future of the military services and consequences of defense sequestration. This is my first time testifying before you as Chief of Naval Operations, and I am proud to represent more than 625,000 Sailors and Civilians serving their country in the United States Navy. It is through their courage and commitment to country that the Navy continues to be at the front line of our nation's efforts in war and peace. I look forward to working with you to ensure our Navy remains the world's preeminent maritime force - providing America offshore options to advance our national interests in an era of uncertainty. Through innovation, adaptation and judiciousness, I believe we can sustain our contribution to defense and be good stewards of our nation's resources.

As it has for more than 200 years, our Navy continues to deliver credible capability for deterrence, sea control and power projection to contain conflict and to fight and win our nation's wars. We remain forward at the maritime crossroads to protect the interconnected systems of trade, information and security that enable our nation's economic prosperity while ensuring operational access for the Joint force to the maritime domain and the littorals.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Navy has been an integral part of our nation's combat, counter-terrorism and crisis response operations. Currently, Navy's aircraft carriers and air wings account for about 30 percent of the close air support for our troops on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, and an even larger share of the electronic support missions that ensure the safety of our troops against IED attack. Navy SEALs led a joint force to capture Osama bin Laden and also rescued the M/V ALABAMA's crew. USS FLORIDA, a guided missile submarine, and the USS SCRANTON and USS PROVIDENCE, two attack submarines, launched over 100 Tomahawk land attack missiles at military targets in Libya at the outset of

Operation ODYSSEY DAWN. Earlier this year, our aircraft carrier USS GEORGE WASHINGTON and several of our cruisers and destroyers aided the Japanese after a Tsunami decimated portions of Honshu Island. To conduct warfighting and be ready to respond to such crises, on any given day more than 40,000 sailors are at sea and about 40 percent of our ships are deployed away from home.

Over the past 10 years we stretched our ships, aircraft and people to meet the growing needs of Combatant Commanders for Navy forces with a smaller Fleet. Since 2000, the number of ships in the Fleet decreased by about 10 percent. Yet, in the last four years alone, demand for carrier strike groups doubled, and requests for amphibious ready groups grew by 70 percent. As a result, each ship is underway about 15 percent more per year than in 2000, lengthening deployments and making deployments more frequent. Because deployments now cut into the time available to conduct maintenance on ships and aircraft and to train our crews, we have to tailor the readiness of some units to only those missions they will likely be tasked to do instead of the whole (design) range of missions they might be tasked to do. Less time for maintenance decreases the service lives of our ships and aircraft and makes maintenance more expensive because it is now less efficient and more emergent. In turn, growing maintenance costs offset the funds available for procurement and modernization, making it that much more difficult to recapitalize the Fleet.

Going forward, I expect the importance of Navy forces will grow as compared to today as we draw down ground forces in the Middle East and reset them. Nations like Iran and North Korea continue to pursue nuclear capabilities, while rising powers are rapidly modernizing their militaries and investing in capabilities to deny our forces freedom of action in vital regions such as the Asia-Pacific. To ensure we are prepared to meet our missions, I will continue to focus on

my three priorities: 1) Be ready to fight and win today; 2) Build the future force to fight and win tomorrow; and 3) Take care of our people and create a motivated, relevant and diverse force. Most importantly, I will work to ensure we do not create a “hollow force” that is unable to do the mission due to shortfalls in maintenance, personnel, enablers or training. We will not erode the support we provide to our Sailors, Civilians, and their families that sustains our all-volunteer force.

To pursue these priorities in a constrained fiscal environment, we will have to be effective and efficient. We will maintain our warfighting advantage against new threats using new technologies and operating concepts. We will use innovative ways to affordably operate forward, where we are most effective and can provide our nation options for influence and response. Additionally, we will be judicious with our resources (people, money and time) by more efficiently scheduling maintenance and adapting our Fleet Response Plan.

We must remain the world’s preeminent maritime fighting force. In particular, our Navy will continue to dominate the undersea domain with sustained investment and effort in a network of platforms and sensors. The Joint force relies on us for assured access to deter conflict, fight wars, protect our allies and partners and advance our interests. We will sustain access below, on and above the water with new maritime and joint operational concepts such as Air-Sea Battle, and by operationalizing the electromagnetic spectrum and cyber domain.

The budget reductions we are currently addressing as part of the 2011 Budget Control Act will introduce additional risk in our ability to meet the future needs of Combatant Commanders, but we believe this risk is manageable. Some strategic changes will be required in the Department of Defense to posture our forces, prepare for conflicts, and conduct combat and

stability operations. We are currently working through an emerging strategy as we complete the fiscal year 13 budget submission.

However, if the efforts of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction do not result in agreement and sequestration occurs, the Department of Defense and the Navy will have to rethink some fundamental aspects of what our military does. The current law does not allow the military to manage these reductions, but rather applies the cuts uniformly to each program, project and activity. Our readiness and procurement accounts would face a reduction of about 18 percent, rising to approximately 25 percent in the event military personnel funding is exempted from full sequestration. The size of these cuts would substantially impact our ability to resource the Combatant Commander's operational plans and maintain our forward presence around the globe.

Some of the actions we would need to take under sequestration could have a severe and irreversible impact on the Navy's future. For instance, we may need to end procurement programs and begin laying off civilian personnel in fiscal year 2012 to ensure we are within control levels for January of 2013. As a capital-intensive force, we depend on consistent and reliable production from the shipbuilding and aviation industries to sustain our fleet capacity. If we end programs abruptly and some of these companies shut down, we will be hard-pressed to reconstitute them. And each ship we don't build impacts the fleet for 20-50 years.

I look forward to working in partnership with the Committee to ensure our Navy will remain able to deter aggression by operating forward and being ready to fight and win our nation's wars. By maintaining our current course and judiciously applying our resources, I am

confident we can come through this challenge and remain the world's most lethal, flexible and capable maritime force. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you on the Navy's behalf.