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Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense Holds Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget for the Department of the Navy

INOUYE:

Today we welcome the Honorable Donald Winter, Secretary of the Navy; Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of naval operations; and General James Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, to present testimony on fiscal year 2009 budget for the Department of the Navy.

The president's budget request includes \$149 billion to support the Navy and Marine Corps in fiscal year 2009. Along with a forthcoming request for supplemental appropriations, these funds will support the full deployment of sailors and Marines to the farthest corners of the globe.

This forward presence contributes to our security by deterring conflict in strategic regions, performing vital humanitarian relief missions, and carrying out combat missions in the global war on terrorism. Many Americans may not be aware of the full role of the Navy and the Marine Corps in the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan.

There are currently 25,600 Marines and 7,800 sailors with boots on the ground in these two countries. Our nation owes them, and all their fellow Service members, a special debt of gratitude.

One challenge to maintaining the posture of the Navy and Marine Corps is to equip the forces with the tools they need to complete their missions. Both today and into the future, however high profile modernization programs like the Littoral Combat Ship, the Expeditionary Combat Vehicle, the presidential helicopter have experienced problems with costs and schedules.

The committee intends to undertake a careful review of these and other important programs to determine the best cost to modernize our forces in the most fiscally responsible manner possible. Not only are there important questions to be asked about the next generations of weapon systems, but there are also concerns about how funds are being invested to meet the immediate needs of our Service members.

The recent grounding of P3 aircraft is one such concern. And, just recently new questions are being asked about whether the bureaucracy acted quickly enough getting (inaudible) and other equipment to those currently serving in harm's way.

We look forward to our witnesses sharing their views on both the challenges and successes they see for the Navy and Marine Corps, and how the 2009 budget request addresses those issues.

But, before calling on our panel for their opening statements, there's one other matter I wish to raise. As the committee examines the F.Y. 2009 request, we must remember that the budget

before us is based on recommendations made six months ago. And it will be several months before our bill may be approved and sent to the White House.

If, for no other reason than the time it takes to assemble and review the budget request, as well as the information gleaned from these hearings, there are likely to be several changes warranted in your request, in order to best serve our national defense.

My co-chairman, Senator Stevens, and I worked for many years to propose adjustments that make sense. I believe our country is best served when Congress and the military Services work as partners in identifying and carrying out the adjustments made during the appropriations process.

I look forward to working with each of you to continue that same spirit of cooperation, which is now a tradition that has served our nation very well. The full statement of each of the witnesses this morning will be included in the record. And, now I'm pleased to turn to my co-chairman, Senator Stevens, for his opening statement.

STEVENS:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen. We're pleased to have you before the committee, and I think it couldn't be a more important time. I do join in thanking you for your service and for your willingness to really take on these tasks that we all have.

And, Admiral Roughead, we welcome you on your first appearance. I know you have a challenging assignment, and we look forward to working with you and the Navy.

The demand for money surpasses the amounts that we can make available. But we have to work together to make sure we meet the most pressing needs of the Services.

I think the greatest thrill we have is one the five of us discussed yesterday. And that is, how do we look over the horizon and make sure we have the military of the future, to meet the threats that future generations will face?

Now that we know how long it takes to prepare those systems, we have to be really clairvoyant and work hard to make sure that we start the systems and find the ways to fund them, so that there will be a superiority for all our forces out there in the years ahead.

I look forward to working with you. Thank you.

(UNKNOWN)

Mr. Chairman, thank you. I can't let this opportunity pass to observe that I think the leaders we have today of the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Department of the Navy, are the best qualified that I can ever remember. Their personal experiences, their education backgrounds,

their proven ability to manage the United States Navy and Marine Corps reflect great credit, I think, on the military and our government.

It's an honor to be involved in helping to decide how the funding is allocated for the missions and the challenges that face the Navy today. But, I think these individuals have reflected great credit on the process and our great country. And it's a pleasure to welcome them to the committee for the annual review, and the budget request that's been submitted to the committee.

INOUYE:

Thank you, very much. And, now, Mr. Secretary?

WINTER:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator Stevens, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you here today. I'm here to present the Department of the Navy's plan to support our sailors and Marines in their mission to defend our nation against current and future challenges.

The president's fiscal year '09 budget will assist the Navy and the Marine Corps in accomplishing their complementary and reinforcing missions, while building capabilities necessary to meet future threats.

One of the primary responsibilities of our government is to provide for the nation's defense. Those responsibilities include the critical requirement to organize, train and equip our naval forces. For that vast majority of citizens, the only cost imposed on us is financial.

America is able to provide for the national defense with such a minimal impact on its citizenry, because we are blessed to have among us a generation of people, patriots all, who volunteer to serve. They are the ones who bear many hardships, accept many risks, and go in harm's way.

The pay and benefit funding levels in our '09 budget reflect the compensation levels necessary to continue to attract and retain quality personnel in a Navy and the Marine Corps.

Furthermore, although we are doing well in our overall recruiting and retention numbers, I emphasize the need for special pays and bonuses to meet critical subspecialty needs, such as our requirements for nurses, physicians, and GWOT stress communities such as explosive ordnance disposal personnel.

It is because of the hard work of our sailors and Marines that we are making progress fostering maritime security, defeating terrorist networks, progressing towards a stable rack,

supporting the Afghan government, countering piracy and proliferation of deadly technology, rendering humanitarian assistance and strengthening partnerships around the world.

Our sailors and Marines have responded when called and superbly performed their many missions in our nation's defense. It is truly an honor and a privilege to work with them and support them as their Secretary.

The Department of the Navy's F.Y. '09 budget meets the challenge of resourcing the Navy and the Marine Corps team across a range of missions, from partnership building to combat operations. It invests in our ability to operate, sustain and develop forces that are engaged in the global war on terrorism while preparing the force for the challenges and threats of the future.

We are requesting a total of \$149 billion, a seven percent increase over the F.Y. 2008 baseline. This increase is driven by factors such as rising oil costs and the critical comprehensive growth of the Marine Corps.

Our F.Y. 2009 budget reflects three key priorities, which are consistent with those of previous years. They are, first of all, prevail in the global war on terror, secondly, take care of our sailors, Marines, their families and, particularly, our wounded. And, lastly, prepare for future challenges across the full spectrum of operations.

To help meet our first priority, prevail in the GWOT, we are adapting our force for current and future missions to include growing the Marine Corps, shaping the force by recruiting and retaining the right people, and addressing critical readiness needs.

Among our most critical readiness needs is the ability to train our sailors and Marines for the threats that they may encounter. Unfortunately, our Navy has encountered increasing encroachments in our ability to conduct training.

We recognize that there are, on occasion, impacts on the citizenry at large associated with such training. But these are necessary costs that are critical to the defense of our nation. We take extensive precautions to minimize the impact of our training.

We owe it to the American people, and we owe it to those who serve to acknowledge that, as in all things in life, there are competing interests and tradeoffs and that we treat the risks of sonar operation at sea, or the impact of jet noise the way we treat all public policy issues, balancing risks and costs against legitimate national security interests.

I commit to you today that I will keep you apprised of legal challenges and new implications for readiness that we face over the course of the coming year.

Mr. Chairman, if in the future we are unable to properly train our sailors and Marines we will have failed to do our duty to them and to the American people.

Another critical issue I would like to highlight concerns doing right by those who go in harm's way. As Secretary of Defense Gates has stated, "Apart from the war itself, we have no

higher priority than to take care of our wounded." Our wounded warriors and their families deserve the highest priority care, respect and treatment for their sacrifices. Our '09 budget honors our commitment to insure that our sailors and Marines receive the appropriate care, training and financial support that the need.

Finally, to meet the challenges of the future, the '09 budget provides for a balanced slate of ships, aircraft and expeditionary capabilities with the fighting power and versatility to carry out blue, green and brown water missions wherever called upon.

Furthermore, I would like to note that, consistent with our commitment to insure affordability and timely delivery of capabilities, we have launched an acquisition improvement initiative to provide better integration of requirements and acquisition, decision processes, improve governance and insight into the development, establishment and execution of acquisition programs, and formalize a framework to engage senior naval leadership.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for the strong support this committee and Congress at large has given our Navy and Marine Corps team. I want to thank you on their behalf. Our Navy and Marine Corps is a strong, capable and dedicated team. I appreciate the opportunity to represent them here today, and I look forward to your questions.

INOUYE:

(OFF MIKE)

ROUGHEAD:

Chairman Inouye, Senator Stevens, distinguished members of the committee. On behalf of our 600,000 sailors, Navy civilians and families, it's an honor to appear before you today. And, together, with Secretary Winter and General Conway, I'm privileged to be part of this leadership team that provides for our nation's safety, security and prosperity.

Today, your Navy stands ready with the agility, the flexibility and the confidence to do what no other Navy in the world can do. Three weeks ago we successfully and temporarily converted a portion of our sea-based ballistic missile defense program to engage a failing satellite. Sea-based ballistic missile defense is here, it is real, and it works. But, that is only a part of what your Navy delivers to our nation.

We are exercising our new maritime strategy every day, a strategy that is more than just a glossy brochure. Our carriers are projecting power in the Arabian Gulf, our destroyers are demonstrating our resolve in the Mediterranean. An amphibious ship is engaged in counter piracy operations on the east coast of Africa, and another is delivering humanitarian assistance on the west coast of that continent.

Our frigates are intercepting drug traffickers in the Caribbean Sea, and our riverine forces are patrolling vital infrastructure on the Euphrates River in Iraq, and our submarines patrol silently around the globe. We have 118 ships and over 58,000 people on deployment, out and about doing the work of the nation.

But, as you so well know, our operations come at a cost to our people, current readiness and the future fleet. Those are my three focus areas. Our people, our sailors, Marines and their families know they have your support. We must continue to invest in their futures and in the young men and women of America who will follow in their wake.

In the context of this generational war, it is imperative that we continue to care for our wounded warriors, and support the health care needs of all of our sailors and Navy civilians. Likewise, your support for the critical skills reenlistment bonuses has enabled us to retain the sailors we need.

Supporting our future force cannot be done without readiness to fight today. To this end, quality shore installations, responsive depot level maintenance facilities and unfettered ability to train responsibly are necessities.

Where area access and shore support is denied, the Commandant and I have been moving forward together with a sea-basing alternative. These elements are essential to support our fleet response plan, which has enabled us to meet requirements and will sustain us through the requested temporary carrier force level adjustment.

Of my three focus areas, building tomorrow's Navy to be a balanced, appropriately sized force is the most immediate imperative and challenge. Fiscal realities, however, have led us to assume more risk in shipbuilding, ship operations and weapons. Achieving the 313 ship floor at current funding levels will require us to improve processes, collaborate with industry, and make difficult decisions in the near term.

I am pleased that the first two DDG1000 contracts have been awarded. Our surface combatants are an essential element of our force, and it is important that we do not raid the combatant line as we build to 313 ships.

I remain strongly committed to funding those programs that provide critical capabilities to our forces. There is no substitute for the Littoral Combat Ship and closing the littoral capability gap. Current F/A-18 Hornets are needed to assuage a 2016 strike fighter shortfall.

Surface combatant superiority will be maintained through DDG-51 modernization. Multi-mission maritime aircraft will recapitalize our maritime patrol anti-submarine warfare capabilities and sea-based ballistic missile defense will insure future theater and national defense and enable access for our joint forces.

These critical programs for our future fleet require appropriate disciplined investments now. The 2009 budget and its associated four structure plans will meet our current challenges with a

moderate degree of risk. Clearly, we have many challenges, of which building tomorrow's fleet is the greatest.

But, with these challenges is our opportunity to have a balanced and global fleet, which will defend the nation and assure our prosperity for generations to come.

On behalf of our sailors, our Navy civilians and our families, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and thank you for your support of what we do today and what we will do tomorrow. And, I look forward to your questions.

INOUYE:

Thank you very much, Admiral.

Commandant?

CONWAY:

Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, Senator Stevens, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I pledge to always provide you with forthright and honest assessments of your Marine Corps. And I bear that in mind today as I report to you on the posture of our Service.

In a written statement, I provided you a list of priorities that would enable your Corps to best serve our nation's security interests, both today and in the uncertain future. But, in brief, our young warriors in combat are my number one priority. Those magnificent patriots have been extremely effective in disrupting insurgents and the Al-Qaida in the Al Anbar province.

In the spirit of jointness, I must note that it hasn't just been Marines. Rather, Marines, sailors and soldiers, a composite effort over time that has brought success to the Al Anbar. Quiet in their duty and determined in their approach, your Marines are telling us loud and clear that wherever there is a job to be done they'll shoulder that mission with enthusiasm. They're tough and they'll do what it takes to win.

We are still supporting the surge in Iraq, and have already shifted from population protection to transitioning security responsibilities to Iraqi security forces. They're actively stepping up to the task. Though it may not be our core competency, Marines have addressed the nation building aspect of our duties with enthusiasm and determination.

In answer to the most recent call from the Secretary of Defense, we were also deploying more than 3,400 Marines to Afghanistan. Your Marines will assist a joint force in either gaining or maintaining momentum there. We follow in our expeditionary ethos of living hard and fighting well as part of an air-ground team.

I just returned from a visit to Iraq and Afghanistan and, ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to report to you that your Marines are demonstrating an amazing resiliency in the face of multiple deployments to dangerous lands. In spite of a one-to-one deployment to dwell regimen, that is virtually no chance of getting better until the fall, the factors that we track monthly to determine health of the force, those include desertion and UA rates, suicide, divorce, child and spousal abuse, retention and reenlistment rates, are all as good or better than they were in 2001.

We do have a significant issue with our families. Simply put, they're proud of their contributions to this war, but they're tired. We owe it to those families to put our family service programs onto a wartime footing. For too long our programs have been borne on the backs of volunteers. Acceptable perhaps during peace time, but untenable during a protracted conflict.

But, Congress has been exceptionally supportive in enabling us to make good on our promises to do more. Of course we look beyond a day in our obligation to the nation, and we have learned lessons in trying to build the force as we fight.

In response to a clear need, we are growing the Corps to 202,000 Marines. We do this without lowering our standards, and we're ahead of our goals. During the last fiscal year we needed to bring aboard, or retain, 5,000 additional Marines. We actually grew 7,000 additional troops; over 96 percent of them high school graduates.

But, more than just manpower, this growth requires training, infrastructure, and equipment to meet the needs of the country. You've helped us meet those requirements with steady support and encouragement and, for that, we certainly thank you.

The Marine Corps retains the mission to provide a multi-capable force for our nation, a two-fisted fighter, if you will. Able to destroy enemy formations with our air-ground teams and major contingencies, but, equally able to fall back on our hard-earned irregular warfare skills, honed over decades of conflict.

By far, the most complex of our congressionally mandated missions, amphibious operations, require deliberate training and long-term resourcing to achieve high levels of proficiency. The operational expertise, special equipment sets and amphibious lift are not capabilities that we can rapidly create in the face of a threat.

Finally, on behalf of your Marines, I extend the great appreciation for your support thus far. And, I thank you in advance for your efforts on behalf of your brave Service men and women in harm's way. I assure you that the Marine Corps appreciates the increasing competitions for the nation's discretionary resources, and will continue to provide a tangible return for every dollar spent.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

INOUYE:

Thank you very much, Commandant. I'd like to begin my questioning with you, sir. At the present time, there are 350 Marines and Marine Reservists in Afghanistan, and you recently announced that you'll be adding 3,200 Marines to Afghanistan. In addition to this, there are 25,300 Marines and Marine Reservists deployed in Iraq. And added to that you have your commitments in the Horn of Africa, Kuwait, and other locations.

And this from a small number of 189,000. How will this additional 3,200 deployed in Afghanistan impact your organization?

CONWAY:

Sir, the impact is significant. And I would add, just in recent days that number of 3,200 has actually grown to some 3,400, because of requirements that we see with regard to the battalion, the Marine battalion, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, that will be dropped down into some very "bad guy" country. And to that regard we saw the need for a couple more people, a couple hundred more people with special capabilities.

But, to get at the essence of your question, it will keep us at what we call surge capacity, that is one-to-one deployment to dwell, or, worse in some cases, through October of this year.

It's not something that we like to do. We have told the Secretary in his judgment that we need that force to respond to the request for forces that came from both Afghanistan and Centcom. That, in a very real sense we're taking one for the team, because we were not able to raise the force elsewhere.

But, the fact is, we believe that there's an important time window there. I think my Marines feel like it is a very worthwhile mission. They said as much when I spoke to them in Afghanistan. And, through October, I think we'll be able to bear up under that increased stress that the Service will experience.

INOUYE:

How much more do you think you'll be adding to your force?

CONWAY:

In terms of -- in what capacity, sir, if I could ask for a clarification?

INOUYE:

In number of Marines? You have plans to add an additional 27,000.

CONWAY:

Yes, sir.

INOUYE:

Through 2013 (inaudible).

CONWAY:

Yes, sir. Sir, we, we will grow to 202,000 Marines. But, as I referenced in my opening statement, we are ahead of our program. We thought we would originally grow to about 189,000 this year. That's roughly 5,000 for each of the first couple of years. We're ahead of that schedule and we think we can stay ahead of it this year.

So, our target is actually something closer to 192,000 Marines and, of course, what that means on the deck is the creation of new units to put against, especially, some of our low density high stressed organizations to be able to do something about this deployment to dwell.

INOUYE:

I thank you very much. I'd like to ask the CNO, the DGG1000 program that you spoke of has been in development in one form or another since the 90s, to address the land attack requirements.

The number of ships the Navy plans to buy has declined to seven, the cost estimates of the first of these new destroyers have increased to at least \$3 billion apiece.

Could you explain where the DDG1000 fits into the future of the surface Navy, and do you believe that this is the right ship?

ROUGHEAD:

Senator, the DDG1000, as you said, has been some time in coming. But, what the DDG1000 brings to our Navy, and the two ships that we put on contract recently, is the introduction of new technologies that will be very important to how we go forward.

In most instances, when we introduce a new class of ship there are only a couple of new advances on those ships. In the case of the DDG1000, there are about ten. The one that is most important, I believe for the future of our Navy, is the effort that has been put into the design that

brings the crew size of these very complex ships down to numbers that we have never seen before. So, I believe that that is absolutely a critical step forward for us in the DDG1000.

With regard to the reduced number of ships that we have in this year's proposed budget, that's really being driven by the -- not having four Littoral Combat Ships in there because of some of the issues that we've been facing with that program.

But, I do believe that both of these ships portend the Navy of the future. In the case of the Littoral Combat Ship, it's not as if we're replacing a capability we already have. We have gaps in our ability to operate in the littoral areas and that is something that we must have for the future, in my professional opinion.

The DDG1000 will bring the longest reach shore fire support gun we've ever had. But, most importantly, the DDG1000 brings the technologies that will shape our Navy for the future.

INOUYE:

Mr. Secretary, I presume you agree with that?

WINTER:

Most definitely, sir. I think that the addition of the DDG1000 has been well thought out. As you pointed out, it's been under development for a number of years. We've made significant investments in the technology. Developments have underpinned this new vessel. We've had more engineering development models on this particular vessel than we've ever had before.

We've also gone to a much greater degree of detailed design prior to the signing of the contract and start of construction than we ever have before. So, I'm comfortable that we're proceeding on a well thought out process here.

At the same time, as the CNO pointed out, DDG1000 by itself does not solve the future surface Navy issues. There were many other issues, not the least of which is the Littoral Combat Ship.

We have adjusted the pace of acquisition there from one that proved to be too aggressive and too fast, to one that I believe is more appropriate to the development of a new class of vessel. That development is now proceeding along a well-established route. We have good progress being made on both of the individual vessels, the hulls. And we're also having exceptionally good development on the mission modules that will support that particular activity.

We will, even with this slower acquisition of the LCS, still have a desired number, 55, as part of the target 313 ships that we will achieve in the 2019 time period. So, I'm very comfortable with the acquisition process and the budget that's been laid out for them.

INOUYE:

So, you're comfortable and you're pleased with the present progress of the LCS?

WINTER:

I look at it very carefully. I'm never pleased by any of these development activities, but I think that recognizing the amount of new development that is associated with this new vessel, that we're making good progress there. And I am pleased to see that progress continuing to be made.

I'm also particularly pleased, I will note, to see that we're able to bring along the mission modules, as well. We have taken delivery already on the first of those modules, the Mine Warfare Module, the first of the mine warfare modules, and we expect to take delivery of the first of the surface warfare and the first of the ASW modules later this year.

INOUYE:

I thank you very much.

Senator Stevens?

STEVENS:

And, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Winter, we've been told that the Navy has announced now it's award to rebuild Walter Reed at Bethesda. You will be in charge of that, right?

WINTER:

Yes, sir.

STEVENS:

Do you know what the total cost of that is?

WINTER:

The current estimate cost is a little over \$900 million, sir. I can get you the exact figure, if you'd like.

STEVENS:

There's a BRAC deadline on that, is there?

WINTER:

There is a BRAC deadline. There is also an acceleration of the activity that we have committed to. The cost growth is in part, a small part, due to the acceleration process. There's also additional costs associated with the significant expansions that we have made to the plans for the integration of these two great facilities to insure that they truly represent a world-class medical treatment facility for all of our Service members.

STEVENS:

Well, the committee will probably be disturbed with me, because I felt the same way about moving the installations from Germany to Italy. We moved two massive installations out of Germany and down to Italy. Now we're going to replace Walter Reed, which is still functioning, all during wartime. Do you think this is the right time to be doing that?

WINTER:

Well, sir, we've made a priority to insure that the continuity of care for all those that are treated at Bethesda is maintained during this process. That has been a majority priority that's been established for the architects and engineers that are going through the overall development process.

STEVENS:

Well, respectfully, Walter Reed's been considered an Army facility.

WINTER:

Yes, sir.

STEVENS:

But, the Navy's going to take it over?

WINTER:

Well, sir, it's going to be worked as a joint activity. We have the responsibility for the facility's implementation of the joint activity here.

STEVENS:

All right. Well, put me down as one that disagrees, but it doesn't do any good. I just think that it's the wrong time to be doing that, and that the Army ought to have its facility just as the Navy has had its, over the years.

General Conway, the V-22 Osprey squadron was deployed last year. As you know, I had the honor to be the first member of Congress to fly that. How did it do?

CONWAY:

Sir, they are about two months from coming home from that seven-month deployment. I've made it a point to visit with them, both times that have been in theater while they've been over. And, I will tell you, sir, you're asking the question because we have purposely suppressed information coming out of the theater, until such time as the deployment is over.

But, the fact is, they're performing very, very well. They've flown over 2,700 hours with the aircraft without incident. They're performing all manner and function of missions. The aircraft that the Osprey is replacing, the venerable old CH-46 and the CH-53 Delta, it cruises at 13,000 feet, well above the small arms and the rocketry that have taken down other of our aircraft.

It cuts the time in half, or to a third that it takes to transit in and around a theater. It's performing very, very well, sir, on a first time deployment of an aircraft in combat, to a very austere environment.

STEVENS:

Well, the Chairman and I caught a little literary hell over that, keeping that alive, as you recall. And so many people, after the incidents occurred in its initial operation wanted to retire it. I just put in a request that when they do get back that we can get a debrief from those guys as to how it really functioned. I thought, we thought was absolutely a necessary system for the Marines, and I'm glad to hear that.

CONWAY:

Appreciate your support, sir. And we have that as a take-away.

STEVENS:

Tell me, you're trying to accelerate growth and I hope that you understand what I'm saying, this is during a period of continued engagement. Now, how does that work out? It takes some period of time before you can deploy those people, doesn't it?

CONWAY:

Yes, sir, it does. And, what happens sir, is that as we grow the force, our initial targets were again those low density, high use MOS fields that are being most stressed in our Corps.

It takes time to get those Marines recruited, through their entry level training, into their MOS schools, mated with the right equipment and so forth. But, in the case of two of the three infantry battalions, Senator, that we have grown, those people are already scheduled to go to Iraq.

So, the process is underway. It is working very well. As I mentioned in my opening statement, we're seeing no diminution in terms of the quality of the Marines that are joining us, and it's working very much like we would have hoped, again, or even in excess of goals compared to where we thought we'd be today.

STEVENS:

You had the resources to do that while the war is going on?

CONWAY:

Sir, we have had augmentation through supplemental in terms of resources required. We hope that for this year, for '09, that it will go into our baseline budget, so we will have that available money then to continue to work as we continue to grow the force.

We are some behind, as you might imagine, with regard to the infrastructure. The infrastructure has not caught up to the increased growth, or even the advanced pace of our growth. And, in a queer sort of way, the fact that we have so many Marines deployed is helping us in that capacity, because we don't have to create so many temporary structures.

STEVENS:

You're talking about facilities here at home to house them when they come home, is that what...

CONWAY:

Precisely, sir. Facilities, ranges, equipment, those types of things.

STEVENS:

I've got to get you up to Alaska, and let you look around.

CONWAY:

I'd love to do that, sir.

STEVENS:

Secretary Winter, is that right? Is the money here to handle this growth for the Marines?

WINTER:

Yes, Senator. And, in particular, just to parley on with the commandant's comments about the facilities. We have put in additional resources into the budget, to accelerate the construction of the new barracks. We expect to be able to have all the barracks for the previous force by 2012, with the additional force being accommodated by 2014.

In the interim, we're doing two things to accommodate the additional personnel, one of which has to do with the use of temporary facilities, which are being constructed rapidly at the required locations. And, there's also some activity going on to retrofit and improve some of the older facilities, to insure they're able to accommodate the Marines.

STEVENS:

Is part of that at Guam?

WINTER:

Not yet, sir. But, in Guam we have a major activity going on associated with the planning of the move from Okinawa to Guam of the Marines, about 8,000 Marines there. Right now the activity is focused in two areas; one of which is the Military Master Plan for Guam, and the other is the Associated Environmental Impact Study that needs to be established prior to the start of construction on Guam.

STEVENS:

Thank you. And Roughead, you mentioned, I think your top unfunded priority for '09 is for the critical maritime patrol improvements. I don't quite understand. What is that funding, and how's it relate to the Maritime Domain Awareness Initiative?

ROUGHEAD:

Senator, the top unfunded requirement applies to our P3 maritime patrol airplanes, which have been used extensively in the Central Command area of operations because of their very, very good intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capability.

STEVENS:

Is it down in the drug area?

ROUGHEAD:

No, sir, they're being used in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

STEVENS:

Do we have a replacement P3 coming yet?

ROUGHEAD:

Yes, sir, we do. We have the new P8, which is moving along quite nicely. That program is doing well. And it will IOC in 2013. And -- but, going back to the P3s, we have detected cracking in the wings because they have been flown far in excess of what their flight life was projected to be.

And the additional funding that we will seek is for repairs to those wings. We've grounded 39 airplanes, 28 of which are deployed, which represents a...

STEVENS:

P3s, or...?

ROUGHEAD:

These are the P3s that we've had to ground. That represents about one-quarter of our maritime patrol force.

STEVENS:

When will the 9s be delivered?

ROUGHEAD:

I'm sorry, sir?

STEVENS:

When's the replacement...?

ROUGHEAD:

The replacement will IOC in 2013. Their initial operational capability will be in 2013.

STEVENS:

Are the 3s going to get you through to that time?

ROUGHEAD:

Yes, sir, we have a plan for the re-winging of the affected airplanes. And we will diminish our inventory as we work our way through that. It is a rather lengthy process to make the repairs on the P3s. But, that's why I've placed it so high on the priority list.

STEVENS:

Thank you very much. I'm managing a bill on the floor. I'm going to have to leave. I tell you, to us from the World War II era, we are really honored to be able to work with you in this generation as we've got now. They are all volunteers. They're the new greatest generation. They'll go down in history, I think, in a way that will be very favorable to them.

They've taken on every task, and done well. And, despite the horrors of some of these engagements, their enlistments are increasing. So, I think we really owe a debt of gratitude, the whole country to this new generation. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

WINTER:

Thank you, sir.

CONWAY:

Thank you, sir.

INOUYE:

Senator Cochran?

COCHRAN:

Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, we noticed that the LPD-17 amphibious ship is at the top of the Marine Corps' unfunded program list, and it's also on the Navy's unfunded list. And this, I guess, in parlance is -- means these are important. These are some of the most important requests being made for funding.

I wonder if you would agree that if LPD-26 was to be funded in F.Y. 2009, would it provide the needed war fighting capability to the fleet at the earliest opportunity? And, would it take advantage of the learning curve effect found in continuous production?

WINTER:

Well, thank you for your interest, sir, in our shipbuilding activities, and, LPD, in particular. I think, as you noted, appropriately, the LPD requirement has become a significant issue, both for the Marine Corps and for the Navy. We accept the established requirement now for 11 operational LPDs and recognize that that has got to be part of what we eventually develop as our integrated fleet plan.

At this point in time, we have nine LPDs in the fleet. We have six of the older Austin class, and three of the new San Antonio class that have all been commissioned. We also have six additional LPD-17, the San Antonio class that have been ordered. Four of those six are under

construction. The two that have been more recently ordered, the ones in the last year and a half, have not yet started construction, which is to say the keels have not been laid.

We have several mechanisms of insuring that we're able to get to and maintain 11 LPDs over the period of interest associated with the 30-year shipbuilding plan. We're currently going through evaluation of that as part of our POM 2010 evaluation. And I think we'll be able to lay out an appropriate course of action here as part of the 2010 build that will establish an appropriate mechanism of insuring that we get to the desired fleet.

COCHRAN:

Thank you.

Admiral Roughead, I know that you are aware that cost increases and delays in scheduling in several programs have had an impact, adverse impact on Navy shipbuilding plans, and adjustments are necessary. But, it's a concern that's been brought to my attention that \$1.6 billion has been moved away from new ship construction for fiscal year 2009, and that could have been used to fund the 10th LPD- 17 requirement. What is your reaction to that observation?

ROUGHEAD:

Well, Senator, when we put together the plan for current shipbuilding, plan for the future, balancing all of the other requirements that the Navy is doing and other future needs that we have, the decision was to submit the plan as it is currently constructed with the seven ships in there, and to hold off on the tenth LPD.

I believe that is the best way forward to apportion the resources that we have and still fulfill the needs of building the fleet for tomorrow.

COCHRAN:

OK. Thank you. General Conway, the Navy's budget request includes the first procurement of the joint high-speed vessel. I understand these vessels are highly flexible and adaptable to a variety of missions, they're faster and can operate in shallower and more austere ports than larger vessels.

Would you advise us how you plan to use these vessels, and how important is funding this program to the global war on terrorism?

CONWAY:

Sir, we see a significant use for these joint high-speed vessels. Senator Stevens referenced Guam a moment ago. When we move to Guam, assuming that negotiations work out and that that happens in the vicinity of 2014, or so. Guam will not offer the training opportunities that we currently have on Okinawa. So, a part of the planning that the Secretary of the Navy spoke to is looking elsewhere in the Pacific Basin.

Immediately in the vicinity of Guam, the Marshall and the Palau Islands to determine what training opportunities exist there. And we're also in discussion with the Australians. Of course, we have some training opportunity in Korea. We have training opportunity on mainland Japan.

We'd like to expand the opportunities with the Philippines. All of that requires inter-Pacific transit kind of capability. And we think that the JSV, in addition, perhaps, to some amphibs could very well satisfy those types of requirements.

That's just one potential use. The qualities of the vessel that you mentioned open up another whole panorama of opportunities to getting to locations we might not otherwise be able to go with small numbers of Marines aboard those high-speed vessels.

We have some concern about their ability to operate in rough seas. And we hope that engineering and so forth will overcome some of those shortfalls and make them fully capable over a wide spectrum of sea state.

COCHRAN:

Thank you, very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

INOUYE:

Thank you.

Senator Mikulski?

MIKULSKI:

Mr. Chairman, General Conway, Admiral, Secretary. First of all, we feel very close to the Navy. You know, we have the Naval Academy in our state, we have Naval Bethesda, which has been talked about, Pax River and, of course, the Marines, or, the Marines that are a favorite everywhere.

In terms of my questions, it's going to go to really, the family readiness, the family support services. But, first one quick word about Naval Bethesda. I understand the concern of Senator Inouye. But, as I understand the intellectual underpinnings of merging Bethesda with Walter Reed, is, that our Marines are an expeditionary force.

The kinds of wounds of war that they endure parallel what our Army also endures from IEDs to traumatic brain injury, to just those permanent wounded warriors. And so there's a symmetry now on, rather than such -- between a surface fitting and a land army. And, I think that's the intellectual underpinning of that working together.

What I'm excited about, Mr. Chairman, and I'm sorry Senator Stevens had to go is that Naval Bethesda-Walter Reed is directly across the street from NIH. It's right across the street, too, from the Institute of Medicine. And then you have the military medical school on the same campus as this. So, we have the possibility for incredible new thinking, new ideas. The training of the next generation of clinicians, doctors, nurses, with the best ideas coming out of military medicine, as well as civilian medicine.

Am I right about what you anticipate is the symmetry of this -- you know, and Walter Reed is an icon. We in Maryland did not seek this. But, what it is, is, that we think it could be really of stunning quality to serve our Marines and our Naval forces.

ROUGHEAD:

Yes, Senator, I believe that the structure that we're building right now at Bethesda is intended to provide the centers of excellence that really are critical, that have been defined, recognizing the types of injuries that we see amongst all of our Service members that have been deployed overseas.

There are some unique issues, traumatic brain injuries, and post traumatic stress disorders; that really requires some new developments, and require the integration, if you will, of a diverse set of clinical and non-clinical specialists.

Having that all together at one location at the Bethesda gives us the ability to leverage the totality that's available within the growing medical community of Maryland. And I look forward to the ability that that conglomeration, that integrative capability will be able to provide for our medical service personnel.

MIKULSKI:

Well, we want to continue to work with you. What we're concerned about is the ability for state and local infrastructure. Namely, that with all those geniuses I just described, they could all be at the same traffic light at the same time on Wisconsin Ave. all calling me. And I don't want to say what they do want to call me when they're all at the traffic light at the same time. So, we look forward to in our physical infrastructure.

ROUGHEAD:

Senator, we're taking the issues there associated with the road and access very seriously. It's a major part of the environmental impact study that we are working through right now. And I fully expect that we will be able to provide appropriate mechanisms of mitigating all of those fears.

MIKULSKI:

And, I'd like to talk with you more about it.

ROUGHEAD:

Please do, ma'am.

MIKULSKI:

If I could change to both the Marine Corps and to the Navy one day, family support services, General Conway, I was so pleased to hear what you said about the family readiness programs and the reliance of the Marines on volunteers. You've all been very creative.

And, whether it's the young Marine, I've heard anecdotal information about how in California you run something called boot camp for dads. It's a weekend program for new fathers to learn what to do with a baby. And you even do kind of manly things like you hold the baby like a football, just don't toss him or run with him. But, really in ways that help these modern men who want to be involved with their families.

But, then when they look at pre-deployment and post-deployment we cannot do this on volunteers. We note that you've added about \$400,000 to a \$30 million program. Could you share with us, now, with the intensity of the deployments though certainly the Marine rest time is better than the Army, how you see what you need to do to keep that spirit of volunteerism that's been a characteristic of supporting the Marine and his family or her family within what you want to bring to this to really help them in pre-deployment and also to re-integration when they come back home with spouses, with children, ironing out might have been financial wrinkles that have developed? Things along those lines.

CONWAY:

Yes, ma'am, I'd be happy to...

MIKULSKI:

As well as the very crucial important medical services. But, as you know, the social fabric often of a family has been worn and tattered during deployment time.

CONWAY:

Yes, ma'am. I would highlight one thing, ma'am. We're very proud of our contribution to this war. And, it equates to essentially what the U.S. Army is doing, as well. In a 28-month period a soldier will be deployed for 15 months, home for 12. That's a 27-month period. In a 28-month period, a Marine will be gone for 14, home for 14. So, it balances out over time. Even though you are correct, our deployment cycle is very different. And the Marines prefer the 7-month deployments, quite frankly.

Now, in terms of what we've done with our family programs. We have had some global war on terrorism moneys, sort of a windfall for this year, and we hope now for next year. We're using those moneys to enhance our childcare, which is the number one demand coming from our families, in really all of our bases and stations.

We're including some respite care in that, as well, for some of our exceptional family member programs. But, what we're doing essentially is trying to professionalize where we have relied on volunteers in the past. That is in no way the meaning of what our volunteers have given us.

MIKULSKI:

What does that mean?

CONWAY:

Well, ma'am, every unit, battalion size, squadron size, or larger, has a family readiness officer. That family readiness officer has been a volunteer in seasons past. And that person normally was a spouse from the deploying battalion or squadron. Their duties were all encompassing. Create the organization, create the notification change, stay current with information, do the socials, take care of families who have...

MIKULSKI:

And they did it on their own time.

CONWAY:

Absolutely.

MIKULSKI:

And, in many instances, their own (inaudible) among the families where the families raised money, we'll call it the "bake sale" way.

CONWAY:

Yes, ma'am. It was very much a "bake sale" kind of operation. And we have simply now been able to, one, put more of our own budget against that, but, also again, through the benefit of some of the GWOT moneys, enhance those efforts to where, we still have volunteers and there's still an absolute requirement for some of what we do. But, not merely on the scale that we had previously relied on over the past four years.

MIKULSKI:

So, now, is this true then? With every Marine base you will have then someone in charge of these efforts, whose full time duty is that?

CONWAY:

Yes, ma'am.

MIKULSKI:

And will be a paid person. Because, volunteer, you still -- we know this even from the non-profits, civilian sector. Volunteers are great, but you need paid professional staff to know how to organize, first of all, to create, develop and organize what this is needed.

CONWAY:

I would asterisk your comment, ma'am, with just a couple of things. It still is the commander's program. He has at his discretion the opportunity to hire someone or, if he chooses, if you have say a staff NCO or officer that's been deployed three or four times in that unit, and he wants to leave that person back, he can name that person as his family readiness officer. So, the commander's option, but certainly he did not have those options before.

MIKULSKI:

Well, I know my time is moving along. I'd like to have a real -- a more complete description of what this readiness program is, and moving along with this. Because, you have families, you have families then with special needs, which we're so glad you even named. Because, quite frankly, the Army doesn't and the National Guard, quite frankly, the Director of Personnel for the Army didn't think enough to put it in the Guard.

So, we want to help you, because behind every Marine is a family, and it's...

CONWAY:

You bet.

MIKULSKI:

(inaudible) morale. But, we know, for example, in one base that he organized a group called Grannies for the Marines. These were people who were grandparents in an area that would volunteer five hours say a month to help a Marine Corps spouse be able to take care of some things. You can't organize volunteers with a volunteer. It just takes too much to do it.

But, beyond that, you have to have predeployment counseling. When they come back home it takes an organized effort for re- integration into the family, spouse, children and then if there's intense medical needs that could go on for a long time, we really have to have a program.

CONWAY:

That's right. And, ma'am, to the credit of the Navy Medical Services, a Marine who deploys will typically, before he goes and after he gets back will have four such counseling periods. And, the Navy has also established a forward footprint with teams actually in the theater who are able to respond if a Marine has a traumatic incident and needs counseling on site.

MIKULSKI:

Well, could we hear then from the Navy? And that'll be the summary of my questions.

ROUGHEAD:

Yes, ma'am. As you know, we've been deploying for centuries. But, even with that, we've made enhancements to what we are providing for our families in our Fleet And Family Readiness, or support centers. We, too, like the Marines have also expanded our childcare, which is a very important dimension of our family's interests.

But, we have also deployed our Navy differently in this war. We've deployed our sailors as individual augmentees. In fact, many don't realize that the United States Navy has more people on the ground in the Central Command area than we have at sea.

And, so what we've done is we've created an organization and a separate element within that organization, that deals with the welfare of those individual deployers and the ability to support the families of those who have been individually deployed.

And, I can tell you, in the time that I've been in the Navy, there has been no more focus provided by senior leadership than that which we are providing for our individually deployed sailors and their families.

MIKULSKI:

Well, I know this is also a keen interest of all members of the committee. But, I know Senator Murray and I are trying to see from pre-deployment to battle assignment to coming back home, to also, then as they come back for medical care, or move back into the VA, that we really are developing this system that the family needs as well as the war fighter.

Our position is that even though the war fighter might not be literally wounded with shrapnel or IED, they're permanently impacted and we need to stick with them all the way through. So, starting with pre-deployment, all the way through, is what we're interested in, so we can help you. And, behind every great soldier, seaman, Marine is a family that supports him, but a nation that supports the family.

So, thank you, and we look forward to more conversation with you.

ROUGHEAD:

Thank you, ma'am.

INOUYE:

Thank you.

Senator Shelby?

SHELBY:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Winter, this may -- I stepped out a few minutes and this may have been asked and you may not have -- the Littoral Combat Ship that you alluded to earlier is vitally important to the future of our Navy. And, I think you've said that many times.

And, I believe it represents an important capability for the Navy, and will give our forces a new transformational system with the maneuverability to operate anywhere, especially in shallow waters, is that correct?

WINTER:

Yes, sir.

SHELBY:

Well, I know there've been issues that we've talked about with the LCS acquisition program. Can you discuss the way forward on the Littoral Combat Ship program?

WINTER:

Thank you very much, Senator, for your interest in this area. I think that we have restructured the LCS program into an acquisition process now, which is appropriate for the development of a new class of vessel, and still gets us to the desired fleet size of 55 LCS ships as part of the 313 that we're targeting for in 2019.

What we've done right now is, I believe you're aware, is to focus on the first two individual vessels, one of each type, so as to insure that we can get through the initial construction phase there, understand any issues in construction, take them out to sea, be able to go through the initial sea trials, and be able to take benefit from all of that as part of the next procurement.

We have approval and funding for one additional vessel in '08, and we are requesting funding for two additional vessels in '09. Our desire there is to go out on the acquisition of three additional vessels, with the idea that we would have a competition, one contractor getting two, one contractor getting one; providing some motivation for the contractors, but maintaining the competitive base through that period of time.

That would lay the groundwork for the future full scale acquisition process, which would be informed by the full benefits of the sea trials, as well as the development activities that have taken place.

SHELBY:

Would you just take a minute and tell us again, for the record, how important the Littoral Combat Ship program is to the Navy, and the future capability and how we deal with the threats in the shallow water?

WINTER:

I will touch lightly on three specific items there, and then ask the CNO to add specifically from an operational point of view. What we've stressed on the design and development of the LCS is really three things. Number one, having speed, speed consistent with the evolving threat that we're seeing out in the Middle East and elsewhere around the world.

Second of all, shallow draft. The ability to operate safely and effectively in the Littoral regions, which is becoming more and more of a focus of our Navy.

And, lastly, having the capability to use what we call mission modules. The ability to switch the mission capability to adapt to the challenges that we see at any given point in time. This provides us with a huge increase in flexibility of responding to a threat, whether that's a surface threat, submarine threat or a mine threat.

And, also gives us the ability to continue to evolve this class of vessels to deal with future, perhaps unidentified threats that we may need to deal with in many years to come. And, with that I'd like the CNO to comment on the operational effects?

ROUGHEAD:

Sure. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

SHELBY:

How important is it, Admiral?

ROUGHEAD:

It is extraordinarily important. And, my perspective is based on being fortunate to come into this job as one of two officers who's commanded the Pacific Fleet and the Atlantic Fleet. And, from my experiences and the types of operations that we are involved in now, and the fact that we do not have a capability that allows us to work in close to shore, work in the large archipelagos that are in the world today, the LCS gives us that flexibility.

The speed, the shallow draft, which expands the amount of ocean that we can operate in, and the flexibility to change mission capabilities in that ship rapidly. There is nothing on the books now, or on the boards now that fulfills that need. And that is why that ship is so important to us.

SHELBY:

Thank you. This question may have been asked, Admiral.

I understand the Navy's fiscal year 2009 budget, that LDP-17 production will conclude after nine shifts. It's my understanding that the Marine Corps top funded priority for this year is acquiring another LPD. Do you feel that the future amphibious fleet should include 11 LPD's? What are your thoughts here?

ROUGHEAD:

Yes, sir, I do agree with that. General Conway and I have had several discussions about the future of where we are going. I believe that the world that we will live in, in the future of the Navy and Marine Corps will be a force of choice, because of our ability to move quickly, to be able to move into areas where access may be denied.

And, our amphibious fleet, the assault echelon, as well as the maritime prepositioned force of the future, will give the Navy and Marine Corps that flexibility. I support his requirement of 11 LPDs and that's why it also appears on my unfunded program list.

SHELBY:

General, do you want to comment? Do you just agree with -- do you agree or disagree?

CONWAY:

Sir, I agree wholeheartedly. We've had some very productive discussions. And both the Navy and Marine Corps agreed upon the requirement of the ships. We have accepted some risk already with the idea of 30 amphibious ships to satisfy a two-brigade requirement.

The Navy has been forthcoming in trying to sort of stretch the rubber band to satisfy our needs. They have agreed to potentially extend some of the older amphibious ships. But, even with their best effort, that leaves us another nine percent or so short of being able to project those brigades. So, a 30 percent shortfall or so, roughly, is still not something that we're comfortable with. So, we have asked for new ships, larger ships really, that allow us to put more aboard.

SHELBY:

Thank you. Chairman, thank you.

INOUYE:

Thank you.

Senator Murray?

MURRAY:

Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of you for your service and for being here today.

Secretary Winter, I want to follow up on a little about what Senator Mikulski talked about. I think we're still playing catch up for the poor planning that we went into after very long operations now, seven years in Afghanistan and almost five years in Iraq.

And, a large concern I have is the slow change of tide regarding the perception and attitude about psychological help. And wanted to ask -- I know you talked a lot about the programs themselves. But, what about -- what are we doing to really change the attitude, all the way down at the bottom levels, about sailors and Marines feeling comfortable talking about needing help with psychological issues?

WINTER:

I think mainly the stigma issue, if you will, is I think a very critical issue. We recognize it. I think it's been recognized at all levels within both the Navy and the Marine Corps, and has been attacked from the very senior levels all the way on down.

The issue there, I think is to first of all make clear what the leadership's position on this, to make sure people understand review; to provide mechanisms of facilitated access so that people can access medical care.

This has gone to the point of including forward deployed mental health professionals as part of our OSCAR program, the Operational Stress Combat -- I'm trying to remember the details of the acronym there, program in which we are actually deploying mental health professionals with the forces to be able to provide close proximity and access.

We're also providing training for many people who have peripheral access to such issues, our chaplains and religious professionals who have the ability to guide individual Service members to seek medical care when it is needed and appropriate.

We're also trying to get Marines and sailors to help each other. And this has been a longstanding tradition. And I think some of the ways in which we are able to get that message

out, and have individual Marines recognize and be able to go Marine to Marine, I think has a huge benefit.

Lastly, we're trying to work with the families. And one of the issues that keeps on coming up is how do you deal with this issue post deployment and post discharge. We try to do the normal checkups and all the reviews and things of that nature, and we're looking to be able to re-evaluate...

MURRAY:

It's oftentimes the spouse that recognizes PTSD or other...

WINTER:

Yes. Exactly.

MURRAY:

And I know you talked about some of the programs you have for spouses. They're great. But, you need professionals who are helping the families understand what to look for too. How are you dealing with that?

WINTER:

And what we're trying to do there, ma'am is first of all help the spouses and the families recognize the issues, and then insuring that they understand how to get help. And, that includes a series of outreach activities, as well as resources that they can draw upon by phone, by Internet and by visiting personnel, whether they're at fleet concentration areas, major bases and operations, or out on the economy. And, so, we're trying to facilitate that access so that they know where they can turn, and understand the resources that are available to them.

MURRAY:

General?

CONWAY:

If I could augment a very complete answer, just a little bit. I agree with you, that we need professionals and we need programs. But, we could also help ourselves. And we're endeavoring

to do that. First of all, you get at why a Marine feels like there may be some stigma associated with it.

And, quite frankly, the Sergeant Major and I, when we go and visit and in publications are saying, "You don't get PTSD, unless you're a warrior. You have had experiences that in some cases no one else has had, so you don't start out being weak or a wimp in this business of PTSD to begin with.

Secondly, some of our more senior people are experiencing it. We have a couple of sergeants major, or a master gunnery sergeants out there who are experiencing these kinds of things, and it's just as true for them that we want to help you with this injury, because we consider it an injury, just as certainly an external wound, want to help you with this and want to get you through it, because you can recover.

We want to change the name from disorder to something else. Because it has, I think, a negative connotation with it. And the last thing is, you're right, spouses sometimes recognize it even before the Service member does, and sometimes the dialogue says, "Well, don't report or they'll toss you out."

Well, we're not doing that. We want to get people through it, and we want to keep them as productive members of our Corps and...

MURRAY:

And you're giving that message to them all the way down?

CONWAY:

Absolutely. Absolutely.

MURRAY:

Admiral, what about the IAs in particular?

ROUGHEAD:

We have a screening process for our IAs, and not just our active force. I think the greatest challenge we have are for IAs who are reservists who come back and then go back into their communities. So, at the operational support centers we're paying particular attention to that.

We also in the Navy have taken about 1,300 positions that involve medical providers, chaplains, and other individuals and have spent some additional time and resources on them to make sure that they, too, are familiar with the types of things that they must be aware of.

And, similarly, with the Marine Corps, the effort to destigmatize the PTSD issue. And, I do believe we're making some good progress in that.

MURRAY:

Do we have enough resources to hire the mental health professionals that you need?

WINTER:

I think, ma'am, we have the resources. The issue is in actually being able to hire.

MURRAY:

To fill them?

WINTER:

The availability of mental health professionals, particularly psychologists and psychiatrists has been a challenge. We've done a little bit better with the mental health nurses. We've done very well with social workers that we've been able to use in certain limited mental health capacities. But, for psychologists and psychiatrists this is a national challenge.

MURRAY:

OK.

CONWAY:

Mr. Secretary, if I may.

MURRAY:

Yes (inaudible)...

ROUGHEAD:

Senator. That's why the provisions that you have provided us in the form of the incentives and the bonuses are so very important, particularly in the mental area, so we thank you for that.

MURRAY:

OK. Well, I can assure you that a number of us on this committee really want to continue to work with you to get that message all the way down to the man or woman at the bottom, but also to provide the services we need. And, certainly, I think we do have to worry about the capability of hiring enough professionals out there and want to continue to work with you on that.

CONWAY:

Greatly appreciate the support ma'am.

MURRAY:

Thank you. To change the topic a little bit, I wanted to ask you about the military's ability to jam and use electronic warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's certainly critical, as we all know. But, historically, as we've seen threats decrease, our electronic warfare capability has decreased. And we have not invested in platforms and technologies and communities. Can you give me a current assessment of where we are on that?

WINTER:

Right now, ma'am, our principle activity is the development of the Growler, which is the replacement for the EA-6B Prowler aircraft. The EA-6B is being used extensively in the theater right now. It is also the only mechanism we have of prosecuting electronic attack at this point in time. It is being used extensively, and we're starting to get concerned about the life limiting features associated with it. Our analyses suggest that an 84 aircraft Growler fleet is what we need to build to.

We have requested funds for 22 Growlers in this budget as part of that. That's in addition to five Growlers that are pending from the supplemental request in '08.

We believe that that is a proper cost towards providing satisfaction of the 84 aircraft requirement. I will note that that sizing of 84 aircraft presumes that the Air Force would also participate in the development of additional electronic attack capabilities. We will...

MURRAY:

Are concerned that other agencies aren't investing?

WINTER:

We will be looking at that, ma'am, as part of the 2010 Palm evaluation, and determining whether or not we're still comfortable with that assumption. And if that assumption is need of re-visitation we will take a look at the implications of that.

MURRAY:

Thank you. I also want to ask you, as you know, Naval Station, Everett is one of the three west coast locations under consideration as a home port for the DDG1000 that we talked about earlier. My understanding is that three of these ships will be stationed at a selected location. And, with all respect to my Chairman, I think Naval Station, Everett obviously is an ideal location. But, barring that, can you give us a quick assessment of where we are in the process and criteria that will be used to develop that, Admiral?

ROUGHEAD:

Senator, what we are doing is looking at what the laydown of our force should be. When I came into this position a few months ago, I wanted to have a very thoughtful approach to where forces should be. My staff is working on that, and I look forward to having that presented to me and then making the appropriate recommendations.

MURRAY:

OK. We look forward to hearing that very much.

And, finally, Mr. Chairman, if I could, I just wanted to mention that the Navy is preparing a major overhaul of an existing maintenance pier at Naval Base, Kitsap in Bremerton. I'm sure you're aware of it. It's a \$150 million project, and it's very important to all of us. There's no doubt that we all know how critical it is.

But, I just was made aware of recently that there's several concerns that have been raised at the local level about the Navy's consultation with some of the impacted parties. And I was hoping that you could just work with us later and make sure we're working with those local constituencies.

ROUGHEAD:

Yes, ma'am we are. And...

MURRAY:

Are you aware of the...

ROUGHEAD:

I'm aware of that. And the meetings that we've been having, I'm committed to continuing to address the issues that have been put on the table. And, as you pointed out, it is very critical that it get resolved, because of the availabilities that will be coming into the shipyard, and that we'll need that facility there.

MURRAY:

OK, thank you very much. I appreciate that.

INOUYE:

Thank you very much. Admiral Roughead, the committee wishes to congratulate you, and the men and women of your command for the very successful interception of the failing NRO satellite two weeks ago.

However, I note that there are many Aegis ships deployed with long-range surveillance tracking capabilities. But, very few are equipped with the missile itself. When are you going to have this transition from the missile defense agency so you can take over?

ROUGHEAD:

Thank you for the question, Senator. I believe that what we demonstrated three weeks ago, showed that our capability is one that is very valuable to the nation. Even though we had to modify significant portions of it to be able to go after a satellite, as opposed to ballistic missiles.

But, over the years, as we have demonstrated at Barking Sands, at the range in Hawaii, the success of our program, I believe, is a function of having some great capability that was purchased without the intent of what we're using it for now.

But, most importantly, it shows that our capability is in the operational Navy. It has grown up in the operational Navy. The tests that have been performed, the engagement of the satellite were done by sailors in their ships using systems that they use every day.

I believe that the investment that MDA makes in the Navy, which is roughly ten percent of their budget, is an investment well spent. I also believe that it is an appropriate time to consider the migration of what's referred to as the fielding wedge for the capability for that to migrate to the Navy, so we can move forward quickly and robustly in maritime ballistic missile defense.

INOUYE:

So you plan to equip these Aegis vessels with missiles?

ROUGHEAD:

Yes, sir. I believe that we will have to increase the inventory of missiles. As I look around the world today at the proliferation and the sophistication of ballistic missile development, in many places in the world. It will be important for us to assure access to protect our forces, and also to support our partners and allies.

INOUYE:

Mr. Secretary, I have a lot of questions I'd like to submit to you, and your colleagues for their responses. And, Senator Cochran, do you have any questions?

COCHRAN:

I have no further questions.

INOUYE:

If not, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Secretary, Admiral Roughead, General Conway, for your testimony this morning before the subcommittee. And we appreciate your continuing service to our country. This subcommittee will reconvene on Wednesday, March 12th at 10:30, when we will receive testimony on F.Y. 2009 budget request from the Department of the Air Force.

We will stand in recess.

WINTER:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

CQ Transcriptions, March 5, 2008

List of Panel Members and Witnesses

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ADMIRAL GARY ROUGHEAD (USN), CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

GENERAL JAMES T. CONWAY (USMC), COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS