

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL  
RELEASED BY THE SENATE  
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

**STATEMENT OF**

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**ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY**

**(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)**

**BEFORE THE**

**PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE**

**OF THE**

**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**MILITARY PERSONNEL**

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Chairman Webb, Senator Graham and distinguished members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to be here today to testify on behalf of our Navy and Marine Corps personnel. For the past five months as an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, I have had the honor of representing and advocating for the nearly 650,000 Sailors and Marines, both active duty and reserve, and 180,000 civilian employees who, together, are globally engaged across a spectrum of operations ranging from major combat to humanitarian assistance. Across the Department of the Navy, we are asking our Sailors, Marines, and civilians to take on extraordinary tasks ranging from combat operations in Afghanistan to unplanned disaster relief in Haiti. The men and women who comprise the Navy and Marine Corps have invariably risen to meet the challenges presented.

Our leadership team, Secretary Mabus, Under Secretary Work, Admiral Roughead and General Conway, have set a course for the Department of the Navy that drives our Human Capital Strategy - focusing on our greatest asset - our people. In order to achieve our best, we promote an environment in which every person can excel, where each person is treated with dignity and respect, and where all are recognized for the contributions they make.

Let me address some particular areas of interest and concern related to the Department's manpower and personnel.

In terms of military personnel, both the Navy and Marine Corps are experiencing historic success in recruiting and retention of active duty service members. I assess that both services will continue meeting their recruiting and end-strength goals for the foreseeable future. It is a tribute to both the dedication of our military personnel

communities and to the patriotism of our nation's young men and women that we are able to maintain an all-volunteer force, of unprecedented quality, through more than eight years of active combat operations.

Recruiting and retention in certain fields --including health care, Special Forces, and nuclear power-- continue to pose challenges, and we still require the use of special pays and bonuses to ensure adequate numbers of qualified personnel are available in critical specialties such as these.

The Navy expects to continue to need an additional 4,400 end-strength for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). In considering that requirement, it is important to remember that the number of active duty sailors has been in gradual decline since the Vietnam War. As recently as 1993 the Navy had half-again as many sailors on active duty, and available for assignments, as it does today.

Despite its high operational tempo, the Marine Corps was able to grow to 202,000 active duty end-strength two years ahead of schedule. This focus on active duty recruiting and retention resulted in a slight shortfall of the Marine reserve component end-strength for 2009. For this same reason, 2010 reserve strength may also be slightly below target. The health of the reserve components is of particular concern because of our dependence on them to meet our global obligations. Since 9/11, more than 142,000 mobilization requirements have been met by members of the Navy and Marine Corps Reserve.

Another topic of particular interest is the introduction of female personnel on submarines. On February 19, 2010, the Secretary of Defense notified Congress of our intent to change the policy prohibiting the service of women in submarines. After the

requisite notification period has expired, it is the Navy's intent to have the first cadre of female officers commence training on nuclear prototypes and begin a pipeline that will ultimately lead them to qualification as Naval Submariners, removing one of the last gender barriers in the United States Navy, and helping to insulate us from the anticipated surge in hiring by the civilian nuclear power industry in the decades to come. Because of the critical mission and demanding environment of the submarine force, we envision a gradual, and measured approach to this integration. Our initial efforts will focus on officers only and will concentrate on our large boats (SSGNs and SSBNs), where the existing infrastructure will accommodate these changes without material alteration. As a measure of extra caution, the Navy will not reduce the number of male officers trained and qualified for submarine duty until we have experience with successfully placing female officers in those roles.

Some might argue that such initiatives should not be undertaken during a period of high operating tempo and stress on the force. But a high tempo, high stress environment appears to be the new normal for the Department of the Navy. One of the lessons to be learned from recent years is that our people step up and perform superbly in times of greatest need. Yet the reality of continuing operations in Afghanistan combined with our other deployment commitments undeniably places great stress on our forces.

Stress on the force has many causes and manifests in many forms. As you know, the Secretary of Defense asked former Secretary West and Retired Admiral Clark to lead an independent review of the tragic events at Fort Hood. Their review produced eighty-six recommendations for changes in, or reviews of, procedures and policies. Currently, the Department of the Navy is working with the other services and the Office of the

Secretary of Defense to evaluate those recommendations and implement those that seem appropriate. Well before the shootings at Fort Hood, the Department of the Navy had in place its Caregiver Occupational Stress Control Program, which is designed to enhance the resilience of caregivers, including mental health professionals, chaplains, corpsmen, and other counselors and advisers. Additionally, for reservists and individual augmentees returning from mobilization, the Department created the Returning Warrior Workshops (which are a part of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program) to help with the adjustment to life back home.

Stress on our personnel has likely played a role in the heartbreaking increase in suicide rates among the active duty in recent years. The Department of the Navy has employed every measure available to help identify those at risk, encourage them to seek help, and prevent these tragedies. We continue to assess and re-evaluate our programs daily, and will not stop, believing that even a single suicide by those wearing our nation's cloth is one too many.

As Secretary Gates has said, apart from the war itself, we have no higher priority than taking care of the wounded, ill, and injured. Through the Marine Corps's Wounded Warrior Regiment and the Navy's Safe Harbor Program, the sea services strive to provide the best possible support for our personnel struck down, to include reintegration into society, and a new emphasis on post-service employment.

Thanks to advances in military medicine, many of our most seriously wounded, who even a few years of ago would have died of injuries, are recovering and, in many cases, able to resume their military jobs. Others will require special accommodations and support for the rest of their lives. We are working in close partnership with the

Department of Veterans' Affairs to ensure the best and most dignified treatment possible for those Sailors and Marines.

Members of our civilian workforce continue their crucial contributions to our mission while coping with two significant transitions of their own.

Consistent with your direction in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, we are currently in the process of moving all of our civilian employees out of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). Those who are returning to the General Schedule will be converted no later than the end of the Fiscal Year. Those who will move to one of the various alternative pay systems will be transitioned during 2011.

While this is occurring, the DoD is also engaged in a significant in-sourcing initiative, expected to add to add more than 33,000 civilian positions over the next five years to perform currently contracted services – the Department of Navy expects to establish 10,000 new civilian positions as part of this effort. This initiative will rebalance our workforce; rebuild organic capabilities; reduce operational risk by ensuring that inherently governmental and functions that support the readiness/management needs of the Department are performed by government employees; and that services are delivered in the most cost effective manner. Nearly a third of these new positions are expected to be part of the crucial acquisition workforce. These insourcing initiatives are consistent with DoD's High Priority Performance Goals in the President's FY 2011 Budget's Analytic Perspectives volume.

Finally, I would like to thank the Committee members for their continuous commitment to the support of our expeditionary fighting men and women, especially to

those who have returned from the front line of battle with broken bodies but unbroken spirits - Our Wounded Warriors.

I look forward to your questions.