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Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

RECENT UNITED STATES NAVY INCIDENTS AT SEA

Tuesday, September 19, 2017

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HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
RECENT UNITED STATES NAVY INCIDENTS AT SEA

Tuesday, September 19, 2017

U.S. Senate
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:08 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Inhofe, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Strange, Reed Nelson, McCaskill, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, Heinrich, Warren, and Peters.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN McCAIN, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM ARIZONA

3 Chairman McCain: Well, good morning. This committee
4 meets this morning to receive testimony on recent U.S. Navy
5 collisions at sea, including USS Lake Champlain, USS
6 Fitzgerald, and the USS John S. McCain, as well as the
7 grounding of USS Antietam.

8 We welcome our witnesses: The Honorable Richard
9 Spencer, Secretary of the Navy; Admiral John Richardson,
10 Chief of Naval Operations; and Mr. John Pendleton, Director
11 of Defense Force Structure and Readiness Issues at the
12 Government Accountability Office.

13 I'd like to take a moment to recognize family members
14 who have lost loved ones in the Fitzgerald and McCain
15 collisions, who are here with us today as our honored
16 guests. From the Fitzgerald, Eric Rehm, the wife of Chief
17 Petty Officer Gary Rehm; Stephen Ritsuko and Shono Douglass,
18 parents and brother of Petty Officer Third Class Shingo
19 Douglass; Senior Chief Petty Officer Victor and Carmen
20 Sibayan and their son, Luke, parents and brother of Petty
21 Officer First Class Carlos Victor Sibayan; Wayne and Nikki
22 Rigsby, father and stepmother of Seaman Dakota Rigsby;
23 Darrold Martin, Chief -- father of Petty Officer First Class
24 Xavier Martin. And, from the McCain, Jennifer Simon, wife
25 of Petty Officer First Class Kevin Bushell, and his mother,

1 Karen Bushell, along with her wife, Anne Shane; Rachel
2 Eckels, mother of Petty Officer Second Class Timothy Eckels;
3 Theresa and Austin Palmer, mother and brother of Petty
4 Officer Second Class Logan Palmer.

5 Let me express my deepest condolences to you all on
6 behalf of this committee, the U.S. Senate, and the American
7 people. Your presence here today reminds us of our sacred
8 obligation to look after the young people who volunteer to
9 serve in the military.

10 Would those individuals who I just named stand so that
11 we can recognize their presence here?

12 Thank you. And God bless.

13 The USS John S. McCain was named after my father and
14 grandfather. I remember the ship-launching ceremony, nearly
15 25 years ago. And my wife, Cindy, continues to serve as the
16 ship's sponsor. So, believe me, these tragedies are
17 personal for me and my family, as well, and we share in your
18 sorrow.

19 My commitment to all of you is that we will get to the
20 bottom of these incidents. It's simply unacceptable for
21 U.S. Navy ships to run aground or collide with other ships.
22 And to have four such incidents in the span of 7 months is
23 truly alarming. This committee takes seriously its
24 oversight role. We will identify shortcomings, fix them, and
25 hold people accountable. We will learn lessons from these

1 recent tragedies to make the Navy better, and all who serve
2 in it safer.

3 I know our Navy leaders share these goals and will work
4 together with us to achieve them. To that end, I hope our
5 witnesses will help the committee better understand what
6 happened with regard to these incidents. We are interested
7 in the status of investigations, common factors or trends
8 identified, root causes, corrective actions, and
9 accountability measures. We'd also like to know the extent
10 and cost of damage to the ships, and operational impacts of
11 unanticipated repairs. Finally, we ask you to highlight the
12 areas in which we, in Congress, can assist to help ensure
13 the safety and proficiency of our sailors, including changes
14 to current law.

15 I'm deeply concerned by Mr. Pendleton's written
16 testimony, which indicates 37 percent -- that's over one-
17 third -- of the training certifications for U.S. Navy
18 cruisers and destroyers based in Japan were expired as of
19 June. As he notes, this represents more than a fivefold
20 increase in the percentage of expired warfare certifications
21 for these ships in the last 2 years. I would point out,
22 warfare certifications are a ship's ability to fully be
23 prepared to engage in combat. Press reporting paints an
24 even bleaker picture. The McCain had experienced expired
25 training certification in six of the ten key area -- key

1 warfare mission areas. The Fitzgerald had expired
2 certification in all ten mission areas.

3 Secretary Spencer and Admiral Richardson, I don't need
4 to tell you that this is troubling and it is unacceptable.
5 And we acknowledge and appreciate the accountability actions
6 the Navy has taken to date. The Navy has relieved two
7 commanding officers, a commander and captain. It has issued
8 reprimands -- 20 reprimands to other officers and enlisted
9 sailors. Since August 23, the squadron two-star strike
10 group and three-star fleet commander will all have been
11 relieved, for cause. I assure you that this committee will
12 do everything we can to support the Navy leadership's
13 efforts to course correct, but we must also call you to task
14 and demand answers. As leaders of our Navy, you must do
15 better.

16 Particularly, I'd like to know why the recommendations
17 of the GAO and other relevant reviews, such as the 2010
18 Fleet Review Panel, were not effectively implemented and
19 maintained. The lives of the 17 sailors lost in the
20 Fitzgerald and McCain collisions were priceless, and I mourn
21 their loss. These preventable incidents also come with a
22 very real pricetag, in terms of the cost of these to
23 taxpayers. I understand the current estimate for repairs is
24 approximately \$600 million. But, the cost will also be felt
25 in unexpected deployments for other ships to meet

1 operational requirements.

2 I'm also concerned by the apparent difficulty of
3 navigating safely in the western Pacific. With three of
4 these ships now nondeployable for months or years, due to
5 damage repairs, there are serious questions about our
6 maritime readiness to fight in response to North Korean,
7 Chinese, and Russian aggression. The ongoing reviews
8 directed by Secretary Spencer and Admiral Richardson must
9 quickly get to the bottom of this and identify root causes,
10 corrective actions, and further accountability actions.
11 Time is of the essence. I hope these reviews fully examine
12 how discrete changes over the years have compounded,
13 resulted in prioritizing to -- prioritizing the need to do
14 more with less. And that has come at the expense of
15 operational effectiveness. These changes include longer
16 deployments, so-called optimal manning of ships, less hand-
17 on and initial training, less time for maintenance, less
18 time to train, and an officer personnel system governed by
19 laws, like the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act and
20 the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which were put in place more than
21 three decades ago and which may have created a preference
22 for breadth of experience over depth of technical
23 experience. We need to look seriously and rigorously at all
24 of these types of systemic contributing factors. And I
25 would like your assurance, Secretary Spencer, that you will

1 do so, and that, as you consider additional accountability
2 actions, you will look at all levels of command, as
3 appropriate.

4 While we are focused on incidents at sea today, this
5 committee recognizes that the current readiness crisis
6 affects all of our military services. It is part of a
7 larger, deeper trend of forcing military units, at the
8 tactical level, to try to do too much with too little. In
9 the last 3 years, fatal training accidents have taken the
10 lives of four times more servicemembers than our enemies
11 have in combat. This cannot continue.

12 Unfortunately, this is an issue of command. There's
13 plenty of blame to go around for the deteriorated state of
14 our military. And we cannot ignore Congress's
15 responsibility. Years of budget cuts, continuing
16 resolutions, and sequestration have forced our military to
17 maintain a high operational tempo with limited resources.
18 We know that has come at the cost of training, maintenance,
19 readiness, effectiveness, and the lives of too many brave
20 young Americans. Our service chiefs, including the Chief of
21 Naval Operations, have testified repeatedly that the Budget
22 Control Act and sequestration are endangering the lives of
23 our men and women in uniform. My dear friends, we were
24 warned.

25 To fix this problem, we must all do better. Military

1 leaders must make honest assessments of their requirements
2 and request the full extent of what they need. In turn, we,
3 in Congress, must provide these resources in a timely and
4 predictable way. That is the only way to truly restore the
5 readiness of our force. It is the only solution to ensuring
6 that accidents like this do not happen again. And it is the
7 bare minimum we owe to the brave men and women who risk
8 their lives to defend our Nation.

9 Senator Reed.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
2 ISLAND

3 Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 I want to join Senator McCain in welcoming Secretary
5 Spencer and Admiral Richardson and Mr. Pendleton to the
6 committee this morning to testify on the issues surrounding
7 the recent accidents and the Department's plan for
8 determining what went wrong and what steps need to be taken
9 to ensure such accidents do not occur in the future.

10 Service in the Nation's Armed Forces can be very
11 dangerous. The country is saddened whenever we lose one of
12 America's sons or daughters, but it is particularly
13 disturbing when young people are casualties in the course of
14 conducting normal peacetime operations. I want to extend my
15 condolences to the families of those who were lost. I know
16 I join all my colleagues and Chairman McCain in expressing
17 our profound sympathy for your loss.

18 We should not prejudge the outcome of the internal Navy
19 reviews of the circumstances around these accidents.
20 However, we do know that the Department of the Navy has been
21 facing serious readiness problems caused by deferred
22 maintenance, reduced steaming and flying hours, and canceled
23 training and deployments. In addition, the Navy, like other
24 services, has also been operating at a very high tempo for a
25 long period. These conditions have been aggravated by many

1 years of budget constraints and uncertainty which have
2 forced leaders into making difficult decisions. All these
3 factors have inevitably taken a toll on Navy commanders and
4 Navy operations.

5 Secretary Spencer and Admiral Richardson, I ask your
6 commitment that you are giving this situation your full
7 attention, that you will follow these investigations
8 wherever they lead, and that you will share all findings
9 with Congress. We must do all that is necessary to provide
10 and sustain our Navy and all our Armed Forces.

11 Again, I thank the witnesses, and I look forward to the
12 testimony.

13 Chairman McCain: Secretary Spencer.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD V. SPENCER, SECRETARY OF THE
2 NAVY

3 Mr. Spencer: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed,
4 distinguished members of this committee, I want to thank you
5 for the opportunity to appear before you and talk about the
6 state of our Navy.

7 Before we move forward, though, I want to express our
8 deepest condolences to the families and loved ones and the
9 crews who have lost one of their own in the last few months.
10 Having looked into the eyes of many of these families, and
11 shared time with them, knowing that their returned ones
12 returned home in a flag-draped casket, I know my words are
13 completely insufficient. To the families present, please
14 know that Polly and I have you in our thoughts and prayers.

15 The 17 sailors from the USS Fitzgerald and John S.
16 McCain were sons, brothers, husbands, fiances, uncles, and
17 friends. They were patriots, and they will not be
18 forgotten. We pledge our full support to their families and
19 crews. We're going to back our words with actions. We have
20 a problem in the Navy, and we're going to fix it.

21 In addition to the investigations already initiated, we
22 are conducting two thorough reviews. The CNO's
23 comprehensive review will take a look at the tactical and
24 operational situation at hand. My strategic readiness
25 review will be an independent team comprised of military and

1 industry experts that will look and examine root causes,
2 accountability, long-term systemic issues, and then provide
3 remedial insight. These reviews will complement and enhance
4 each other, providing the depth and criticality to the --
5 that the situation demands.

6 After I've received and reviewed the recommendations
7 from our teams, I will act, to the limits of my authority,
8 to change processes and acquire any needed capabilities in
9 order to protect our people.

10 I'm here today to impress our sense of urgency and to
11 highlight a way forward to renew a culture of safety and
12 training across the fleet. We will take lessons learned
13 from the recent tragic events and come out the other side a
14 stronger, more capable Navy/Marine Corps team.

15 Make no mistake, we are not waiting 60 days or 90 days
16 to make adjustments. The CNO will address a list of actions
17 the Seventh Fleet is taking immediately to address the
18 situation at hand, ranging from ship-to-ship materiel
19 inspections to the activation of AIS radar identifications
20 while we're trafficking specific areas. We are not lying
21 idle, and I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen, we are
22 committed.

23 I appreciate the opportunity to work with you on the
24 remedial solutions and to find our way forward.

25 Thank you, and I'll forward to your questions.

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[The prepared statement of Mr. Spencer follows:]

1 Chairman McCain: Admiral Richardson.
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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JOHN M. RICHARDSON, USN, CHIEF OF
2 NAVAL OPERATIONS

3 Admiral Richardson: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member
4 Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, I also
5 want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you
6 today to discuss the recent U.S. Navy incidents at sea.

7 To begin with, I also want to express my deep
8 condolences to the families of the 17 sailors who served
9 their country with honor and distinction and lost their
10 lives in USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain. In both of
11 these tragic incidents, our sailors acted heroically to save
12 their ships as they combated flooding and the loss of
13 critical systems. Care and support to these families, the
14 families of our sailors, is our top priority. I've
15 committed to them that we will learn everything we can from
16 these tragic events to prevent another accident. As you
17 pointed out, sir, many of the family members are here today.
18 And we will always stand with you.

19 What we do is inherently dangerous, but it is
20 leadership responsibility to ensure we provide the right
21 training and oversight to keep our teams safe and effective.
22 We are taking immediate corrective actions to ensure we meet
23 the training and materiel readiness standard to prevent
24 another mishap.

25 We are not stopping with immediate actions. In

1 addition to the investigations into the specific incidents
2 on Fitzgerald and McCain, we're conducting, as the Secretary
3 pointed out, a comprehensive review, which will turn over
4 every stone to examine for more systemic problems. And this
5 review will complement the Secretary's strategic review.

6 I've testified several times about the triple whammy,
7 the corrosive confluence of high operational tempo,
8 inadequate budgets, and budget uncertainty. The funding
9 approved in fiscal year '17 is being used to plug our most
10 urgent readiness holes in the fleet, and our '18 request
11 sustains that progress. While we have prioritized
12 maintenance and readiness dollars, full recovery will not
13 happen overnight; it will take years with stable and
14 adequate resources.

15 But, make no mistake, sir, while these factors do exert
16 a negative force on the challenges we face, at the core this
17 issue is about leadership, especially command. Our first
18 dollar, our first molecule of effort, our first team must go
19 to safety. Safety is first. No matter what the situation,
20 those charged with command must achieve and maintain a
21 standard that ensures their teams are trained and ready to
22 safely and effectively conduct assigned operations. We must
23 remain vigilant to meeting this standard, fighting against
24 every pressure to erode it.

25 Our commanders must meet the absolute standard to

1 develop safe and effective teams. If we cannot meet the
2 standard, we do not deploy until we do. We must establish a
3 command climate that supports honest reporting.

4 Senator, these incidents demand our full attention. We
5 must provide our sailors the necessary resources and
6 training to execute their assigned missions. I am
7 accountable for the safe and effective operations of our
8 Navy, and we will fix this. I own this problem. I'm
9 confident that our Navy will identify the root causes, and
10 correct them, and that it will be better in the end.

11 Again, thank you for the opportunity to be here, and I
12 look forward to your questions.

13 [The prepared statement of Admiral Richardson follows:]

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1 Chairman McCain: Mr. Pendleton.
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1 STATEMENT OF JOHN H. PENDLETON, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE
2 FORCE STRUCTURE AND READINESS ISSUES, GOVERNMENT
3 ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

4 Mr. Pendleton: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed,
5 members of the committee, thank you for having me here today
6 to summarize GAO's work on Navy readiness.

7 Mr. Chairman, I don't know what caused the tragic
8 recent accidents, but I do know, from my work, that the
9 Navy's caught between an unrelenting operational demand and
10 a limited supply of ships. At this point, I'm skeptical
11 that the Navy will be able to make significant readiness
12 gains unless the demands on them are decreased. Even with
13 increased funding going forward, my assessment agrees with
14 the Navy, that it will take several years to rebuild
15 training, manning, and maintenance, foundations of readiness
16 that have become shaky over time.

17 Our work has also revealed significant management
18 issues that the Navy must confront. In a 2015 report, we
19 found that the ships based in Japan had such aggressive
20 deployment schedules that they did not have dedicated
21 training periods, like ships in the United States do. In
22 fact, we were told that the overseas ships -- overseas-based
23 ships were so busy that they had to train on the margins.
24 When I asked what that meant, it was explained to me that it
25 meant that they had to squeeze in training when they could.

1 The assumption, I think, was that the Seventh Fleet,
2 because it was perpetually in motion, it was ready. I think
3 the Navy has now realized that this conventional wisdom was,
4 in fact, likely faulty. We recommended at the time, back in
5 2015, that the Navy revise deployment schedules to create
6 dedicated training time, and also, more broadly, assess the
7 risk associated with increased reliance on overseas basing
8 of ships. DOD and the Navy agreed with us, at least on the
9 paper, but they've taken little action since to implement
10 our recommendations.

11 The Navy has other even more broad management
12 challenges that it must address, like ship manning. A Navy
13 internal study found that sailors were often working over
14 100 hours a week, back in 2014, and it concluded that this
15 was unsustainable and potentially contributing to a poor
16 safety culture. We recommended, in brief, that the Navy
17 assess how much work it actually takes to run a ship, and
18 use that to size the crew.

19 Maintenance is also taking longer and costing more.
20 Ship deployments have often been extended. This causes
21 ships to have more problems when they're brought in for
22 maintenance. Shipyards have struggled to keep pace, for a
23 number of reasons. Over the past few years, the lost
24 operational days that's been created by the maintenance
25 overruns have cost the Navy the equivalent of the presence

1 of almost three surface ships per year. That, in turn,
2 strains the remaining fleet, and it's an unsustainable,
3 vicious cycle.

4 As you know, the Navy's not alone in its readiness
5 challenges. That's why GAO recommended -- and this
6 committee has supported, thank you -- the need for the
7 development of departmentwide readiness rebuilding plan that
8 explicitly balances resources with demands, and is
9 transparent about how long it will take to rebuild
10 readiness, and what it will cost. I suggest you continue to
11 insist that the Department provide you that plan.

12 Over the past 3 years, GAO has made 14 recommendations
13 in all to the Department of Defense to help guide the Navy
14 and the services toward improved readiness. And as the Navy
15 and DOD develop a roadmap, going forward, I sincerely hope
16 they consider our recommendations to help guide them.

17 Mr. Chairman, thank you for having me here today, and
18 I'm happy to take any questions you have.

19 Chairman McCain: Thank you, Mr. Pendleton. I
20 appreciate it -- your testimony, but, more importantly, I
21 thank you for the important work that you do, which is
22 incredibly important to this committee.

23 Secretary Spencer and Admiral Richardson, surface force
24 readiness has degraded over the last 10 years. Surface
25 chain of command has become complicated on the waterfront.

1 There's a blurring of lines of authority and accountability.
2 The growing backlog of off-ship repair requirements, a
3 large, deep maintenance requirement that has not been
4 adequately identified or resourced. The effort to derive
5 efficiencies has overtaken our culture of effectiveness.
6 The materiel condition of the surface force is well below
7 acceptable levels to support reliable sustained operations
8 at sea and preserve ships to their full service life
9 expectancy. Ships home-ported overseas have limited
10 training and maintenance, which results in difficulty
11 keeping crews trained and ships maintained. Some ships
12 home-ported overseas have had consistently deferred
13 maintenance, resulting in long-term degraded materiel
14 condition. Without a sustainable operational schedule and
15 comprehensive risk assessment for ships home-ported
16 overseas, it will be difficult for the Navy to identify and
17 mitigate risks. I could go on.

18 Mr. Secretary, do you agree that these statements ring
19 true today?

20 Mr. Spencer: I do, Senator.

21 Chairman McCain: And I agree with you. Unfortunately,
22 these are findings from the Navy and GAO reports from 2010
23 to 2015. Many of the issues we're discussing today have
24 been known to Navy leaders for years. How do we explain
25 that, Admiral?

1 Admiral Richardson: Senator, there is no explanation
2 to reconcile those two observations. While clearly there is
3 much more to be done, and these observations, you know,
4 point to those -- and I commend the work of Mr. Pendleton
5 and the GAO, as well, to providing such sound
6 recommendations -- there has been, also, a -- an effort to
7 address those observations. We've not been sitting idle.
8 And so, while it's -- clearly, it's been insufficient to
9 close the readiness and effectiveness gap, we have been
10 making steady investments to respond to the indications that
11 we've got in training and manpower and in maintenance. And
12 we'll remain committed to closing that gap, as well, and
13 reconciling the difference between supply and demand.

14 Chairman McCain: Well, I can't continue this much
15 further without asking your assessment of the effect of
16 sequestration on your ability to address these conditions
17 that I've cited, which come from GAO and the Navy itself.
18 What effect does sequestration -- for example, we're now
19 facing the same collision coming up with -- as of 1 October
20 -- what effect does sequestration have in affecting these
21 recommendations and situations, as described by the GAO and
22 the Navy itself?

23 Mr. Secretary?

24 Mr. Spencer: Senator, the impact of sequestration and
25 continuing resolutions is deleterious. It's an impact on

1 the Navy that is stunning. Having been asked to come and
2 run a business -- i.e., the Navy -- as CEO of the Navy on
3 the man, equip, train, and supply side of the equation, it's
4 very disturbing. Just looking, today, to give you a feel,
5 Senator, with the CR that's coming up, starting October 1,
6 going through December 8th, the fleet will mitigate
7 approximately \$200 million of O&M shortfall over the next 69
8 days.

9 Chairman McCain: That's operation and maintenance.

10 Mr. Spencer: That is correct, I'm sorry.

11 Chairman McCain: Okay, go ahead.

12 Mr. Spencer: It's a tentative number. It's still in
13 work. But, that's where we think it's coming from. The
14 fleet will minimize the impact by incrementally funding or
15 shortening periods of contracts, where possible. This will
16 cause a degradation in the quality of work. The fleet will
17 also delay consumables and phased replacement materiel,
18 purchasing for ships, and this will impact, again, the
19 quality and service and the operation of the ships. We have
20 to do management of the funds resources we have. This is
21 not solely a funds issue, but you asked about CR and the
22 effects of sequestration. We are living them. They are
23 untenable.

24 Chairman McCain: Admiral?

25 Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could add to that. The

1 effects of sequestration and continuing resolutions makes
2 everything harder. Everything. And as we face the
3 continuing resolution before us now, in addition to what the
4 Secretary said, we will be considering deferring or slipping
5 11 more ship maintenance availabilities. There are dozens
6 of new projects that we won't be able to get started on.
7 These are things that had -- start to address some of these
8 conditions that we've got.

9 Over the past 9 years now, you know, looking over, as
10 we review the data, the number of efficiency studies,
11 effectiveness studies -- Can you do more with less? -- they
12 all result in a constant pressure to -- it never -- it
13 rarely results in an increase.

14 Having said that, sir, I maintain that this is an issue
15 of command, and that, if you only give us one ship, it's our
16 obligation to operate that ship safely and effectively. And
17 so, I do not -- while that makes it harder, that is not --
18 in no way an excuse for the performance that led to these
19 four incidents.

20 Chairman McCain: Mr. Pendleton, do you have anything?

21 Mr. Pendleton: Yeah. I mean, we heard about the
22 impact of budget everywhere when we do our work. It's hard
23 to pin it down exactly. There's examples in our reports, of
24 depot maintenance being deferred, and furloughs, and
25 postponed deployments, and ship fuel problems. I think it's

1 a cumulative disruption, at this point. And I think -- what
2 we judged, back last year, was, we are where we are. And
3 the Department, not just the Navy, needs a plan for going
4 forward, in part to be able to articulate what's real and
5 reasonable, going forward, sir.

6 Chairman McCain: Thank you.

7 I'm very proud of the vote of confidence in Senate
8 approval of the Defense Authorization Act, which was
9 overwhelming and a source of pride to me, that all 27
10 members of this committee agreed on the legislation that was
11 just approved overwhelmingly. I have to point out, there
12 was an effort, by an amendment by Senator Cotton, to try to
13 rectify this sequestration issue to some degree. And I will
14 not name individuals, but it was blocked from even being
15 considered for a vote. That, to me, is -- well, it's
16 disgraceful.

17 Senator Reed.

18 Senator Reed: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 Admiral Richardson, you continue to come back, and I
20 think approximately, to the issue of command, even though we
21 all understand the fiscal and procedural and resource
22 constraints that Navy has faced. But, the issue of command
23 is played out in -- not theoretically, but very practically.
24 That's when a commander says, "I can't do this, because my
25 ships is not ready." Have you, in your capacity, indicated

1 to COCOMs that you can't provide ships because not ready --
2 has commanders of individual ships said, "I can't" -- to the
3 fleet -- "I can't move, because my ships is not ready"?

4 Admiral Richardson: Senator, as I've testified before,
5 and you know very well, we don't meet more than 50 percent
6 of the combatant commanders' demands, as it is, at least
7 from a force-structure standpoint and -- a combination of
8 that and readiness. And there have been times, where I've
9 spoken with my subordinate commanders, where there is just
10 insufficient time to get a force trained and certified to
11 meet a deployment date when we have to go back to the
12 combatant commander and say, "You're going to have to wait."

13 Senator Reed: And, with respect to the issue of
14 command, when those tough calls are made by the commander,
15 is -- that does not result in any kind of either formal or
16 informal disparagement of the commander; that's --

17 Admiral Richardson: If I could go down and give that
18 commander a handshake and a medal, I would do that. This is
19 exactly the type of honesty and transparency that we need to
20 run a Navy that's safe and effective.

21 Senator Reed: And so, in the process, going forward,
22 not only will you be attempting, I think, to analyze the
23 issues, come up with resources, but also continue to stress
24 the idea of commanders having the ultimately responsibility
25 to determine the worthiness of their ship.

1 Admiral Richardson: That'll be the absolute center of
2 gravity of our effort, sir.

3 Senator Reed: The -- Mr. Pendleton and his colleagues
4 have done some excellent work, and they point out that the
5 certifications of a significant number of ships,
6 particularly in the Pacific, are not adequate. Can you tell
7 us what that certification means? Is that a good indication
8 of the capability of the ship, or is that not?

9 Admiral Richardson: This is an indication that we use,
10 sir. This is our indication. And so, it's either a good
11 indication or it's a meaningless indication. I'd like to
12 think that those certifications mean something. And it --
13 while Mr. Pendleton's report gets to some ratios -- and I'll
14 leave it to him to get to that math -- I agree with his
15 conclusion that, over the last 2 years, the number of
16 certifications on our ships, particularly in the forward-
17 deployed naval force in Japan, has dropped precipitously.
18 And that deserves our full attention. It should have been
19 brought to our attention more urgently before now.

20 Senator Reed: With respect to deployed forces, there
21 seems to be a distinction between deployed forces and
22 stateside forces, in terms of lots of things -- repairs,
23 refitting, resources, training. That is going to be a
24 focus, I presume, of you and the Secretary's inquiries about
25 what's the -- why the disparity?

1 Admiral Richardson: It certainly will be a focus of
2 the comprehensive review, to take a look at the way we
3 generate and certify readiness, compare it to the forces in
4 the United States, the rotational forces that leave --
5 deploy and come back, versus those forward-deployed forces
6 that remain at a higher state of readiness in theater.

7 Senator Reed: And, Admiral Richardson, over the last
8 several years, the Navy -- not the Navy alone, but all the
9 military services -- have attempted to quote/unquote
10 "streamline training," make it more effective because of
11 deployment schedules, because of the availability of
12 personnel. Do you think that, in any way, contributed to
13 the -- these accidents, that these young people were, you
14 know, hustled through, if you will, and not -- without the
15 same kind of opportunities that predecessors might have had
16 to learn their jobs?

17 Admiral Richardson: Sir, I'll tell you that it's too
18 early to say if these had a specific impact on those
19 incidents. Those investigations are still in progress.
20 But, we are looking specifically at that. You know, what is
21 the climate with respect to the priority of training and
22 certification, and does it always get given lower priority
23 to operations and the need to go out and execute the
24 mission? And then, as Mr. Pendleton and the Secretary have
25 hinted, that, when maintenance periods run long, that

1 further pressurizes our operational time. And so, training
2 gets -- you know, is there a pattern to consistently box out
3 training, particularly the training on the fundamentals?
4 That's absolutely a focus of the investigations.

5 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Chairman McCain: Senator Inhofe.

8 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 I chair the Readiness Subcommittee. And, on February
10 8th, we had a readiness hearing. Admiral Moran was at that
11 hearing. And -- now, keep in mind, that was February the
12 8th, and, of the four incidents we're talking about, all
13 except the one on January 31st were since that hearing that
14 we had, Secretary Spencer, at the readiness hearing. In
15 fact, I look at your situation, that you've now been on the
16 job for, what, 5 weeks, 6 weeks. I'll bet you wonder
17 sometimes what you've gotten into. But, it's a tough, tough
18 situation, and you're the kind of person that can try
19 something new. And I'm --

20 But, at this hearing, the -- Moran testified that the
21 Navy could only meet about 40 percent of its demand from the
22 regional combatant commanders. We've heard the
23 reaffirmation of that, which has been going on for a long
24 time. We also heard the Navy is the smallest it's been in
25 99 years. He went on to say, "It's become clear to me that

1 the Navy's overall readiness has reached its lowest level in
2 many years. That is all due to the inconsistent,
3 insufficient funding that does not match the demand for Navy
4 forces due to global threat situations." So, we hear over
5 and over again that the Navy is taking on more, and with
6 less.

7 So, Secretary Spencer and Admiral Richardson, if the
8 Navy is focused on ensuring the foreign deployed ships are
9 ready, and recent history is our example, what shape would
10 the rest of the fleet be, in terms of readiness? What shape
11 is the rest -- the non-forward-deployed in? How would you
12 characterize that?

13 Admiral Richardson?

14 Admiral Richardson: Sir, it has been our consistent
15 priority to resource those forces that are forward deployed
16 and that are going to deploy, and that the surge force, as
17 we call them, those forces that are here in the continental
18 United States that may be the next to deploy or they may be
19 called to respond in a crisis to reinforce the forward-
20 deployed forces, those are the ones that remain less ready
21 than we need them to, to respond in the way that they need
22 to.

23 This is where you do a lot of that basic training,
24 right? And so, the one thing that's unforgivable in these
25 situations is time. You just cannot get back the time.

1 Senator Inhofe: Yeah.

2 Admiral Richardson: So, the flying hours don't -- you
3 can't catch up, right? That time is gone. The steaming
4 hours, all of those things that don't happen in basic
5 training, it's very hard to recapture that, just in terms of
6 developing the level of experience and sophistication.

7 Senator Inhofe: Okay. You've caused for -- called for
8 a comprehensive review and an operational pause. When did
9 the operational pause start?

10 Admiral Richardson: The operational pause started
11 pretty much immediately after the collision of John S.
12 McCain.

13 Senator Inhofe: Yeah. And I know that the
14 comprehensive review is still underway. Can you talk about
15 anything that, perhaps during this pause, you might -- any
16 observations --

17 Admiral Richardson: Senator, thank you. I did direct
18 that operational pause, because, at that point, I needed to
19 elevate this to a Navy-wide perspective so that, both the
20 shore and afloat, we took some time to stop, take a break,
21 and review our fundamentals to ensure that we are operating
22 safely and effectively, and to correct any areas that
23 required immediate attention.

24 And, in addition to that pause, the Seventh Fleet
25 conducted a standdown to address navigation and seamanship

1 basics. As a result of that, we've made a number of
2 corrections -- immediate actions, if you will. All --
3 first of all, all waivers for certifications, the
4 certification process has been elevated now to the four-star
5 level at the Pacific Fleet commander. We are reviewing
6 every single ship, ship by ship, to evaluate their materiel
7 and operational readiness. That is being done both
8 administratively to make sure that our certification process
9 --

10 Senator Inhofe: Yeah.

11 Admiral Richardson: -- is good, and also with physical
12 visits.

13 Senator Inhofe: Yeah.

14 Admiral Richardson: The -- we have also convinced a
15 readiness-for-sea inspection on all of those ships, to
16 inspect and assess watch-standard proficiency and materiel
17 readiness.

18 Senator Inhofe: So, that pause has aided you in your
19 comprehensive review.

20 Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir. I mean, I have a list
21 that I could go on and on, in terms of immediate actions,
22 but we are not waiting for these longer-term comprehensive
23 reviews to complete; we're taking that action now to ensure
24 a margin of --

25 Senator Inhofe: Yeah.

1 Admiral Richardson: -- safety for --

2 Senator Inhofe: Well, Mr. -- thank you very much --
3 Mr. Pendleton, you know, your candid and, I think, alarming
4 assessment of the whole situation is not a surprise. And,
5 as you look over the -- all the forewarned things that -- I
6 think the Chairman said in his opening statement, said, "We
7 were warned," and I think we were. You -- it does boil down
8 to -- I think it does, anyway -- to resources, and a lot of
9 it -- I think you would probably agree with that.

10 This is what I'd like to ask you to do. I have 14
11 things in the defense authorization bill that we just passed
12 yesterday, and, assuming that we're able to keep these
13 things in there, recognizing we have a conference to go, we
14 have other -- we have appropriations and all that -- I'd
15 like to have you look at these 14 things, look at the
16 problems that we're trying to address in this particular
17 hearing, and give us your evaluation as to how these -- any
18 of these 14 things might resolve the problem in the long
19 term and the short term. All right?

20 Mr. Pendleton: We'll be happy to do that and provide
21 it for the record.

22 [The information referred to follows:]

23 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

24

25

1 Senator Inhofe: Thank you.

2 Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen.

3 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 And thank you all for being here today.

5 Cybersecurity, as we all know, is a growing concern as
6 we become more reliant on electronic means for
7 communication, for storage of data, for operation and day-
8 to-day systems, and also for navigation and control systems.

9 And I understand that cyberexperts from the Tenth Fleet
10 were sent out to Singapore to investigate electronic data
11 onboard the USS John McCain to see if any cyberintrusions
12 had taken place, and that Admiral Moran stated, last week,
13 that future accident investigations will include cyber
14 investigations to ensure that there's been no tampering.

15 Can you tell me -- I guess this is for you, Admiral
16 Richardson -- what are we doing proactively to ensure the
17 security of our navigation systems and our electronic
18 systems?

19 Admiral Richardson: Senator, just as you said, we did
20 send a -- an investigation team out to the John S. McCain to
21 take a look at that. I got a report, an update on that,
22 just this morning, and still no evidence of any kind of
23 intrusion or tampering yet. We're continuing to
24 investigate.

25 And we've -- and the Navy have been on a steady path to

1 continue to harden ourselves against -- we'll really be
2 prepared for operations in combat in the cyberdomain. And
3 that starts, first and foremost, like everything, with
4 people and organizations. And so, we've been steadily
5 bringing in and training cyberexperts into our team. We
6 stood up that Tenth Fleet as a response to that. We have
7 technical authority at the -- at SPAWAR, out in San Diego,
8 and we've got a information warfare-type commander, just
9 like all the other services, down in Hampton Roads,
10 Virginia. And so, we believe that we're organized properly.

11 Those organizations are becoming manned. Their structures
12 are -- those billets are being filled, the training is being
13 done.

14 And then, we are doing a combination of things. Many
15 of these measures require physical standards so that our
16 systems are hardened against intrusion. And we are
17 certainly baking those in to new systems that we are
18 bringing onboard. And then, we are looking at hardening
19 those legacy systems that we already own, to the greatest
20 degree possible. A very fast-moving problem, a very dynamic
21 problem. I'm not saying we're there yet, but we're giving
22 it very high priority and resources.

23 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I'm glad to hear
24 that. And obviously, that's another area where resources
25 are very important.

1 Senator McCain has talked about the problems of
2 sequestration, which everyone on this committee knows very
3 well. But, I wonder if you could talk, in detail, about the
4 impact of continuing resolutions, budget cycle after budget
5 cycle, and how they affect maintenance and training plans
6 for ships. And are forward-deployed ships affected more
7 than ships stateside? Can you -- is there any correlation
8 there?

9 Admiral Richardson: Ma'am, as I said, we will
10 prioritize our resources to those forces that are forward
11 deployed and that will deploy forward. And so, we will not
12 leave those teams short of resources.

13 Having said that, the uncertainty that -- well,
14 actually -- it's become, actually, certain. We're certain
15 that we're not going to get a budget in the first quarter.
16 And so --

17 Senator Shaheen: Which is a sad commentary --

18 Admiral Richardson: Which is --

19 Senator Shaheen: -- on the budget situation.

20 Admiral Richardson: And behaviors have adapted. And
21 so, we don't put anything in -- important in the first
22 quarter of the year. And we have to compete three out of
23 four quarters of the game.

24 And in addition to just to that fact, the -- what
25 happens is, you have to double your contracting. Right?

1 You have to right a tiny little contract for the length of
2 the continuing resolution, and then you have to write
3 another one for the rest of the year. As you know, nothing
4 new can start. And so, we try not to schedule anything new
5 in that first quarter.

6 The maintenance and training, those are the hardest
7 things. And so, as those -- as the uncertainty, you know,
8 injects itself, it is always that the things on the bubble
9 are maintenance periods, particularly surface-ship
10 maintenance periods. It is, you know, how many steaming
11 hours am I going to get? How many flying hours am I going
12 to get? \$150-million-per-month shortfall, how do I manage
13 that? These are the effects of continuing resolutions.

14 Mr. Spencer: Senator, can I add to that context, if I
15 --

16 Senator Shaheen: Please.

17 Mr. Spencer: -- if I may?

18 One of the things that you heard me testify, when I was
19 first here for confirmation, was, we really have to get our
20 hands on industrial science, which the most primary
21 fundamental of that is the line of sight to your resources.
22 As I'm out there speaking to our suppliers and our
23 contractors, who are more than willing to work on our
24 behalf, they cannot run their businesses when they don't
25 have line of sight to commitment. And that is critical.

1 Senator Shaheen: And certainly, that's something that
2 I've heard from suppliers in New Hampshire, as well.

3 Thank you all.

4 Chairman McCain: Senator Wicker.

5 Senator Wicker: Admiral Richardson, Mr. Pendleton said
6 he doesn't know what caused these accidents. After the two
7 reports come out, do you think we'll have a better idea and
8 Mr. Pendleton will be --

9 Admiral Richardson: We'll be crystal clear on that,
10 sir.

11 Senator Wicker: Okay. And when can we expect these
12 reports?

13 Admiral Richardson: The comprehensive review, I put a
14 60-day tether on that. That's --

15 Senator Wicker: Sixty days from today?

16 Admiral Richardson: Sixty-day -- it should complete in
17 mid October -- mid to late October.

18 Senator Wicker: Okay.

19 Admiral Richardson: Secretary's strategic review will
20 complete, nominally, 30 days after that. I do want to
21 emphasize, that's an aggressive timeline. I want to get
22 these answers now, but I also want to get these answers
23 right. And so, we'll evaluate to make sure that we're doing
24 a complete assessment, and not just rushing to a partial
25 assessment.

1 Senator Wicker: Okay. Now, you mentioned leadership,
2 and particularly at the command level. Can you shed any
3 more light on the two officers who were fired last week?
4 The Navy mentioned a loss of confidence in their ability to
5 command. Are you able to be more specific to the committee
6 at this point about those two individuals?

7 Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could, I'd like to defer
8 until the investigations are done, and then we can come
9 forward with a full --

10 Senator Wicker: Okay. But -- well, can you say, were
11 those two individuals onboard either of those ships?

12 Admiral Richardson: The two -- the commodore and the
13 strike-group commander were not onboard the ships.

14 Senator Wicker: They were not aboard the ships.

15 Admiral Richardson: No, sir.

16 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, now let -- and certainly,
17 the Chairman is correct, and witnesses are correct, about
18 sequestration. And my commendation to Senator Cotton for
19 trying to solve this issue. And I want to be his teammate
20 on that. It's way past time that we address this issue.

21 We have a modernization issue, and we have the more
22 immediate readiness issue. I think they're both tied
23 together. And so, let me ask you -- just continue with you,
24 Admiral Richardson. We have a requirement for 355 ships in
25 our fleet today, is that correct?

1 Admiral Richardson: Sir, several studies -- Navy
2 studies, outside-the-Navy studies -- have pointed to a fleet
3 size around 355-360 ships.

4 Senator Wicker: And you support that, do you not,
5 Secretary Spencer?

6 Mr. Spencer: Yes, I do.

7 Senator Wicker: And then, Admiral, it's a fact that
8 we're now asking 276 ships to answer the requirement that
9 the -- that a minimum of 355 ships would take.

10 Admiral Richardson: This is the math behind the fact
11 that we can only source about 40 percent of the world demand
12 right now.

13 Senator Wicker: And so, to the extent we're asking
14 fewer ships to do the -- a larger amount of work -- to the
15 extent that we've -- that we reduced our fleet size by 20
16 percent since 9/11, it is a fact that the Navy is busier
17 than ever, and that's got to affect readiness, as well as
18 the longer-term modernization issue. Is that not correct?

19 Admiral Richardson: Sir, we are maintaining
20 essentially the same level of forward presence with that 20-
21 percent-smaller fleet. That has resulted in some
22 exceedingly long deployment lengths, as Chairman McCain
23 pointed out. We've corrected that back down to about 7
24 months as a sustainable length. But, our ships have been
25 run hard. They are spending more time in maintenance, and

1 that pressurizes the operational time.

2 Having said that, again, I'd bring it back to the
3 fundamental importance of command, here, to monitor the
4 readiness of your ships, your aircraft, your submarines, and
5 to report when those --

6 Senator Wicker: Well, I appreciate your acknowledgment
7 of that.

8 Let's just talk a little about training. And let me
9 toss out the idea of incorporating more virtual training,
10 simulator-based training, into the curriculum for deployed
11 sailors. Are you considering incorporating more of this
12 high-tech, high-fidelity -- and simulators into regular
13 training as a way to address that issue?

14 Admiral Richardson: Sir, we've been on that path for
15 some time. And I'd love to take you around and show you
16 some of the advanced simulators that we use, both ashore and
17 at sea, to keep our skills --

18 Senator Wicker: So, we're where we need to be on that?

19 Admiral Richardson: Well, that -- we can always do
20 more. And I will tell you that the technology is allowing
21 us to get more and more realistic in the scenarios that we
22 present to our sailors, and we're adopting that technology
23 as fast as we can.

24 Senator Wicker: And then -- and finally, what about
25 this issue of sleep deprivation? There have been some New

1 York Times articles, and other publications, about pervasive
2 sleep deprivation among sailors, particularly surface
3 warfare officers standing watch. Is that part -- do you
4 think that's likely to be one of the reasons that we
5 eventually get down to on this issue?

6 Admiral Richardson: Sir, we're investigating that
7 specific claim very, very closely. The -- many parts of our
8 Navy have already mandated a 24-hour circadian rhythm
9 watchstanding rotation, you know, to ensure that everybody
10 gets sleep inside their natural circadian rhythm. Admiral
11 Rowden, from the -- commander of Surface Forces, just
12 recently issued -- while it was recommended before, he now
13 said it'll be mandatory. But, we're diving into that
14 deeply.

15 Senator Wicker: Well, we await your further
16 information, and thank you for your leadership.

17 Chairman McCain: Admiral, is it true that some of our
18 sailors are working 100-hour weeks?

19 Admiral Richardson: Sir, I'll not deny that. The
20 sailors are working very hard. We have been doing some
21 work-study -- sort of, workday type of studies. We've got
22 some, particularly in the DDGs, the cruisers, the Arleigh
23 Burke-class destroyers, and we're starting to respond to
24 that by supplementing the crews.

25 Chairman McCain: Okay. But, I'd just point out, if we

1 know that somebody's working a 100-hour workweek, I'm not
2 sure we need a study.

3 Senator Hirono.

4 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Admiral Richardson, you just said something really
6 interesting, just now, that it is the responsibility of the
7 commander to monitor the readiness of their ships to --
8 readiness to deploy. So, are you saying that, if a
9 commander says that his ship -- his or her ship is not
10 ready, will that result in nondeployment of that ship?

11 Admiral Richardson: If we're aware that a ship is not
12 certified to -- ready to -- and certified to deploy, that
13 ship should not deploy.

14 Senator Hirono: And you're going to take that
15 commander's assessment of it. Is that how it works in the
16 chain of command?

17 Admiral Richardson: Well, there's also his immediate
18 superior in command. And so, there's -- you know, there's
19 several layers of people that are monitoring this. We don't
20 put it all on the --

21 Senator Hirono: Right.

22 Admiral Richardson: -- commanding officer of the ship.

23 Senator Hirono: But, I think that's -- is that what
24 you meant when you said that you would have to also change
25 the culture? Because already you're only able to meet 40

1 percent of the combatant commander's request, so the culture
2 issue is probably that everyone wants to meet the demands
3 for deployment, and so the culture needs to be changed.
4 That's safety first. Is that what you meant when you said
5 culture?

6 Admiral Richardson: We completely agree with you,
7 ma'am. And we have a can-do culture, right? I mean, that's
8 what we do. We -- nobody wants to raise their hand and say
9 --

10 Senator Hirono: Yes.

11 Admiral Richardson: -- "I can't do the mission," but
12 it's absolutely essential that, when those are the facts, we
13 enable that report.

14 Senator Hirono: So, now you're going to institute a
15 can-do-with-safety-first culture.

16 Admiral Richardson: Exactly.

17 Senator Hirono: The Optimized Fleet Response Plan, the
18 new fleet deployment and maintenance model, appears to be
19 falling short. It leaves no margin for error and extended
20 deployments. Maintenance backlogs and missed training
21 evolutions appear to have become the norm and commonplace.
22 And, while it is too early to identify the exact causes of
23 the accidents, developing a more flexible and realistic plan
24 should increase the ability to train and conduct
25 maintenance, and lead to fewer accidents.

1 Admiral Richardson, is the Navy looking to update the
2 plan? And how does the Navy intend to address this issue?

3 Admiral Richardson: Ma'am, just to be very specific,
4 the Optimized Fleet Response Plan, OFRP, is that plan by
5 which we prepare -- maintain and prepare and certify for
6 deployment those forces based here in the United States.
7 And that is a flexible plan. There have been many times
8 where I've had discussions with Admiral Davidson or Admiral
9 Swift that we needed to accommodate a delay in maintenance.
10 And so, we extend the training period, and, if necessary,
11 we, you know, deploy late. So, it -- you can only --

12 Senator Hirono: So --

13 Admiral Richardson: -- compress it so much.

14 Senator Hirono: Excuse me.

15 Admiral Richardson: Now, there is --

16 Senator Hirono: So, you're making a distinction that
17 OFRP is for those ships that are on the mainland, where the
18 problem or many of the concerns arise with the forward-
19 deployed ships. Is there an OFRP plan that doesn't leave
20 much room for exigencies --

21 Admiral Richardson: This is the observation --

22 Senator Hirono: -- with regard to --

23 Admiral Richardson: -- Mr. Pendleton and the GAO, that
24 these -- the way by which we generate and certify readiness
25 in the forward-deployed naval forces is a bit different. We

1 expect them to maintain an overall higher level of
2 readiness. And so, they don't get as deep as -- maintenance
3 out there. They get more continuous types of maintenance so
4 that they can stay overall ready.

5 But, where we run into trouble is when the pyramid gets
6 inverted. The first thing we should be doing is maintaining
7 safe and effective certifications. Only with those done,
8 and the maintenance properly done, can we expect to deploy
9 effectively and execute the mission. What we're seeing is
10 that, particularly for the forward-deployed force in Japan,
11 that pyramid became inverted, mission became first, at the
12 expense of the --

13 Senator Hirono: So, what are you planning to do to --

14 Admiral Richardson: So, this is --

15 Senator Hirono: -- change that --

16 Admiral Richardson: -- this is an --

17 Senator Hirono: -- situation?

18 Admiral Richardson: -- absolute specific focus of the
19 comprehensive review, to dissect that and make adjustments.

20 Senator Hirono: You noted in your testimony -- and
21 this may be a question that you can only respond to for the
22 record, because I am running out of time -- in your
23 testimony, you said that the Navy's subjected to budget
24 pressures, to do more with less, operational pressures to
25 put busy forces on station more quickly and more often, and

1 schedule pressures to make adjustments to training and
2 maintenance plans. And you also noted that none of these
3 can excuse the commanders from doing what they're supposed
4 to do. But, of the three pressures you that identified in
5 your testimony, which do you have the most control over?
6 Budget pressure, operational pressure, schedule pressure --
7 which do you have the most control over?

8 Admiral Richardson: I would say the two that we have
9 greater control over are operational and schedule pressure.

10 Senator Hirono: So, I would be interested to know what
11 you're doing with your control and operational and schedule
12 pressures to address these concerns that have been raised in
13 this hearing.

14 Admiral Richardson: Yes, ma'am.

15 [The information referred to follows:]

16 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Hirono: Thank you.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Chairman McCain: Senator Cotton.

4 Senator Cotton: Thank you, gentlemen, for your
5 testimony today.

6 My deepest condolences go to the family members and the
7 fellow sailors of the men and women who were killed on both
8 the Fitzgerald and McCain.

9 It's hard to imagine, no matter what your
10 investigations ultimately prove, that at least some part of
11 the fault will not lie with Congress and the steady erosion
12 of budgetary support that we have provided the United States
13 Navy and the entire military.

14 We have heard again this morning, from both sides of
15 our aisle, complaints about the Budget Control Act of 2011,
16 and specifically the automatic spending cuts known as
17 sequestration. Well, we had a perfect chance to finally end
18 those over the last week on the floor of the Senate. I
19 offered an amendment, as Chairman McCain said, that would
20 have eliminated those automatic spending cuts, not only on
21 defense, but on domestic spending, as well. It's no secret
22 that I think many of those domestic programs could tighten
23 their belt a little bit, but I knew that we needed a
24 bipartisan solution.

25 I think every member of this committee has called for

1 that at one point or another, to include every Democrat, but
2 we didn't even have a vote on the amendment, because Chuck
3 Schumer, the Democratic leader, wanted more to leverage in
4 budget negotiations later this year, and the Democrats in
5 his caucus went along with him. So, their complaints about
6 sequestration fall somewhat on deaf ears.

7 Now, they will say that our amendment didn't also
8 address the so-called mandatory sequester. But, let me
9 point out, first, that that doesn't affect a single dime of
10 benefits to Social Security or Medicare or veterans
11 benefits, and, moreover, virtually every one of them has
12 voted at least twice to extend the automatic sequester into
13 the future, when they did not seem that troubled by it.
14 Politics prevailed here.

15 Now, let me turn to the state of your sailors'
16 training. Admiral Richardson, in the GAO report there are
17 indications that, in the forward-deployed naval forces, you
18 have sailors who have not achieved mission-critical
19 certifications on things like seamanship, air warfare,
20 ballistic missile defense, cryptography, electronic warfare,
21 intelligent strike warfare, cruise missile tactical
22 qualification, naval surface fire support, surface warfare,
23 undersea warfare, and visual board, search, and seizure.
24 Without trying to assess whether these failures -- or these
25 lack of certifications were behind the incidents with the

1 Fitzgerald and the McCain, I assume that's something that
2 you seek to address rapidly.

3 Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir, absolutely.

4 Senator Cotton: And to help the layman understand,
5 these certifications would be akin, in the Army or the
6 Marine Corps, to basic rifle qualifications. Is that right?

7 Admiral Richardson: Senator, some of them are, so
8 there's sort of a -- two tiers to those certifications that
9 you just described. And, depending upon which one you
10 named, it would break out into -- some are just fundamental
11 ship handling, navigation, safety, you know, how to operate
12 your ship safely at sea, the fundamentals, if you will, and
13 then some of them are much more higher-end, sophisticated
14 warfighting requirements.

15 Senator Cotton: Are -- the Navy is obviously a
16 forward-deployed force that is always operating, even if
17 it's not in an active zone of conflict; whereas, say, the
18 Marine Corps or the Army deploys to places like Iraq and
19 Afghanistan and then trains at places like Camp Lejeune and
20 Fort Campbell. Are these certifications things that can
21 occur onboard, or do they have to be off of a deployment
22 cycle and occur back at their bases?

23 Admiral Richardson: They can occur within that --
24 particularly the -- for the forward-deployed naval forces,
25 they can occur in the course of maintaining yourself

1 operational. You just have to dedicate the time to do the
2 training and get the team onboard to do the certification.

3 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

4 We've also spoken some about discipline and
5 accountability for officers, to include some petty officers
6 who were found at fault. What is the status, if any, of
7 potential awards of medals for those sailors who saved the
8 lives of their fellow sailors?

9 Admiral Richardson: Sir, I'll have to get back to you
10 on the specifics, but, you're right, there was definitely
11 heroic acts on both of those. I can get that back to you.
12 It's certainly our intent to recognize heroism where it was
13 seen.

14 [The information referred to follows:]

15 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Cotton: I hope so. You know, as you state in
2 your written testimony, what the Navy does is inherently
3 dangerous. I'd say that of all the Armed Forces, even when
4 they're not in an active conflict in places like Iraq and
5 Afghanistan. And certainly, great heroism was displayed.

6 One final question I want to ask the Secretary and the
7 Chief. In studying the causes of these incidents, what
8 steps, if any, has the Navy and the intelligence community
9 taken to rule out the possibility of a deliberate act of a
10 hostile power?

11 Mr. Spencer: Senator, it's all underway in the
12 reports, what we call the ongoing reports, the technical
13 reports that are going on right now. You heard the CNO
14 speak earlier that Admiral Tighe and her group in the Tenth
15 Fleet, on the cyber side, are doing their reviews there.
16 Intelligence is also looking at it. So, it is being
17 discussed.

18 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

19 Anything to add, Admiral Richardson?

20 Admiral Richardson: No, sir. Absolutely no stone
21 unturned. We're looking at everything.

22 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

23 Senator Reed [presiding]: On behalf of Chairman
24 McCain, let me recognize Senator Kaine.

25 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1 And thanks, to the witnesses.

2 Before we begin on the topic, I want to just comment on
3 Senator Cotton's discussion about his amendment. I
4 supported the amendment and was looking forward to voting
5 for it. Others in my caucus felt the same way. You have a
6 reason to be concerned. The only thing I would add to your
7 concern is, there were a whole lot of amendments that the
8 Democrats wanted to offer, and they were all cut off, too.
9 So, you didn't get a vote -- your not getting a vote was not
10 because of people necessarily wanting to avoid the issue; it
11 was wanting to have a robust amendment process. And if
12 everybody else's amendments were going to get kicked out,
13 sadly, yours did, as well. And I regret that it was.

14 Let me now focus on this topic. I want to acknowledge
15 the sacrifice of the sailors who lost their lives in these
16 instances. This is why we're here, and this is why we need
17 answers. Particularly, those families from Virginia:
18 Dakota Rigsby, Gary Rehm, Timothy Eckels, and Charles
19 Finley, who were either from Virginia or had been stationed
20 in Virginia. We need to acknowledge them.

21 And, Admiral Richardson, I talked to you yesterday
22 about the seriousness of this investigation -- the two
23 investigations. I was Governor of Virginia when there was a
24 horrible violent incident at Virginia Tech, and 32 people
25 were killed by a deranged young guy who killed them. I went

1 to Virginia Tech the day after the tragedy. I was told by
2 the president of the university that they would empanel a
3 panel to review what happened, and I said, "No, you're not
4 going to empanel a panel. I'm going to put together a
5 panel. I'm going to make sure the panel has experts who
6 have no connection with Virginia Tech and who have no
7 connection with any of those who were injured or wounded,
8 and I'm going to ask them to tell me everything that went
9 wrong and everything we can do to fix it." I was advised,
10 by lawyers connected with the State, "Don't do that. It
11 will give people a roadmap to bring a lawsuit. It will open
12 up all kinds of pain for the State if you're candid and
13 unsparing." And I said, "I don't care about the lawsuit.
14 People died. And the only thing that we can do, sadly, is
15 try to learn everything we can from what caused them to die
16 so that we can reduce the chance that that happens to
17 anybody else. So, we're going to get every answer, and
18 we're going to be transparent and public about every answer,
19 and then we're going to fix everything we can."

20 And that's what we expect from the two investigations
21 that are being done. They will be unsparing, they will get
22 every answer, they will be transparent about every answer,
23 and then we will work together with you to make sure we fix
24 anything that needs to be done.

25 You've been asked questions about training. I was on a

1 radio program this morning, just coincidentally, in Hampton
2 Roads, mentioned this hearing, and, over the course of a 5-
3 minute interview, the host said, "I just got a text from a
4 sailor saying that training on seamanship is lax." And, by
5 the end of the interview, said, "I've gotten five more texts
6 basically saying similar things." I think this has been
7 affected, certainly, by sequester and the reasons that we've
8 discussed, but I want to ask about something else, and ask
9 whether this is going to be part of the scope of the
10 investigation.

11 My understanding was that, in 2003, the Navy changed
12 the surface warfare officer basic training course. It was a
13 6-month classroom instruction, and they changed it to a
14 strictly computer-based syllabus. And then, more recently,
15 they returned to a class-based syllabus that was only a 9-
16 week course. Is that correct?

17 Admiral Richardson: Sir, that is correct. Back in
18 2003, we stood down the Surface Warfare Officer School, at
19 the division officer -- the beginning level. And we thought
20 we could achieve the aim and train surface warfare officers,
21 junior officers, with a computer-based approach combined
22 with on-the-job training at sea. And we found that that was
23 woefully inadequate, have reversed -- come out of that. It
24 was sort of a two-step process to come out of it, but now
25 our junior officers and surface warfare pipeline do begin

1 with a basic division officer course which is 8 weeks long.
2 It stresses fundamentals. It spends a tremendous amount of
3 time on seamanship and navigation, lots of simulators, as
4 Senator Wicker pointed out. And then, about midway through
5 their division officer tour, or between their two junior
6 officer tours, there's an additional 8 weeks of more
7 advanced training, still at the basic level, focused at the
8 junior officer. But, those are -- those have been put in
9 place -- the first one was put in place in 2012, second one
10 in 2014.

11 Senator Kaine: I don't want to, obviously,
12 predetermine what the results of the investigation will be,
13 but I just want to make sure. Is the scope of that initial
14 training -- you know, 6 months, to online, to 8 or 9 or 12
15 weeks -- is the scope of initial training going to be part
16 of the investigation that's being done?

17 Admiral Richardson: Specifically called out in the
18 comprehensive review --

19 Senator Kaine: All right.

20 Admiral Richardson: -- to look at individual training
21 and professional development.

22 Senator Kaine: If I could, one last question. There
23 is a blog forum that is used for discussion, often by
24 surface war -- surface ship officers. It's called Commander
25 Salamander. And there was a notable blog entry, a

1 resignation letter -- an anonymous resignation letter that
2 just came to my attention late last night. It was published
3 in November 2008, and here is a portion of the letter, "The
4 problem of checking the boxes, vice actually being a capable
5 Navy, exists everywhere. Lessons learned and codifications
6 of best practices have led the Navy to being a force focused
7 on the checklist as the end state, vice actually capability.
8 As one example," comma, "Afloat Training Group, ATG, does
9 not care that a ship has a method to ensure safe
10 navigation."

11 I would like to provide that as a -- as an exhibit to
12 my question and, again, just ask if early warnings like this
13 will, in fact, be part of the scope of the investigation
14 that is being conducted.

15 [The information referred to follows:]

16 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Admiral Richardson: Senator, no stone unturned. We'll
2 look at every indication we have, and address that.

3 Senator Kaine: Thank you.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 Senator Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

6 For the benefit of all that are here, we have a vote
7 ongoing, and that is why my colleagues have left. They are
8 going to vote, and they will return.

9 With that, let me seize the opportunity to begin a
10 second round, which hopefully will have only one questioner.
11 But --

12 Admiral Richardson, I know the Navy has put together
13 the Optimized Fleet Response Plan. And that's the idealized
14 way to schedule ships and to inform crews and to synchronize
15 training. But, when it impacts against the reality of
16 delays in many different ways, it doesn't seem to work. Are
17 you looking, in this review, at that Optimized Fleet
18 Response Plan and how useful it is today, or how it might be
19 altered or changed?

20 Admiral Richardson: Sir, we are. But, I would say
21 that, I think the Optimized Fleet Response Plan has been
22 somehow misunderstood to be a rigid, you know, unresponsive
23 thing. It's actually very fluid, and it's a -- it's just a
24 process by which we generate, you know, forces for
25 deployment. And so, for instance, if a maintenance period,

1 let's say for the carrier, goes long, you know, the rest of
2 the process will be adapted to accommodate that delay. If
3 more training is required to get through the basic phase,
4 we'll adjust. And so, this is not a, you know, one-size-
5 fits-all, "This is what we do, and nothing else." It's
6 actually a pretty fluid plan. It tries to get the
7 maintenance done, get the manning onboard early in the
8 process, so those people that we train are actually the ones
9 that we're going to deploy with. And then there's a sort of
10 a crawl-walk-run approach to training. And all that is
11 adaptive to the circumstances on the ground.

12 And so, I just wanted to try and make that impression
13 --

14 Senator Reed: Thank you.

15 Admiral Richardson: -- that there is room for
16 flexibility within the OFRP to accommodate for change.

17 Senator Reed: Thank you.

18 Mr. Pendleton: Senator Reed, can I add something?

19 Senator Reed: Mr. Pendleton, yes, please, and then
20 I'll recognize Senator Ernst.

21 Mr. Pendleton: Yeah. So, we looked at the Optimized
22 Fleet Response Plan, and we looked at the Navy's plan for
23 readiness rebuilding, and everything the Admiral said is --
24 about it is true. There's really two things I'd want to
25 leave with you. One, the Navy's plan for readiness recovery

1 is predicated on the Optimized Fleet Response Plan, which is
2 four words for "schedule." That's because that's what it
3 is. Staying on time, that they -- they're able to do that.
4 And that's difficult when you have delays, or whatever.

5 The forward-deployed naval forces in Japan, part of the
6 reason we made the recommendation that we made is, we didn't
7 see a similar plan like that for those ships over there.
8 There was not dedicated training time. There were not the
9 things that we thought would be needed to be -- create a
10 sustainable situation.

11 Senator Reed: Thank you.

12 Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could.

13 Senator Reed: Yes, sir.

14 Admiral Richardson: Mr. Pendleton has it exactly
15 right. And so, if you look at the plan for forward-deployed
16 naval forces, there is a dedicated time.

17 Senator Reed: Right.

18 Admiral Richardson: That's the plan. But, the GAO,
19 rightfully, looked at execution data.

20 Senator Reed: Yeah.

21 Admiral Richardson: And it's hard to determine
22 adherence to that plan, because we just kind of prioritize
23 getting out and executing the mission. The thing that would
24 fall off is the dedicated training.

25 Senator Reed: Thank you. Thank you both, gentlemen.

1 Senator Ernst, please.

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Senator Reed.

3 And, gentlemen, thank you for being here today.

4 And first, as well as a number of my colleagues has
5 done, I want to express my sincerest condolences to the
6 families of those that lost sailors in these very, very
7 tragic incidents. And my thoughts and prayers will continue
8 to be with you through this difficult time.

9 And, Secretary Spencer, Admiral Richardson, and Mr.
10 Pendleton, thank you for being here today. These are
11 difficult topics that we're discussing, and I hope that
12 we're able to really shed some light on what's going on, and
13 truly do get to the bottom of this so it doesn't happen
14 again.

15 Mr. Pendleton, I want to follow up about the 100 hours
16 per week, as Senator McCain had asked earlier. The GAO
17 report found that sailors were working more than 100 per
18 week, leaving them little time for rest. And I know we have
19 that can-do attitude. Admiral, you have stated that
20 already. I know many even of our operators in the Army,
21 they want to fulfill a mission, they're not going to say no.
22 But, it's obvious that this is detrimental to our readiness.
23 And can you talk about how that excessive workload has the
24 ability to not only impact morale, recruitment, and
25 retention, but also then the safety and well-being of the

1 other sailors on those vessels?

2 Admiral Richardson: I'll start, sir -- ma'am, and let
3 Mr. Pendleton pile on.

4 There's no doubt that overworking a team, particularly
5 over time, has an absolutely corrosive effect. We actually
6 have specialists in this area, Dr. Nita Shattuck, at the
7 Naval Postgraduate School, who has pointed out, in very
8 clear terms, the need for getting sufficient sleep and
9 getting rest in a -- you know, a 24-hour rhythm to get the
10 most effectiveness out of that sleep. And so, if we go
11 beyond that, there are measurable degradations in your
12 decisionmaking and in your performance. And so, we need to
13 make sure that we adjust back. Surface forces just recently
14 mandating, now, that they do their at-sea rotations
15 consistent with these, you know, rest principles.

16 But, to the GAO's point, we also need to make sure that
17 our in-port workload is examined. As I said, we just did
18 this for the destroyers, and found that, while there are no
19 extra skills that are required, the capacity in port
20 sometimes exceeds our at-sea manning models. And so, we're
21 making adjustments.

22 Senator Ernst: Thank you. Thank you, Admiral.

23 Mr. Pendleton: So, everything the Admiral said, I
24 think's very honest and reflects the situation out there.
25 One thing I would mention to the committee is that, under

1 the current criteria the Navy uses, that they expect the
2 sailors to actually work 81 hours a week -- 70 hours on
3 duty, and then 11 hours for the other things. So, it's a
4 pretty grueling schedule programmed right in. I think
5 what's happened, it's -- this has snuck on them a little bit
6 over time. It's the -- because it takes more work to keep
7 the ship running. And so, they end up with folks working 15
8 -- over 15 hours a day, on average.

9 I don't have a lot of specific work. I'm citing a Navy
10 study. But, some of the folks sitting behind me, and they
11 work with me, have done literally dozens of focus groups.
12 And I don't think they -- that they didn't hear this in any
13 single one. Everyone talked about the lack of sleep and the
14 impact on them. And some of them said they wished for 100-
15 hour week. So, it -- so, I think it's pretty tough out
16 there.

17 Senator Ernst: It is tough out there. And one thing I
18 would emphasize, though, that that is a commander's
19 responsibility, is to make sure that they are able to react
20 when the time calls for it. You know, as a lowly company
21 commander running transportation operations, in combat
22 operations we're only required 4 hours of sleep for our
23 soldiers that are driving trucks. And, of course, every one
24 of them would say, "I can go 24 hours a day," but we know,
25 as commanders, that you can't keep pushing our soldiers,

1 sailors, marines, and airmen to the limit and expect them to
2 operate efficiently and safely.

3 Mr. Spencer: If I may, Senator, I'd be remiss if I
4 didn't jump in here and address an issue that, when you hear
5 about our studies, we're going to be coming back to you all
6 to ask for some relief in certain areas. The secretariat,
7 my office, the CNO, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps
8 are reviewing instructions to make sure that we are focused
9 on readiness and lethality, going forward. And those
10 instructions that do not support readiness and lethality are
11 going to be questioned and/or asked to be reviewed by you
12 all. It's what I call "the rucksack issue." The best
13 intentions of the world are handed down by folks to say,
14 "Can you add this? Can you add this?" Well, no one's
15 taking anything out of the rucksack. And that's what we
16 need to address right now, and that's what's going on.

17 Senator Ernst: Absolutely. As my adjutant general in
18 Iowa always said, it's "assume prudent risk." And that's
19 what we want to enable our commanders to do, is assume that
20 prudent risk. However, sometimes it's not prudent, and we
21 should reject that.

22 So, thank you very much, gentlemen.

23 Senator Reed: On behalf of Chairman McCain, Senator
24 Warren, please.

25 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 And I want to say to all of our Navy families who have
2 lost loved ones, thank you for being here today. We grieve
3 with you, and we owe you an explanation of what happened.
4 And I know our leadership feels the same way.

5 Admiral Richardson, in the last year, the Navy has had
6 four incidents involving the loss of life or injury. In
7 three of the four, the ships involved were home-ported
8 overseas. In fact, all in the same port, in Japan. GAO
9 found that the Navy counts ships home-ported overseas as
10 being in, quote, "permanent deployment status" resulting in
11 fewer training hours for sailors. And, in fact, in 2015,
12 GAO found there were no dedicated training periods at all
13 for ships home-ported in Japan. The Navy concurred with the
14 GAO's recommendations, and reported that it had developed
15 revised operational schedules. But, as recently as August
16 -- that's 2 years after the report, August of this year --
17 Pacific Fleet officials told GAO that the revised schedules
18 were, quote, "still under review."

19 Now, Admiral Richardson, 2 years is a long time. So,
20 what's the holdup here?

21 Admiral Richardson: No, there's no excuse for that.
22 We're investigating how that gap opened up. I'm -- there's
23 nothing defensible I can say for that.

24 Senator Warren: Okay. I assume we're going to find a
25 way to close this --

1 Admiral Richardson: We are.

2 Senator Warren: -- quickly now?

3 Admiral Richardson: Absolutely.

4 Senator Warren: So, let me just keep asking, though,
5 about where things have gone wrong. At the time of their
6 respective incidents, did the crews of the Fitzgerald and
7 the Antietam and the McCain have up-to-date warfare
8 certifications?

9 Admiral Richardson: Ma'am, many of them did not.

10 Senator Warren: Of the three, do you know how many had
11 up-to-date --

12 Admiral Richardson: Well --

13 Senator Warren: -- certifications?

14 Admiral Richardson: -- I can get you the exact number.
15 There's a number of different certifications. And I'll
16 provide that exact number for the record.

17 [The information referred to follows:]

18 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Admiral Richardson: But, all three of them, because it
2 was pervasive in the forward-deployed naval forces --

3 Senator Warren: Do you know, offhand, how many
4 overseas home-ported fleet -- how much, what percentage of
5 our overseas home-ported fleet currently has expired warfare
6 certifications?

7 Admiral Richardson: There are -- just about every ship
8 has some element of their certification expired. That can
9 be managed. If it's one thing and -- an advanced warfare
10 mission, for instance, they just don't assign them to that
11 mission. Where it becomes troublesome is that -- if it
12 becomes too many areas, and particularly in those areas that
13 are directly related to safe and effective operation, the
14 fundamentals.

15 Senator Warren: Right.

16 Admiral Richardson: And so, that's when it becomes of
17 great concern.

18 Senator Warren: So, it -- the GAO reported, just last
19 month, that 37 percent of cruisers and destroyers home-
20 ported in Japan had expired certifications in 2017. Does
21 that sound about right to you?

22 Admiral Richardson: I'll leave it to Mr. Pendleton to
23 do the math, but that does sound about right.

24 Senator Warren: Okay. So, let me just ask, Admiral
25 Richardson, do you believe it's irresponsible to allow our

1 sailors to deploy repeatedly on cruises without the training
2 they need to ensure the safety of the ship and its crew?

3 Admiral Richardson: Yeah, what had happened in those
4 areas, ma'am, is that when -- I mean, the team out there was
5 conscious that these certifications were expiring. And it's
6 a bit like your driver's license expiring. It may not
7 necessarily mean that you don't know how to drive anymore;
8 it's just -- you know, there's -- that expire. However, we
9 do need to recognize that those certifications mean
10 something.

11 Senator Warren: Yes.

12 Admiral Richardson: And they need to go back and
13 recertify. And so, what had happened instead is that they
14 would do an evaluation, just like I discussed, and said,
15 "Okay, well, the certification is expired. We're not going
16 to get a time to get onboard and do the certification for
17 some time, and so we'll do a discussion or an administrative
18 review to extend that." That was called a risk mitigation
19 plan. That became pretty pervasive. And so -- so, it was
20 this, kind of, boiling-frog scenario that, over time, over
21 the last 2 years, really, became acute.

22 And so, to answer your question yes/no, Is it
23 irresponsible? Yes, it is irresponsible. But, I just
24 wanted to give you a sense for how that came about.

25 Senator Warren: And I appreciate that. And what I'm

1 hearing you say is that you're conducting a thorough review.
2 This is not going to happen in the future.

3 Admiral Richardson: We'll get this right.

4 Senator Warren: Thank you.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman McCain [presiding]: Senator Rounds.

7 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 First, let me begin, as many of my colleagues have, in
9 offering condolences to the family/friends of those who have
10 lost their lives and those who have been injured. It's
11 difficult to put ourselves into your shoes. And I just
12 simply offer to you that, while we can't take away the pain
13 that you feel, we'll most certainly keep you and your loved
14 ones in our thoughts and in our prayers. It also means
15 that, as this committee, we feel a real responsibility to
16 try to share what happened, and not only that, but why.

17 And I think both Senator Ernst and Senator Warren have
18 hit on something here which is very important, which is, we
19 talk about the manpower and the number of hours that these
20 soldiers have been serving, and whether or not they've
21 actually been able to do the training and so forth. Seems
22 to be a consensus growing that we needed to have more
23 resources available to do more training, to do the
24 retraining, to allow these individuals to operate at as
25 close to a peak efficiency as possible. That takes money,

1 and it takes resources.

2 My question, to begin with, would be to Mr. Pendleton.
3 Does the Navy have the ability to shift resources, if they
4 were to be available, from programs involving modernization
5 to readiness?

6 Mr. Pendleton: That would be tough. I mean, there's a
7 lot of fungibility within the operations and maintenance
8 accounts. That's not my specialty. There's limits on the
9 modernization. I probably should get the Admiral or someone
10 to commend on that. I mean --

11 Senator Rounds: That would be fine.

12 Admiral Richardson, would you care to --

13 Admiral Richardson: Senator, a programming shift of
14 that type would probably require us to come back to Congress
15 with an above-threshold reprogramming request. And that
16 would be adjudicated to make that happen. It's not easy.

17 Senator Rounds: The reason why I ask is that it seems
18 to me that we're almost -- it's almost like squeezing a
19 balloon, in some cases. When we start talking about moving
20 resources, even if we could move them, we're still talking
21 about the limited resources brought about by sequestration
22 and limited budgets that all of our Armed Forces are
23 suffering with right now. If we take a look at the
24 readiness side and the modernization side, we've got, just
25 within the Navy itself, some of the best examples that we

1 are going to continue to remind you of, our three nuclear-
2 powered submarines that are sitting at dock, as opposed to
3 being in depot, because we don't either have the depot space
4 or the dollars in order to actually get them back up and
5 operational. Billions of dollars in assets that are not at
6 the ready. And, in fact, they're not even dive certified.
7 You've got over 60 percent of your F/A-18s that need
8 maintenance or that simply aren't operational at any given
9 time.

10 So, this is a case of, even if we could move resources
11 around, we have limited resources available throughout the
12 different plans, not for upgrades, but just for maintaining
13 the additional equipment, let alone coming back in and
14 trying to find the additional manpower dollars so that we've
15 got individuals who are on deployment that actually have the
16 time to be trained, as well, in a perfect operating system.

17 Just curious whether or not -- and I'm -- I know that
18 the Chairman has hit upon this; it is sequestration which is
19 causing a lot of this, but I'd like each of you to please
20 respond, if we could. Just how much of this problem that
21 we've now seen is caused by a failure to properly fund the
22 military in the first place with regards to not only
23 modernization, but readiness, as well?

24 Mr. Spencer: Senator, I'd like to dive in first, here.
25 I want to carry on your analogy. It's not a balloon. Or,

1 if it's a balloon, it's a balloon that is so pressurized,
2 there's no movement. You squeeze it, it pops. That is the
3 extent that I'd see it, coming at it from a business point
4 of view. The funding balance-to-asset allocation here is
5 way out of whack, and we have to get that back on track.
6 There's other things we have to do, but, if we're addressing
7 the financial resource side right now, there has to be some
8 adjustments, because the balloon is at exploding pressure.

9 Senator Rounds: Admiral Richardson?

10 Admiral Richardson: Sir, I think the Secretary
11 characterized that completely accurately. There's not a lot
12 of room to maneuver. You're really robbing Peter to pay
13 Paul, as you pointed out. And when I think of what the -- I
14 think of the navy the Nation needs, it's naval power, which
15 is, yes, readiness, safety, effectiveness, first and
16 foremost; it includes modernization, and it includes, you
17 know, procurement, to make sure that we stay relevant into
18 the future.

19 Senator Rounds: You took my ending quote away,
20 Admiral. That's exactly the way that I was seeing this.
21 But, I -- let me end with this.

22 To the families that are out there, I know that our
23 focus right now is on the leadership within the Navy and the
24 commanders in the Navy and what they want to do about it.
25 This goes deeper than that. This is a case of where the

1 United States Congress has to provide the adequate funding
2 to take care of these young men and women who put themselves
3 in harm's way every single day. And we will not forget
4 that.

5 Thank you, gentlemen.

6 Thank you, sir.

7 Chairman McCain: Senator Peters.

8 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 And thank you, to our witnesses here today.

10 Chairman McCain: I just wanted to recognize that the
11 Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy is here, also, Chief
12 Giordano. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for
13 being here.

14 Senator Peters.

15 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Again, thank you, to our witnesses, for testifying on
17 this very important issue.

18 I want to add my condolences to all of the families who
19 lost loved ones in these very tragic accidents, as well.
20 One of those sailors, who is from Michigan, Electronics
21 Technician Third Class Kenneth Aaron Smith, our prayers and
22 thoughts are with him, with his family, as all of the
23 sailors who lost their lives.

24 Director Pendleton, I certainly appreciate your report
25 and your testimony here today. I just have kind of a

1 straightforward question, just to get some clarity as to
2 priorities that we need to be thinking about, in terms of,
3 hopefully, avoiding more of these incidents in the future.
4 Just a question. If you traded places with either of the
5 gentlemen who are sitting next to you, the Chief of Naval
6 Operations or the Secretary of the Navy, in your mind what
7 would be the first steps that you would take?

8 Mr. Pendleton: You know, I think our recommendations
9 lay out a pretty good roadmap. We thought about this a lot,
10 back in 2015. Specific to forward-deployed naval forces, I
11 think you've got to make time for them to train. You've got
12 to make space in the schedule for them to actually train and
13 get those certifications. Those are -- the trend in that's
14 what's concerning.

15 The second -- which I think the Navy's doing both these
16 things now -- is, you need to assess whether or not
17 increasing reliance on overseas-based ships is the best
18 call, because that comes at cost, and some of them may be
19 hidden.

20 So, those would be the two things that I would focus
21 on, specific to the Navy.

22 Senator Peters: You mentioned, in your opening
23 testimony, about a plan, the readiness plan, that we need to
24 continue to demand that. Would you please elaborate on
25 those comments?

1 Mr. Pendleton: So, in -- last year, in 2016, we looked
2 at the readiness rebuilding plans of all the military
3 services, including the Navy, as well as how the Department
4 of Defense was overseeing it. And we came away with the
5 conclusion, not to put too fine a point on it, that they
6 didn't have a comprehensive plan for how they were going to
7 go forward. There was a lot of recognition of the problem,
8 a lot of priority being assigned to it, but what we couldn't
9 see was, if you put money in, how much readiness were you
10 going to get out? And also, there was the question of how
11 you were going to manage the demands.

12 So, what we suggested, hopefully was practical: What
13 are your goals? In some cases, the goals weren't clear to
14 us. You know, how are you -- what are you -- how much are
15 you going to be able to get next year and the year after?
16 What's it going to cost? How long is it going to take?
17 Those kinds of things. Because our concern was, we would
18 look up in 5 years and be in the same situation.

19 Senator Peters: The concern that was expressed by
20 Senator Ernst and I last year -- in fact, we sent a letter
21 to Secretary Mabus -- concerned with individuals and the
22 Navy's dependence on electronic devices for navigation. I
23 know we don't know the reason for these incidents and the
24 accidents, but sometimes over-reliance on electronics can
25 lead to some problems. When you think about the warfare of

1 the future, a conflict in a space, we could have -- GPS
2 systems could be compromised, communications systems could
3 be compromised. All sorts of issues could be related to
4 that. And there is a sense that we need to make sure that
5 we're training our sailors in good old-fashioned seamanship,
6 which means navigating the old-fashioned way, with charts
7 and other types of navigational aids that were done before
8 electronics, and make sure that there are eyeballs out to
9 the sea at all times, not just relying on the electronics.

10 Secretary Spencer and Admiral, if you could comment as
11 to, How are we ensuring that our sailors continue to have
12 their seamanship abilities and not relying on electronics?
13 Particularly, my understanding is that ships with certified
14 electronic navigation systems are not even required to have
15 charts onboard. Is that something that we're looking at?

16 Mr. Spencer: Senator, it's a great question. I was
17 heartened, the other day when I was down at the Naval
18 Academy and Admiral Carter did what he should do in his
19 command to put the arm on me to find some more money for the
20 Academy, but he was talking specifically about the training
21 that goes on with the yard boats -- the PYs, I believe
22 they're called -- YPs, thank you -- the yard boats, where
23 they actually -- midshipmen go out and actually practice
24 shipmanship in the reality, along with celestial navigation.
25 We need to fund these things on a continual basis. It's

1 easy to say, "These are things of the past. Why can't we
2 kick them to the curb?" But, you bring up some very salient
3 points about what happens when we're denied access to
4 certain technologies.

5 That being said, I certainly don't want to shortchange
6 the advances that we get from technology. Being a pilot,
7 we're now bringing iPads into cockpits, and doing away with
8 paper charts. There are risks there, but I believe what --
9 the FAA has even come to the conclusion is, the technology
10 benefits outweigh the risks.

11 Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could just pile onto
12 that, it is really about reliability. And so, if we are
13 going to shift to an electronic, you know, system --
14 electronic-based system, if you will, part of that
15 reliability is making sure that the operators understand the
16 underlying principles of that display that they're getting,
17 and they are ready to question the validity of that display
18 when they -- things don't look right. To understand whether
19 it looks right or not, you've got to have the fundamental
20 training in relative motion, navigation, et cetera. And so,
21 it's extremely important to make sure that we've got that in
22 place. As the Secretary pointed out, we're instilling that
23 at the Naval Academy. It'll be part of our comprehensive
24 review, to make sure that we're continuing that in the
25 Officer and Enlisted Development Programs.

1 Senator Peters: Thank you, gentlemen. Appreciate it.

2 Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis.

3 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

5 And, to the family members, friends, and fellow
6 sailors, I offer my condolences.

7 Admiral Richardson, Senator Cotton mentioned something
8 I think's very important. He said you're going through the
9 investigation to get into the root causes of the incidents
10 we're discussing today. But, he made a very important point
11 that I doubt seriously gets covered -- and, Director
12 Pendleton, this may be something for you, as well -- and
13 that's really actions or inaction by Congress that are some
14 of the root causes to these problems. Does that ever really
15 weigh into any of the investigations? In other words, you
16 may find out that decisions were made that actually led up
17 to the circumstances that happened on that ship, but it
18 wasn't necessarily -- it could have been something that
19 could have been avoided if funding -- if we had done our job
20 right. Does that ever weigh into any of these
21 investigations, or is that something that the GOA -- GAO
22 would ever look at?

23 Mr. Pendleton: Probably not, in a microsense like
24 that, but I will say that I think the way that plays out,
25 actually, is in making choices of short-term versus long-

1 term plans. If you look in my -- in our statement that we
2 provided for the record, we show the Navy's plans to build
3 ships kind of goes that way, and its personnel plan goes
4 that way.

5 Senator Tillis: Right.

6 Mr. Pendleton: That's a straight out-year budget-
7 projection problem, right?

8 Senator Tillis: Yeah.

9 Mr. Pendleton: You're trying to figure out how to
10 squeeze a lot of military into a can that's not quite as big
11 as they'd like it to be. And so, you see these kind of
12 mismatches happen.

13 On the micro, not so much. It's usually hard to assess
14 that out on it.

15 Senator Tillis: Well, I think what we have to do is
16 maybe take it up a notch and look at trend. Because the
17 trends you're talking about, in terms of personnel and
18 investments and ships and naval capabilities, are a direct
19 result of what we either do or do not do up here. And I
20 think, sooner or later, we've got to start demonstrating
21 that some of -- Admiral Richardson's always here to say he's
22 going to get the job done, but, at some point, because that
23 balloon bursts, you simply can't get the job done.

24 Admiral Richardson? I do have some other questions
25 that I'd like to get to fairly quickly.

1 Admiral Richardson: Sir, the -- our investigations
2 really concentrate on what is within our span of control.
3 We get the resources that you give us, and it's our
4 responsibility, and the responsibility of command, to take
5 those resources, operate safe and effectively.

6 Senator Tillis: I expected the answer to that, at that
7 -- at the level you're dealing with, with the incident, but
8 we really have to get Congress to be more aware of how our
9 actions or inactions are a root cause to some of these
10 problems.

11 I want to ask some questions -- we're going to submit
12 several, probably, questions for the record, in my capacity
13 as the Personnel Subcommittee Chair, but I want to go back,
14 maybe, and ask the question -- you know, being a captain or
15 -- for a cruiser or a destroyer, I think is a relatively
16 complex job. Would you agree with that, Admiral Richardson?

17 Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir.

18 Senator Tillis: Now, we -- I think that Chair McCain
19 mentioned his concern with, maybe we're getting more breadth
20 and not enough depth as we're training up men and women to
21 fill these roles. And one question that I have, If you have
22 the average length -- assignment length for a CO on each of
23 these ships to be 1.8 years, and a commander to be 18
24 months, are we kind of tightening the length of time that
25 we're actually giving these people an opportunity to get

1 that depth of experience before they're put in a command
2 role? And do you think that that's an okay thing, or
3 something that we should look at?

4 Admiral Richardson: Well, we need to make sure that
5 we've got an adequate sea time, right? Really, time on the
6 ship, operating, not only in command, but throughout their
7 career, so that, by the time they get to command, they've
8 got the experience and training required to have those
9 instincts that will serve them so well in command. And so,
10 that pipeline is a part of this comprehensive review.

11 To be honest, sir, we look at that constantly. It's
12 not like we're waking up, you know, from a long sleep, here.

13 But, we need to give it a fresh look as part of the
14 comprehensive review.

15 Senator Tillis: But, if you've got an XO and a CO on
16 the same ship, and sequential assignments, and then you've
17 overlapping some of that, how does that help?

18 Admiral Richardson: I'm not sure it does. So, this is
19 a question that -- a specific question that I have. This
20 XO/CO fleet-up plan that we put in place for the surface
21 Navy, I want to make sure we examine that closely.

22 Senator Tillis: One other quick question. And, as I
23 said, I've got a number that I'm going to submit for the
24 record -- but, do we have a surface warfare community
25 retention problem?

1 Admiral Richardson: There's nothing really that's been
2 brought to my attention for the community, writ large. The
3 exception would be nuclear-trained surface officers. That's
4 a community under particular pressure that we watch very
5 closely.

6 Senator Tillis: It looked like the Center for Naval
7 Analysis suggested that the demand may be outweighing the
8 supply, so I was just trying to get to the root cause of why
9 that is and whether or not retention was a part of it.

10 My time is expired. We'll submit a number of questions
11 for the record.

12 Thank you.

13 [The information referred to follows:]

14 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Mr. Spencer: Mr. Chairman, could I provide one more
2 answer? Would that be possible?

3 Senator, addressing your question about staffing on the
4 bridge, et cetera, and career advancement, one of the things
5 you're going to see coming out of my study is exactly that.
6 We're going to look at DOPMA, we're going to look at joint
7 service, we're going to look at any and all aspects, at the
8 higher level, and that addresses exactly what you're talking
9 about.

10 Chairman McCain: Senator King.

11 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 I -- while in no way denigrating all the discussion
13 that we've had today about staffing and training and
14 adequacy and hours of work -- I think all those are
15 contributors, but I'm surprised -- I want to turn to an
16 entirely different subject. Every boat in the Gulf of Maine
17 has a radar on it that tells us when there's another boat
18 within a mile or 2 miles or 5 miles. An alarm goes off that
19 shows up on your GPS. How in the world does a billion-
20 dollar destroyer not know that there's a freighter closing
21 in on it? I don't understand how this could possibly
22 happen. And I've talked to Maine lobstermen. They're
23 scratching their heads. They can tell when there's a flock
24 of seagulls off their bow.

25 Admiral Richardson: Sir, got the same questions. It's

1 very hard to understand, with the sophisticated systems
2 onboard these warships, that we let a ship get in that
3 close, to the point of collision. And so, that is a direct
4 --

5 Senator King: Not "a ship." Three ships. Three of
6 these were collision with --

7 Admiral Richardson: Right.

8 Senator King: -- with merchant vessels.

9 Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir.

10 Senator King: I mean, aren't there -- and give me --
11 can you give me an answer, specifically? Aren't there radar
12 systems --

13 Admiral Richardson: There are.

14 Senator King: -- on these ships --

15 Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir.

16 Senator King: -- that would detect --

17 Admiral Richardson: The primary --

18 Senator King: -- anything within the range?

19 Admiral Richardson: There's a primary and a backup
20 radar that should detect those ships. There are systems
21 that can alert you at a particular range. And so, we have
22 to find out what happened.

23 Senator King: Is there a black box on these ships,
24 like there is on an aircraft, so we can determine what the
25 sequence of events was?

1 Admiral Richardson: We'll get to the sequence of
2 events, yes, sir.

3 Senator King: And the second question is, Don't we
4 have sailors on the bridge with binoculars --

5 Admiral Richardson: We do.

6 Senator King: -- anymore?

7 Admiral Richardson: It a requirement to have lookouts,
8 and we have lookouts on the watch team on the bridge.

9 Senator King: Is there -- and the other question is
10 about the radar of these ships that ran into us. Is there
11 some technology that they couldn't see us? Are these -- are
12 we using a stealth technology that -- anything you can
13 answer in an open setting?

14 Admiral Richardson: Sure. I mean, it's -- wouldn't
15 surprise anybody, I think, that we design our warships to
16 have a lower radar cross-section. I mean, it's, in some,
17 designed to be very low. Right? So, the -- that degree of
18 stealth makes us more effective, from a warfighting
19 standpoint. But, that also imposes a burden, if you will,
20 on the crew of that ship to understand that they are low-
21 observable and that they may not be as easily seen as
22 something that is as large as a destroyer. It'll have a
23 radar cross-section of a ship that's much smaller.

24 Senator King: Or if they're not in a conflict
25 situation, to emit some kind of signal to a -- to another --

1 Admiral Richardson: That's been an immediate action,
2 is that there is this Automatic Identification System, AIS,
3 that the Secretary mentioned. And we had, I think, a
4 distorted perception of operational security that, if we
5 kept that system secure -- off in our -- on our warships.
6 One of the immediate actions following these incidents is
7 that, particularly in heavily trafficked areas --

8 Senator King: In trafficked areas, like --

9 Admiral Richardson: -- we're just going to turn it on.

10 Senator King: -- like Japan.

11 Admiral Richardson: And then you can -- right, you can
12 look outside and see the ship. And so, it's not an
13 operational security --

14 Senator King: So, you can't report to us today any
15 results of the investigation into what happened with the
16 nonperformance --

17 Admiral Richardson: Those --

18 Senator King: -- of the radar system.

19 Admiral Richardson: Those specifics are forthcoming.

20 Senator King: Forthcoming soon?

21 Admiral Richardson: As soon as the investigations are
22 complete, yes, sir.

23 Senator King: All right.

24 Let me turn from this subject, for a moment, to
25 maintenance. I think the testimony from our friend from the

1 GAO was that the maintenance capacity is not adequate, and
2 that, therefore, we have ships that are in port too long,
3 and that puts a strain on the ships that are left at sea.
4 Is that accurate?

5 Admiral Richardson: I think Mr. Pendleton painted that
6 exact picture. The words he used were "vicious cycle," and
7 I would agree. That's a good characteristic of that.

8 Senator King: Because these ships are expensive, as
9 you know, and anytime you have a capital object that's that
10 expensive, Secretary Spencer, you know from your business
11 experience, you want it operated. And do we need to be
12 talking about increasing the capacity of the maintenance
13 yards to cut down on that time off the ocean, if you will?

14 Admiral Richardson: I'll go first. I think that
15 there's no doubt that we could use the increased maintenance
16 capacity. Right now, we are leveraging every ounce of
17 capacity, I think, across the Nation, both public and
18 private, to execute the maintenance that we need --

19 Senator King: But, if we're doing -- if we're
20 executing on every ounce of capacity, and it's not adequate,
21 sounds to me like we need more capacity.

22 Admiral Richardson: We need more, yes, sir.

23 Senator King: And is that in the plans anywhere? Is
24 that in any submissions of budgetary priorities in the
25 future?

1 Admiral Richardson: One of the other reports that Mr.
2 Pendleton just recently issued was a report on our
3 shipyards. And so, how to increase the capacity through
4 modernizing our shipyards. We work closely with the private
5 sector to have these discussions all the time, in terms of:
6 How do we increase that capacity? So, it's something that
7 has our attention, yes, sir.

8 Senator King: One final question on the technology. I
9 would urge that a standard practice ought to be for these
10 locational radar, that keep an eye on what's in the
11 vicinity, that if there -- (a) there should be an alarm,
12 which I'm sure there is, and (b) it should ring in the
13 captain's quarters if anything comes within whatever the set
14 distance is. It's really unacceptable, in this day and age,
15 with the technology that we have, to have something like
16 this happen, regardless of the wider issues.

17 Admiral Richardson: Now --

18 Senator King: This is just unacceptable, from a --
19 just a modern seamanship point of view, it seems to me.

20 Admiral Richardson: Sir, I agree with you 100 percent.
21 And that's why I'm fighting the tendency to characterize
22 this -- I mean, certainly there are tearing-down forces that
23 are broader. We've discussed many of those today. But,
24 this will go to, you know, proper operation of your
25 equipment, fundamentals of watchstanding. Those are the

1 things that we have to look at.

2 Senator King: Thank you.

3 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Senator Reed [presiding]: On behalf of the Chairman,
5 let me recognize Senator Donnelly.

6 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 I want to join my colleagues in expressing my deepest
8 condolences to the family and friends of the sailors we have
9 lost in these incidents. We are grateful for the service,
10 saddened by the loss. Extraordinary people.

11 And, Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this
12 hearing. Both our military leadership and Congress have
13 roles to play to ensure this doesn't happen again.

14 Admiral, I just want to follow up on my colleague
15 Senator King's questions. And you mentioned that we'll get
16 to the sequence of events and find out what happened. Do
17 you have a timeframe for that? Because we saw a number of
18 incidents, and the goal is, the faster -- we want to do it
19 right, but the faster we get the facts as to what happened,
20 the better the opportunity is to not have it happen again.

21 Admiral Richardson: Right. Senator, we're taking sort
22 of a two- -- response along two timescales, if you will,
23 sir, so we want to get the full investigation done with
24 alacrity. And we are doing that. And so, this fall, you
25 know, timeframe, we'll get those complete. But, we're not

1 waiting for those things to be done to act. And so, there
2 are a number of tactical immediate actions. I mentioned the
3 Automatic Identification System. We're going to turn that
4 on so that we're much more visible to other ships.
5 Mandating that we perform both manual and electronic
6 tracking of all other vessels that will come within 2 and a
7 half miles. We've got mandated commanding officer review
8 and approval of the watchbills, the watchteams that will be
9 doing that. So, there's a number of actions, my point
10 being, that we are doing now to enhance the things that
11 Senator King and you are talking about.

12 Senator Donnelly: How many radar systems do you have
13 on at a time? And are there --

14 Admiral Richardson: There are --

15 Senator Donnelly: -- are there backups for --

16 Admiral Richardson: For navigation and safety, two
17 radar systems, a primary and a backup. And then there may
18 be a third commercial radar that we use sometimes.

19 Senator Donnelly: Were they working at the time of
20 these incidents, on both ships?

21 Admiral Richardson: Sir, I don't have those details,
22 so we'll get to that.

23 Senator Donnelly: Mr. Pendleton, in your statement,
24 you identify a number of recommendations from past GAO
25 reviews that the Navy has not yet implemented. Which do you

1 consider the most urgent of those?

2 Mr. Pendleton: I think -- with respect to the forward-
3 deployed naval forces, I think carving out dedicated
4 training time for them is going to be very important. So,
5 that's probably my number-one. When you look broader than
6 that and begin to give a urgent, not necessarily since it
7 needs to be done today, but the Navy needs to determine how
8 many people it really needs and put on the ships, because
9 100-hour workweeks are not sustainable. So, those would be
10 the two I identify for you.

11 Longer-term, I think the shipyards are going to be a
12 real issue. We just issued the report that was mentioned.
13 There needs to be a capital investment plan on the
14 shipyards. We're going to run out of drydock space, and
15 it's going to be hard to get out of this vicious cycle, sir.

16 Senator Donnelly: Secretary Spencer, what do you look
17 at as the most urgent things to implement right now?

18 Mr. Spencer: I concur with training, but, when I put
19 on my Title 10 hat, I -- we have to gear up on
20 infrastructure. If we look at the maintenance cycles that
21 we have here, if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Pendleton, our bill
22 is \$4.2 billion.

23 Mr. Pendleton: I think it's actually 4.86, a little
24 higher.

25 Mr. Spencer: \$4.86 billion to get our yards back in

1 shape. We're going to have to do something to move that
2 ball down the road.

3 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

4 Admiral, as has been mentioned, 100-hour workweeks are
5 unsustainable. I know you have personal experience from
6 your deployments that you've had. What are we doing right
7 now to change that paradigm of 100-hour workweeks and
8 helping those individuals who are shouldering that burden
9 right now, who are out in the field doing the very, very
10 best they can to keep our Nation safe?

11 Admiral Richardson: So, now all -- the surface force,
12 the submarine force, and the aviators all have mandatory
13 sleep requirements now in place. The surface force just
14 recently made that mandatory. It was recommended before.
15 So, that will -- you know, that will mandate that at sea,
16 and those watch rotations, that we get sufficient sleep and
17 get out of this cycle.

18 The other thing is this -- there is a cultural factor
19 here, where, you know, you've got -- it's just a little bit
20 more -- you know, you're more dedicated, if you will, if you
21 can go to the extra mile and stay awake. That's like
22 pulling an all-nighter in college. I have two daughters in
23 college, and, you know, they -- it's too common there, as
24 well. And so, it's a combination of education and culture
25 change to make sure that people are seeking this rest.

1 Senator Donnelly: And the last thing I want to ask is,
2 as you do these investigations, very often, as I know you're
3 aware of, the people who know the best as to how to fix it
4 are the ones who are on the front line and who are right
5 there on the ships or in the submarines. And I want to know
6 what we're doing to make sure we incorporate their ideas in
7 how we move forward.

8 Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir. It started with the
9 operational pause. In my message for that, I mandated that
10 those be small groups, you know, of sailors on the deck
11 plate. Focus groups, I think, is the most effective way
12 that I have seen to get after those types of concerns. It
13 beats a poll or a survey or anything like that. And so,
14 that'll be a fundamental part of our way, going forward.

15 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

16 Mr. Chairman, thank you.

17 Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

18 On behalf of Chairman McCain, Senator Sullivan, please.

19 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 And, gentlemen, thank you for being here, and your
21 testimony.

22 I also want to offer my condolences to the families.
23 And, you know, this is just completely unacceptable, period.
24 No debate about that. I don't think anyone's debating that.
25 But, you know, when the men and women of our military do

1 what less than 1 percent of Americans do in this country,
2 which is raise your right hand to support and defend the
3 Constitution and keep us safe, we've got do a better job,
4 all of us -- the Navy, the Marines, the Army, the Congress.
5 And it's unacceptable.

6 So, Admiral, I want you to -- I'm having a hard time
7 with the -- this issue of, kind of -- put us on the bridge
8 of a modern Navy ship, and talk about the redundancies --
9 the radar, the GPS's, the physical watch. What -- I mean, I
10 know you're investigating this, but what does that look
11 like? Aren't we the most advanced navy in the history of
12 the world? And how are these, kind of, redundancies, in
13 terms of basic seamanship in collisions at sea, breaking
14 down, in your view? And it's not just one, you know, sailor
15 on the watch. There is a whole host of other things that
16 would make sure we avoid these kind of collisions. What, in
17 your experience -- first, what does that look like? And
18 then, what, in your experience, do you think is going wrong,
19 where -- obviously there's a series of failures here in
20 these --

21 Admiral Richardson: Right.

22 Senator Sullivan: -- collisions, not just one. What
23 does that look like? And how --

24 Admiral Richardson: Well, I --

25 Senator Sullivan: -- can we better understand it?

1 Admiral Richardson: Right. Sir, my experience is,
2 just as yours, that these catastrophes really result from
3 the accumulation of a number of small errors that build up
4 and line up eventually to create a sequence that results in
5 a incident of this magnitude.

6 The -- to put you on the bridge of a modern destroyer,
7 a watch team will be on the order of 10 people. About four
8 of those will be officers -- the officer of the deck, the
9 junior officer of the deck, officer of the watch, conning
10 officer. There will be two lookouts, there will be a
11 quartermaster. And so, there's plenty of people involved in
12 the seamanship and navigation on the bridge. They're
13 supported by a team in the Combat Information Center, which
14 is also looking at electronic displays. They don't have
15 windows, but they're backing them up.

16 With respect to the technology that this -- the
17 equipment for all of those critical systems -- navigation,
18 steering, propulsion -- we have a primary and a backup
19 system for every one of those. So, GPS is backed up by
20 inertial navigators. We have a primary and a backup radar.

21 For the rudders -- we have two rudders, and each of those
22 rudders has a primary and a backup hydraulic cylinder. And
23 so, there's a lot of redundancy built into these systems,
24 because they are so fundamental to safety.

25 And so, now you get a sense -- and it goes back to

1 Senator Donnelly's question and Senator King's point, which
2 is, How could all of that break down so catastrophically to
3 result in a collision of this magnitude. And that's why we
4 have to do the thorough investigation.

5 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask another question. You
6 know, it comes to readiness, it comes to training. One of
7 the things, in my relatively short time here in the Senate,
8 that I've been concerned about with regard to military
9 readiness is that this committee, this Congress, well-
10 intentioned, puts additional training requirements --
11 additional training requirements, additional things that you
12 need to address, because we told you. And, to be honest,
13 most of those don't relate to combat readiness, most of them
14 don't relate to basic MOS, whether it's a surface warfare
15 officer or a marine infantry officer and his, you know, duty
16 to close with and destroy the enemy of our Nation. How much
17 of your training do you believe is being mandated by the
18 Congress that takes you away from your basic MOS training?
19 And if there are issues with that, we would certainly like
20 to know about it.

21 Mr. Secretary, can you try to address --

22 Mr. Spencer: Senator, let me address that for you.

23 Senator Sullivan: Do you think it's a problem?

24 Mr. Spencer: It definitely is a problem. Not only
25 will you hear from my report group as to any actions done at

1 the Senate level or need to be adjusted here in this chamber
2 or other chambers, you are going to hear from them. We're
3 going to address DOPMA, we're going to address the NUA
4 amendment, we're going to address how joint chiefs task. We
5 have given this committee an infinite rein literally to
6 address everything. At the operational level, the
7 secretariat, the OPNAV, the CMC are all going through their
8 instructions, going, What are we focused on? We're focused
9 on readiness and lethality. What do all our instructions
10 support? And if we find instructions that are not focusing
11 us on those two items, we're going to bring them to your
12 attention if you have control of them. If we have control
13 of them, we're going to try to adjust this. It's the --
14 it's as I said earlier, the rucksack issue. All the best-
15 intentioned in the world, put a rock in to do a training on
16 smoking cessation, put a rock in to do other sorts of
17 training. No one's taking a rock out, and the rucksack's
18 getting pretty damn heavy.

19 Senator Sullivan: Well, I couldn't agree more.

20 And, Admiral, I'm assuming you would agree with that.
21 But, I implore you to bring those issues back to us, because
22 we're -- there's only so many hours in the day, and the
23 mission of the Navy -- you know what that mission is. And
24 we need to make sure our sailors are trained in the best way
25 possible. And this rucksack issue you're talking about --

1 as a reservist, myself -- in the Reserves, it's even worse,
2 because there's less time in a year to train. So, please
3 bring those back.

4 And again, my condolences to the families here. We
5 need to fix this. And I know you're committed to doing it.
6 It's going to be an all-hands-on-deck effort. But, we
7 cannot -- cannot afford to lose any more of our Nation's
8 finest in training accidents.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

11 On behalf of the Chairman, Senator Blumenthal, please.

12 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Senator Reed.

13 Thank you all for being here today on a very difficult
14 subject, especially for any of us from Connecticut. We lost
15 two brave, courageous men, one on the Fitzgerald, the other
16 on the McCain. I'd like to pay tribute to Electronics
17 Technician Second Class Dustin Doyon and Sonar Technician
18 Third Class Ngoc Truong Huynh, both from Connecticut. Their
19 families mourn them, and all of us in Connecticut are struck
20 by the sadness and grief of their passing and their courage
21 in joining in devoting their lives to the defense of our
22 Nation. And so, we really owe them an investigation that's
23 not only thorough and comprehensive, but also as prompt as
24 possible.

25 I am struck by a number of the questions and answers

1 that have been elicited so far, in dealing with this
2 intensely human tragedy in such an abstract way, which maybe
3 makes it easier to address. But, I think most Americans
4 find these crashes incomprehensible.

5 So, let me begin by asking you, Admiral, Is there any
6 indication, so far, that there was equipment failure on
7 either the Fitzgerald or the McCain?

8 Admiral Richardson: Sir, we're taking a look at all of
9 that. And that'll be part of the investigation --
10 investigative results when we come out. It's premature to
11 say conclusively whether that contributed. But, it's not
12 only the operating status of the equipment, but how it was
13 operated. Was it being operated properly, in accordance
14 with the procedures? You know, all of these things will be
15 part of the result of that investigative look.

16 Sir, I do also have to comment on how absolutely human
17 this is to us. Every one of those sailors is like a son to
18 me, and the opportunity to be with their families when they
19 see them come back in these coffins makes it intensely
20 human. And so, we're going to get after this.

21 Senator Blumenthal: By the way, I did not mean to
22 imply that anybody on this panel, and particularly you,
23 Admiral, who has devoted your life to the Navy and service
24 and sacrifice, would feel anything but the most intense pain
25 and grief as a result. And, having a son who has served in

1 the Navy, another in the Marine Corps, I know that, as a
2 dad, I felt proud of the fact, not only that they were
3 serving, but that they were surrounded by people who really
4 cared for them. And they were the best-trained and the most
5 dedicated of any military force in the history of the world.
6 And yet, human error, as you've just pointed out, even with
7 the best equipment, may result in failure to operate the
8 equipment properly, which comes back to training.

9 I have been told that, you know, since 2006, the Navy
10 doubled the number of ships home-ported overseas to 20,
11 obviously to increase its forward presence and reduce crisis
12 response time. But, training was eliminated on these
13 forward-deployed platforms. As a result, the number of
14 expired certifications increased fivefold, from 7 percent to
15 37 percent, between 2015 and 2017. Are those numbers
16 accurate? I don't know whether they've been raised here
17 before.

18 Mr. Pendleton: Yeah, you're -- most of that's coming
19 from our work. The increase in overseas-based ships, I
20 think, went from 20 to 40, which was about 7 percent of the
21 Navy to 14 percent of the Navy. The certification numbers
22 that you described, that is from 2015 January until mid this
23 year. If you imagine -- the 11 ships that are based in
24 Japan, we looked at all the certification areas, 22 of them.
25 When we looked at that in 2015 -- imagine a bunch of little

1 squares -- 7 percent of those were red. When we came back,
2 in preparation for this hearing, 37 percent of them were
3 expired. Some of them, 2 years or more. And so, that was a
4 trend that we alerted the Navy to and that we put in our
5 updated work. For the most part, you have it right, but
6 just wanted to make sure the specifics were --

7 With respect to training, what we said is, they didn't
8 have dedicated training time, the -- unlike the ships back
9 -- based in the United States. So, before a ship deploys
10 from the United States, it has a train-up period. The folks
11 overseas were pretty much just almost always deployed. Is
12 that fair?

13 Senator Blumenthal: In terms of what that -- those
14 numbers mean, 37 percent of those certifications were
15 expired?

16 Mr. Pendleton: Yeah.

17 Senator Blumenthal: And that means that --

18 Mr. Pendleton: That means --

19 Senator Blumenthal: Go ahead.

20 Mr. Pendleton: Sorry. There's a --

21 Senator Blumenthal: What does it mean?

22 Mr. Pendleton: -- periodicity to this. Every couple
23 of years, or less, you have --

24 Senator Blumenthal: Right.

25 Mr. Pendleton: -- to be certified that you can do

1 things: drive a ship, work your coms, everything -- and in
2 warfare areas, as well. So, that means that they had missed
3 that certification time.

4 Senator Blumenthal: And it doesn't necessarily mean
5 that they were not competent to perform duties that they
6 were doing, but it does reflect on the kind of training that
7 was --

8 Mr. Pendleton: And the trend was of concern, as I
9 think the Admiral has mentioned, as well.

10 Admiral Richardson: And I would just articulate that
11 if that certification has meaning, then we've got to do the
12 damn certification. And we can't just walk by it and try
13 and talk our way out, that, "Hey, we're still proficient,
14 even though the certs expired." That's just not an
15 acceptable way to do business.

16 Senator Blumenthal: Well, not acceptable, I agree.
17 Thirty-seven percent -- and going from 7 percent to 37
18 percent in just 2 years is pretty --

19 Admiral Richardson: Egregious.

20 Senator Blumenthal: -- staggering.

21 Thank you.

22 Chairman McCain [presiding]: Senator Sullivan wants to
23 have another --

24 Senator Sullivan: Just two --

25 Chairman McCain: -- question.

1 Senator Sullivan: -- two quick ones, Mr. Chairman.

2 Thank you very much.

3 It was really a followup to Senator Blumenthal's
4 question, which was the home port versus -- the overseas-
5 ported versus, kind of, CONUS home-ported ship. The
6 statistics that were just read, I think, are pretty
7 striking. And, Admiral and Mr. Secretary, I know you're
8 going to be looking at the specifics of these accidents and
9 what specifically happened, but I think if you could also
10 help address, kind of, the strategic elements -- Is there
11 something that we should be looking at that makes the
12 overseas-ported -- ships that are based overseas, going
13 through different training, different deployment cycles --
14 if you can help address that issue, too, because it does
15 seem like that's something that might be an element of this
16 challenge. Do you agree with that?

17 Mr. Spencer: Two -- yes, Senator. Two things that
18 have, regrettably, come out of this, as far as I'm
19 concerned. And Mr. Pendleton hit on metrics. I'm a true
20 believer in metrics. We have to know what we're measuring
21 and what we're looking at. And this is a prime example of,
22 Can we get ourselves a dashboard that is very easy for,
23 quote/unquote, "management" to look at the dashboard and
24 have the appropriate indicators on there at any one time?
25 This is what we need to do. We don't need to actually be

1 having our hands and fingers into what's going on there. We
2 have to have the first indicators on when to react and say,
3 "Uh-oh, trending in the wrong position, let's address."

4 If you look at the study that I have asked to be stood
5 up, we are addressing the overall root causes of what's
6 going on. The CNO is looking at tactical causes. We are
7 going to be looking at root causes. We've asked people from
8 BP North America to join us. They lived through the
9 Deepwater Horizon tragedy and came out the other side with a
10 very strong plan. We called the Maritime Academy and said,
11 "Who is your poster child for maritime safety who's had an
12 issue?" And they said, "Speak to Crowley Marine. They had
13 a bit of a rash. They have a great program now, called Road
14 to Zero." Called Tom Crowley. He said, "You're on it."

15 We looked at other situations that were out there. We
16 called the Mayo Clinic. The Mayo Clinic has done 7 years of
17 studies looking at high-pressure, team-oriented places. And
18 what they were looking at were operating rooms, where you
19 had professionals -- seven different teams of professionals,
20 doing a lung transplant over a 7-hour period, and they
21 degraded the whole thing, started over again, and said, "How
22 do we build this for optimum outcome?" And it came to such
23 human behavior aspects as the anesthesiologist can go, "Need
24 a minute here. Everyone stop. I need to stabilize
25 something," and had input and control into a situation of

1 pressure and intensity that had one leader, but they had to
2 actually culturally realign how they communicate with
3 everyone.

4 These are the kind of insights and people we're going
5 to have working on our level to really see if we can have --
6 we will have a plan to do corrective action.

7 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you.

8 Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could pile on.

9 There is a real benefit to having ships forward
10 deployed.

11 Senator Sullivan: Oh, I couldn't agree more. Don't
12 get me --

13 Admiral Richardson: We need to --

14 Senator Sullivan: -- wrong. I think it's actually
15 critical that we have ships forward deployed.

16 Admiral Richardson: And so, for a number of reasons,
17 that you're aware of. What we do need to do when we forward
18 deploy ships, though, to Mr. Pendleton's point, is, we need
19 to have a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to
20 sustain that forward-deployed force from a maintenance,
21 training, infrastructure standpoint, people, you know, the
22 whole thing. And --

23 Senator Sullivan: Yes. And that's just what I'm
24 requesting you take a look at that issue, as well.

25 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Chairman McCain: Well, let me just add. Admiral, I
2 appreciate everything you're saying, but it doesn't take a
3 study of RAND or Mayo when you're making people work 100
4 hours a week. Okay? It doesn't take any study. I don't
5 have to ask RAND to look at it. I think I know what 100
6 hours a week does to people over time. And that's been
7 standard procedure for a long time. What are -- why not
8 declare a stop to -- a halt to it right now? Right now.
9 They should not be working 100 hours a week. So, I
10 appreciate all our plans and all our remedies, but there are
11 some of them that are just common sense, that don't require
12 a study.

13 So, I think the men and women who are serving in the
14 Navy would like to see some immediate action taken. Seven-
15 month deployments are a long time. Up til now, there have
16 been times where those deployments have been a lot longer
17 than that. Who is looking out for them? Who's asking them
18 to stay in?

19 So, I appreciate all the studies you've ordered, and
20 all the assessments and all that. There are some that, all
21 you have to do is use common sense and make some changes
22 that would, obviously, relieve some of the strain. When
23 somebody's working 100 hours a week over a period of time,
24 they're going to make mistakes. Any manager can tell you
25 that.

1 So, Mr. Secretary, I'm glad you have all these plans.
2 I'm glad you're going to make changes. I'm glad you've got
3 RAND and whoever the hell else it is that's studying it.
4 There are some aspects of what we're subjecting the men and
5 women who are serving, especially in the overseas deployment
6 ports, that you could change -- you could make the change
7 tomorrow. And what we would like to see is some significant
8 changes. Fire a few people, that's fine. But, I'm not sure
9 it relieves that individual who's still working 100 hours a
10 week. And one of the reasons why that person is working 100
11 hours a week, obviously, is because the enormous burden that
12 have been placed on them, not only to do their job, but also
13 a lot of additional requirements that, every time there's
14 been a problem, "Well, let's give another lecture, let's
15 have another training session, let's have another test."
16 So, again, it's -- I appreciate what you're saying. I
17 appreciate what you're doing. But, I'd also like to see
18 some immediate commonsense actions taken that anybody with a
19 -- any manager, any leader will tell you that if you work
20 somebody over 100 -- 100 hours a week, you're not going to
21 get an efficient output. And there's many other aspects
22 that are -- of that are doing. If you deploy -- if you keep
23 deploying ships more than 7 months a year, you're not going
24 to keep good people in the Navy. You're just not. They
25 prefer a better life.

1 And so -- and finally, speak truth to power. One of
2 the reasons why you are having to impose these burdens and
3 the extended deployments and the lack of readiness is
4 because of sequestration. When you don't know from -- as
5 you mentioned, when you don't know in September what you're
6 going to be doing in October, that's not right, and it's not
7 fair. So -- and, Admiral Richardson, I'd like to thank you
8 for your very frank and candid comments on that issue before
9 this committee.

10 So, I'd just like to, finally, say there are additional
11 family members who are here, and I would -- and I recognized
12 a group of them at the beginning, but I'd also like to thank
13 them again, those who were not here at the beginning of the
14 hearing. We thank you for your family's service and
15 sacrifice. They will always be remembered. And your
16 presence here renews and invigorates this committee's
17 commitment to making sure that every single life of every
18 single member of the United States Navy will be given the
19 utmost protection and the utmost care and concern, and not
20 allow situations to evolve that then make it likely that
21 their lives are in greater danger.

22 I thank the witnesses.

23 Ask Senator Reed if he has any additional comments.

24 Senator Reed: Mr. Chairman, I would simply join you in
25 expressing profound condolences to the families, and also a

1 profound commitment on behalf of the Congress and, I know,
2 the Secretary and the CNO, to take the steps necessary to
3 protect our men and women who wear the uniform of the United
4 States.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman McCain: Hearing is adjourned.

7 [Whereupon, at 12:21 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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