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.

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

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

I'd like to take a moment to recognize family members who have lost loved ones in the Fitzgerald and McCain collisions, who are here with us today as our honored guests. From the Fitzgerald, Eric Rehm, the wife of Chief Petty Officer Gary Rehm; Stephen Ritsuko and Shono Douglass, parents and brother of Petty Officer Third Class Shingo Douglass; Senior Chief Petty Officer Victor and Carmen Sibayan and their son, Luke, parents and brother of Petty Officer First Class Carlos Victor Sibayan; Wayne and Nikki Rigsby, father and stepmother of Seaman Dakota Rigsby; Darrold Martin, Chief -- father of Petty Officer First Class Xavier Martin. And, from the McCain, Jennifer Simon, wife of Petty Officer First Class Kevin Bushell, and his mother,
Karen Bushell, along with her wife, Anne Shane; Rachel Eckels, mother of Petty Officer Second Class Timothy Eckels; Theresa and Austin Palmer, mother and brother of Petty Officer Second Class Logan Palmer.

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

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

Thank you. And God bless.

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

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

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

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

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

Particularly, I'd like to know why the recommendations of the GAO and other relevant reviews, such as the 2010 Fleet Review Panel, were not effectively implemented and maintained. The lives of the 17 sailors lost in the Fitzgerald and McCain collisions were priceless, and I mourn their loss. These preventable incidents also come with a very real pricetag, in terms of the cost of these to taxpayers. I understand the current estimate for repairs is approximately $600 million. But, the cost will also be felt in unexpected deployments for other ships to meet
I'm also concerned by the apparent difficulty of navigating safely in the western Pacific. With three of these ships now nondeployable for months or years, due to damage repairs, there are serious questions about our maritime readiness to fight in response to North Korean, Chinese, and Russian aggression. The ongoing reviews directed by Secretary Spencer and Admiral Richardson must quickly get to the bottom of this and identify root causes, corrective actions, and further accountability actions. Time is of the essence. I hope these reviews fully examine how discrete changes over the years have compounded, resulted in prioritizing to -- prioritizing the need to do more with less. And that has come at the expense of operational effectiveness. These changes include longer deployments, so-called optimal manning of ships, less hand-on and initial training, less time for maintenance, less time to train, and an officer personnel system governed by laws, like the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act and the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which were put in place more than three decades ago and which may have created a preference for breadth of experience over depth of technical experience. We need to look seriously and rigorously at all of these types of systemic contributing factors. And I would like your assurance, Secretary Spencer, that you will
do so, and that, as you consider additional accountability actions, you will look at all levels of command, as appropriate.

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

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

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

Senator Reed.
STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND

Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

We should not prejudge the outcome of the internal Navy reviews of the circumstances around these accidents. However, we do know that the Department of the Navy has been facing serious readiness problems caused by deferred maintenance, reduced steaming and flying hours, and canceled training and deployments. In addition, the Navy, like other services, has also been operating at a very high tempo for a long period. These conditions have been aggravated by many
years of budget constraints and uncertainty which have forced leaders into making difficult decisions. All these factors have inevitably taken a toll on Navy commanders and Navy operations.

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

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

Chairman McCain: Secretary Spencer.
STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD V. SPENCER, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

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

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

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

In addition to the investigations already initiated, we are conducting two thorough reviews. The CNO's comprehensive review will take a look at the tactical and operational situation at hand. My strategic readiness review will be an independent team comprised of military and
industry experts that will look and examine root causes, accountability, long-term systemic issues, and then provide remedial insight. These reviews will complement and enhance each other, providing the depth and criticality to the -- that the situation demands.

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

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

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

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

Thank you, and I'll forward to your questions.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Spencer follows:]
Chairman McCain: Admiral Richardson.
STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JOHN M. RICHARDSON, USN, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

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

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

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

We are not stopping with immediate actions. In
addition to the investigations into the specific incidents
on Fitzgerald and McCain, we're conducting, as the Secretary
pointed out, a comprehensive review, which will turn over
every stone to examine for more systemic problems. And this
review will complement the Secretary's strategic review.

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

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

Our commanders must meet the absolute standard to
develop safe and effective teams. If we cannot meet the standard, we do not deploy until we do. We must establish a command climate that supports honest reporting.

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

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

    [The prepared statement of Admiral Richardson follows:]
Chairman McCain: Mr. Pendleton.
STATEMENT OF JOHN H. PENDLETON, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE
FORCE STRUCTURE AND READINESS ISSUES, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

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

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

Our work has also revealed significant management issues that the Navy must confront. In a 2015 report, we found that the ships based in Japan had such aggressive deployment schedules that they did not have dedicated training periods, like ships in the United States do. In fact, we were told that the overseas ships -- overseas-based ships were so busy that they had to train on the margins. When I asked what that meant, it was explained to me that it meant that they had to squeeze in training when they could.
The assumption, I think, was that the Seventh Fleet, because it was perpetually in motion, it was ready. I think the Navy has now realized that this conventional wisdom was, in fact, likely faulty. We recommended at the time, back in 2015, that the Navy revise deployment schedules to create dedicated training time, and also, more broadly, assess the risk associated with increased reliance on overseas basing of ships. DOD and the Navy agreed with us, at least on the paper, but they've taken little action since to implement our recommendations.

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

Maintenance is also taking longer and costing more. Ship deployments have often been extended. This causes ships to have more problems when they're brought in for maintenance. Shipyards have struggled to keep pace, for a number of reasons. Over the past few years, the lost operational days that's been created by the maintenance overruns have cost the Navy the equivalent of the presence
of almost three surface ships per year. That, in turn, strains the remaining fleet, and it's an unsustainable, vicious cycle.

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

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

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

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

Secretary Spencer and Admiral Richardson, surface force readiness has degraded over the last 10 years. Surface chain of command has become complicated on the waterfront.
There's a blurring of lines of authority and accountability. The growing backlog of off-ship repair requirements, a large, deep maintenance requirement that has not been adequately identified or resourced. The effort to derive efficiencies has overtaken our culture of effectiveness. The materiel condition of the surface force is well below acceptable levels to support reliable sustained operations at sea and preserve ships to their full service life expectancy. Ships home-ported overseas have limited training and maintenance, which results in difficulty keeping crews trained and ships maintained. Some ships home-ported overseas have had consistently deferred maintenance, resulting in long-term degraded materiel condition. Without a sustainable operational schedule and comprehensive risk assessment for ships home-ported overseas, it will be difficult for the Navy to identify and mitigate risks. I could go on.

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

Mr. Spencer: I do, Senator.

Chairman McCain: And I agree with you. Unfortunately, these are findings from the Navy and GAO reports from 2010 to 2015. Many of the issues we're discussing today have been known to Navy leaders for years. How do we explain that, Admiral?
Admiral Richardson: Senator, there is no explanation to reconcile those two observations. While clearly there is much more to be done, and these observations, you know, point to those -- and I commend the work of Mr. Pendleton and the GAO, as well, to providing such sound recommendations -- there has been, also, a -- an effort to address those observations. We've not been sitting idle. And so, while it's -- clearly, it's been insufficient to close the readiness and effectiveness gap, we have been making steady investments to respond to the indications that we've got in training and manpower and in maintenance. And we'll remain committed to closing that gap, as well, and reconciling the difference between supply and demand.

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

Mr. Secretary?

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

Chairman McCain: That's operation and maintenance.
Mr. Spencer: That is correct, I'm sorry.
Chairman McCain: Okay, go ahead.
Mr. Spencer: It's a tentative number. It's still in
work. But, that's where we think it's coming from. The
fleet will minimize the impact by incrementally funding or
shortening periods of contracts, where possible. This will
cause a degradation in the quality of work. The fleet will
also delay consumables and phased replacement materiel,
purchasing for ships, and this will impact, again, the
quality and service and the operation of the ships. We have
to do management of the funds resources we have. This is
not solely a funds issue, but you asked about CR and the
effects of sequestration. We are living them. They are
untenable.

Chairman McCain: Admiral?
Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could add to that. The
The effects of sequestration and continuing resolutions makes everything harder. Everything. And as we face the continuing resolution before us now, in addition to what the Secretary said, we will be considering deferring or slipping 11 more ship maintenance availabilities. There are dozens of new projects that we won't be able to get started on. These are things that had -- start to address some of these conditions that we've got.

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

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

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

Mr. Pendleton: Yeah. I mean, we heard about the impact of budget everywhere when we do our work. It's hard to pin it down exactly. There's examples in our reports, of depot maintenance being deferred, and furloughs, and postponed deployments, and ship fuel problems. I think it's
a cumulative disruption, at this point. And I think -- what we judged, back last year, was, we are where we are. And the Department, not just the Navy, needs a plan for going forward, in part to be able to articulate what's real and reasonable, going forward, sir.

Chairman McCain: Thank you.

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

Senator Reed.

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

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

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

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

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

Senator Reed: And so, in the process, going forward,
not only will you be attempting, I think, to analyze the
issues, come up with resources, but also continue to stress
the idea of commanders having the ultimately responsibility
to determine the worthiness of their ship.
Admiral Richardson: That'll be the absolute center of gravity of our effort, sir.

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

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

Senator Reed: With respect to deployed forces, there seems to be a distinction between deployed forces and stateside forces, in terms of lots of things -- repairs, refitting, resources, training. That is going to be a focus, I presume, of you and the Secretary's inquiries about what's the -- why the disparity?
Admiral Richardson: It certainly will be a focus of the comprehensive review, to take a look at the way we generate and certify readiness, compare it to the forces in the United States, the rotational forces that leave -- deploy and come back, versus those forward-deployed forces that remain at a higher state of readiness in theater.

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

Admiral Richardson: Sir, I'll tell you that it's too early to say if these had a specific impact on those incidents. Those investigations are still in progress. But, we are looking specifically at that. You know, what is the climate with respect to the priority of training and certification, and does it always get given lower priority to operations and the need to go out and execute the mission? And then, as Mr. Pendleton and the Secretary have hinted, that, when maintenance periods run long, that
further pressurizes our operational time. And so, training
gets -- you know, is there a pattern to consistently box out
training, particularly the training on the fundamentals?
That's absolutely a focus of the investigations.

Senator Reed: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Inhofe.

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

But, at this hearing, the -- Moran testified that the
Navy could only meet about 40 percent of its demand from the
regional combatant commanders. We've heard the
reaffirmation of that, which has been going on for a long
time. We also heard the Navy is the smallest it's been in
99 years. He went on to say, "It's become clear to me that
the Navy's overall readiness has reached its lowest level in many years. That is all due to the inconsistent, insufficient funding that does not match the demand for Navy forces due to global threat situations." So, we hear over and over again that the Navy is taking on more, and with less.

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

Admiral Richardson?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And, in addition to that pause, the Seventh Fleet conducted a standdown to address navigation and seamanship
basics. As a result of that, we've made a number of corrections -- immediate actions, if you will. All -- first of all, all waivers for certifications, the certification process has been elevated now to the four-star level at the Pacific Fleet commander. We are reviewing every single ship, ship by ship, to evaluate their materiel and operational readiness. That is being done both administratively to make sure that our certification process --

Senator Inhofe: Yeah.

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

Senator Inhofe: Yeah.

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

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

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

Senator Inhofe: Yeah.
Admiral Richardson: -- safety for --

Senator Inhofe: Well, Mr. -- thank you very much --

Mr. Pendleton, you know, your candid and, I think, alarming assessment of the whole situation is not a surprise. And, as you look over the -- all the forewarned things that -- I think the Chairman said in his opening statement, said, "We were warned," and I think we were. You -- it does boil down to -- I think it does, anyway -- to resources, and a lot of it -- I think you would probably agree with that.

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

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

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Inhofe: Thank you.

Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here today.

Cybersecurity, as we all know, is a growing concern as we become more reliant on electronic means for communication, for storage of data, for operation and day-to-day systems, and also for navigation and control systems. And I understand that cyberexperts from the Tenth Fleet were sent out to Singapore to investigate electronic data onboard the USS John McCain to see if any cyberintrusions had taken place, and that Admiral Moran stated, last week, that future accident investigations will include cyber investigations to ensure that there's been no tampering.

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

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

And we've -- and the Navy have been on a steady path to
continue to harden ourselves against -- we'll really be prepared for operations in combat in the cyberdomain. And that starts, first and foremost, like everything, with people and organizations. And so, we've been steadily bringing in and training cyberexperts into our team. We stood up that Tenth Fleet as a response to that. We have technical authority at the -- at SPAWAR, out in San Diego, and we've got a information warfare-type commander, just like all the other services, down in Hampton Roads, Virginia. And so, we believe that we're organized properly. Those organizations are becoming manned. Their structures are -- those billets are being filled, the training is being done.

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

Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I'm glad to hear that. And obviously, that's another area where resources are very important.
Senator McCain has talked about the problems of sequestration, which everyone on this committee knows very well. But, I wonder if you could talk, in detail, about the impact of continuing resolutions, budget cycle after budget cycle, and how they affect maintenance and training plans for ships. And are forward-deployed ships affected more than ships stateside? Can you -- is there any correlation there?

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

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

Senator Shaheen: Which is a sad commentary --

Admiral Richardson: Which is --

Senator Shaheen: -- on the budget situation.

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

And in addition to just to that fact, the -- what happens is, you have to double your contracting. Right?
You have to right a tiny little contract for the length of
the continuing resolution, and then you have to write
another one for the rest of the year. As you know, nothing
new can start. And so, we try not to schedule anything new
in that first quarter.

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

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

--

Senator Shaheen: Please.

Mr. Spencer: -- if I may?

One of the things that you heard me testify, when I was
first here for confirmation, was, we really have to get our
hands on industrial science, which the most primary
fundamental of that is the line of sight to your resources.
As I'm out there speaking to our suppliers and our
contractors, who are more than willing to work on our
behalf, they cannot run their businesses when they don't
have line of sight to commitment. And that is critical.
Senator Shaheen: And certainly, that's something that I've heard from suppliers in New Hampshire, as well.

Thank you all.

Chairman McCain: Senator Wicker.

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

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

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

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

Senator Wicker: Sixty days from today?

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

Senator Wicker: Okay.

Admiral Richardson: Secretary's strategic review will complete, nominally, 30 days after that. I do want to emphasize, that's an aggressive timeline. I want to get these answers now, but I also want to get these answers right. And so, we'll evaluate to make sure that we're doing a complete assessment, and not just rushing to a partial assessment.
Senator Wicker: Okay. Now, you mentioned leadership, and particularly at the command level. Can you shed any more light on the two officers who were fired last week? The Navy mentioned a loss of confidence in their ability to command. Are you able to be more specific to the committee at this point about those two individuals?

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

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

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

Senator Wicker: They were not aboard the ships.

Admiral Richardson: No, sir.

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

We have a modernization issue, and we have the more immediate readiness issue. I think they're both tied together. And so, let me ask you -- just continue with you, Admiral Richardson. We have a requirement for 355 ships in our fleet today, is that correct?
Admiral Richardson: Sir, several studies -- Navy studies, outside-the-Navy studies -- have pointed to a fleet size around 355-360 ships.

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

Mr. Spencer: Yes, I do.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Senator Wicker: And then -- and finally, what about this issue of sleep deprivation? There have been some New
York Times articles, and other publications, about pervasive sleep deprivation among sailors, particularly surface warfare officers standing watch. Is that part -- do you think that's likely to be one of the reasons that we eventually get down to on this issue?

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

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

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

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

Chairman McCain: Okay. But, I'd just point out, if we
know that somebody's working a 100-hour workweek, I'm not sure we need a study.

Senator Hirono.

Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

Senator Hirono: Right.

Admiral Richardson: -- commanding officer of the ship.

Senator Hirono: But, I think that's -- is that what you meant when you said that you would have to also change the culture? Because already you're only able to meet 40
percent of the combatant commander's request, so the culture
issue is probably that everyone wants to meet the demands
for deployment, and so the culture needs to be changed.
That's safety first. Is that what you meant when you said
culture?

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

Senator Hirono: Yes.

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

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

Admiral Richardson: Exactly.

Senator Hirono: The Optimized Fleet Response Plan, the
new fleet deployment and maintenance model, appears to be
falling short. It leaves no margin for error and extended
deployments. Maintenance backlogs and missed training
evolutions appear to have become the norm and commonplace.
And, while it is too early to identify the exact causes of
the accidents, developing a more flexible and realistic plan
should increase the ability to train and conduct
maintenance, and lead to fewer accidents.
Admiral Richardson, is the Navy looking to update the plan? And how does the Navy intend to address this issue?

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

Senator Hirono: So --

Admiral Richardson: -- compress it so much.

Senator Hirono: Excuse me.

Admiral Richardson: Now, there is --

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

Admiral Richardson: This is the observation --

Senator Hirono: -- with regard to --

Admiral Richardson: -- Mr. Pendleton and the GAO, that these -- the way by which we generate and certify readiness in the forward-deployed naval forces is a bit different. We
expect them to maintain an overall higher level of readiness. And so, they don't get as deep as -- maintenance out there. They get more continuous types of maintenance so that they can stay overall ready.

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

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

Admiral Richardson: So, this is --

Senator Hirono: -- change that --

Admiral Richardson: -- this is an --

Senator Hirono: -- situation?

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

Senator Hirono: You noted in your testimony -- and this may be a question that you can only respond to for the record, because I am running out of time -- in your testimony, you said that the Navy's subjected to budget pressures, to do more with less, operational pressures to put busy forces on station more quickly and more often, and
schedule pressures to make adjustments to training and
maintenance plans. And you also noted that none of these
can excuse the commanders from doing what they're supposed
to do. But, of the three pressures you that identified in
your testimony, which do you have the most control over?
Budget pressure, operational pressure, schedule pressure --
which do you have the most control over?

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

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

Admiral Richardson: Yes, ma'am.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Senator Hirono: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Senator Cotton.

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

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

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

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

I think every member of this committee has called for
that at one point or another, to include every Democrat, but we didn't even have a vote on the amendment, because Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, wanted more to leverage in budget negotiations later this year, and the Democrats in his caucus went along with him. So, their complaints about sequestration fall somewhat on deaf ears.

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

Now, let me turn to the state of your sailors' training. Admiral Richardson, in the GAO report there are indications that, in the forward-deployed naval forces, you have sailors who have not achieved mission-critical certifications on things like seamanship, air warfare, ballistic missile defense, cryptography, electronic warfare, intelligent strike warfare, cruise missile tactical qualification, naval surface fire support, surface warfare, undersea warfare, and visual board, search, and seizure. Without trying to assess whether these failures -- or these lack of certifications were behind the incidents with the
Fitzgerald and the McCain, I assume that's something that you seek to address rapidly.

Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir, absolutely.

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

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

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

Admiral Richardson: They can occur within that -- particularly the -- for the forward-deployed naval forces, they can occur in the course of maintaining yourself
You just have to dedicate the time to do the training and get the team onboard to do the certification.

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

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

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

[The information referred to follows:]

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

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

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

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

Anything to add, Admiral Richardson?

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

Senator Cotton: Thank you.

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

Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
And thanks, to the witnesses.

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

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

And, Admiral Richardson, I talked to you yesterday about the seriousness of this investigation -- the two investigations. I was Governor of Virginia when there was a horrible violent incident at Virginia Tech, and 32 people were killed by a deranged young guy who killed them. I went
to Virginia Tech the day after the tragedy. I was told by the president of the university that they would empanel a panel to review what happened, and I said, "No, you're not going to empanel a panel. I'm going to put together a panel. I'm going to make sure the panel has experts who have no connection with Virginia Tech and who have no connection with any of those who were injured or wounded, and I'm going to ask them to tell me everything that went wrong and everything we can do to fix it." I was advised, by lawyers connected with the State, "Don't do that. It will give people a roadmap to bring a lawsuit. It will open up all kinds of pain for the State if you're candid and unsparing." And I said, "I don't care about the lawsuit. People died. And the only thing that we can do, sadly, is try to learn everything we can from what caused them to die so that we can reduce the chance that that happens to anybody else. So, we're going to get every answer, and we're going to be transparent and public about every answer, and then we're going to fix everything we can."

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

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

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

Admiral Richardson: Sir, that is correct. Back in 2003, we stood down the Surface Warfare Officer School, at the division officer -- the beginning level. And we thought we could achieve the aim and train surface warfare officers, junior officers, with a computer-based approach combined with on-the-job training at sea. And we found that that was woefully inadequate, have reversed -- come out of that. It was sort of a two-step process to come out of it, but now our junior officers and surface warfare pipeline do begin
with a basic division officer course which is 8 weeks long. It stresses fundamentals. It spends a tremendous amount of
time on seamanship and navigation, lots of simulators, as
Senator Wicker pointed out. And then, about midway through
their division officer tour, or between their two junior
officer tours, there's an additional 8 weeks of more
advanced training, still at the basic level, focused at the
junior officer. But, those are -- those have been put in
place -- the first one was put in place in 2012, second one
in 2014.

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

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

Senator Kaine: All right.

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

Senator Kaine: If I could, one last question. There
is a blog forum that is used for discussion, often by
surface war -- surface ship officers. It's called Commander
Salamander. And there was a notable blog entry, a
resignation letter -- an anonymous resignation letter that just came to my attention late last night. It was published in November 2008, and here is a portion of the letter, "The problem of checking the boxes, vice actually being a capable Navy, exists everywhere. Lessons learned and codifications of best practices have led the Navy to being a force focused on the checklist as the end state, vice actually capability. As one example," comma, "Afloat Training Group, ATG, does not care that a ship has a method to ensure safe navigation."

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

[The information referred to follows:]  
[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Admiral Richardson: Senator, no stone unturned. We'll look at every indication we have, and address that.

Senator Kaine: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator Reed: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

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

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

But --

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

Admiral Richardson: Sir, we are. But, I would say that, I think the Optimized Fleet Response Plan has been somehow misunderstood to be a rigid, you know, unresponsive thing. It's actually very fluid, and it's a -- it's just a process by which we generate, you know, forces for deployment. And so, for instance, if a maintenance period,
let's say for the carrier, goes long, you know, the rest of the process will be adapted to accommodate that delay. If more training is required to get through the basic phase, we'll adjust. And so, this is not a, you know, one-size-fits-all, "This is what we do, and nothing else." It's actually a pretty fluid plan. It tries to get the maintenance done, get the manning onboard early in the process, so those people that we train are actually the ones that we're going to deploy with. And then there's a sort of a crawl-walk-run approach to training. And all that is adaptive to the circumstances on the ground.

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

Senator Reed: Thank you.
Admiral Richardson: -- that there is room for flexibility within the OFRP to accommodate for change.
Senator Reed: Thank you.
Mr. Pendleton: Senator Reed, can I add something?
Senator Reed: Mr. Pendleton, yes, please, and then I'll recognize Senator Ernst.
Mr. Pendleton: Yeah. So, we looked at the Optimized Fleet Response Plan, and we looked at the Navy's plan for readiness rebuilding, and everything the Admiral said is -- about it is true. There's really two things I'd want to leave with you. One, the Navy's plan for readiness recovery
is predicated on the Optimized Fleet Response Plan, which is four words for "schedule." That's because that's what it is. Staying on time, that they -- they're able to do that. And that's difficult when you have delays, or whatever.

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

Senator Reed: Thank you.

Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could.

Senator Reed: Yes, sir.

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

Senator Reed: Right.

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

Senator Reed: Yeah.

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

Senator Reed: Thank you. Thank you both, gentlemen.
Senator Ernst, please.

Senator Ernst: Thank you, Senator Reed.

And, gentlemen, thank you for being here today.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Senator Ernst: Thank you. Thank you, Admiral.

Mr. Pendleton: So, everything the Admiral said, I think's very honest and reflects the situation out there.

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

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

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

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

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

So, thank you very much, gentlemen.

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

Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
And I want to say to all of our Navy families who have lost loved ones, thank you for being here today. We grieve with you, and we owe you an explanation of what happened. And I know our leadership feels the same way.

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

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

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

Senator Warren: Okay. I assume we're going to find a way to close this --
Admiral Richardson: We are.

Senator Warren: -- quickly now?

Admiral Richardson: Absolutely.

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

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

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

Admiral Richardson: Well --

Senator Warren: -- certifications?

Admiral Richardson: -- I can get you the exact number.

There's a number of different certifications. And I'll provide that exact number for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]
Admiral Richardson: But, all three of them, because it was pervasive in the forward-deployed naval forces --

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

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

Senator Warren: Right.

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

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

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

Senator Warren: Okay. So, let me just ask, Admiral Richardson, do you believe it's irresponsible to allow our
sailors to deploy repeatedly on cruises without the training they need to ensure the safety of the ship and its crew?

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

Senator Warren: Yes.

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

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

Senator Warren: And I appreciate that. And what I'm
hearing you say is that you're conducting a thorough review. This is not going to happen in the future.

Admiral Richardson: We'll get this right.

Senator Warren: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain [presiding]: Senator Rounds.

Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

Senator Rounds: That would be fine.

Admiral Richardson, would you care to --

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

Senator Rounds: The reason why I ask is that it seems to me that we're almost -- it's almost like squeezing a balloon, in some cases. When we start talking about moving resources, even if we could move them, we're still talking about the limited resources brought about by sequestration and limited budgets that all of our Armed Forces are suffering with right now. If we take a look at the readiness side and the modernization side, we've got, just within the Navy itself, some of the best examples that we
are going to continue to remind you of, our three nuclear-powered submarines that are sitting at dock, as opposed to being in depot, because we don't either have the depot space or the dollars in order to actually get them back up and operational. Billions of dollars in assets that are not at the ready. And, in fact, they're not even dive certified. You've got over 60 percent of your F/A-18s that need maintenance or that simply aren't operational at any given time.

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

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

Mr. Spencer: Senator, I'd like to dive in first, here. I want to carry on your analogy. It's not a balloon. Or,
if it's a balloon, it's a balloon that is so pressurized, there's no movement. You squeeze it, it pops. That is the extent that I'd see it, coming at it from a business point of view. The funding balance-to-asset allocation here is way out of whack, and we have to get that back on track. There's other things we have to do, but, if we're addressing the financial resource side right now, there has to be some adjustments, because the balloon is at exploding pressure.

Senator Rounds: Admiral Richardson?

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

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

To the families that are out there, I know that our focus right now is on the leadership within the Navy and the commanders in the Navy and what they want to do about it. This goes deeper than that. This is a case of where the
United States Congress has to provide the adequate funding to take care of these young men and women who put themselves in harm's way every single day. And we will not forget that.

Thank you, gentlemen.
Thank you, sir.

Chairman McCain: Senator Peters.

Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
And thank you, to our witnesses here today.

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

Senator Peters.

Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Again, thank you, to our witnesses, for testifying on this very important issue.

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

Director Pendleton, I certainly appreciate your report and your testimony here today. I just have kind of a
straightforward question, just to get some clarity as to priorities that we need to be thinking about, in terms of, hopefully, avoiding more of these incidents in the future. Just a question. If you traded places with either of the gentlemen who are sitting next to you, the Chief of Naval Operations or the Secretary of the Navy, in your mind what would be the first steps that you would take?

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

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

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

Senator Peters: You mentioned, in your opening testimony, about a plan, the readiness plan, that we need to continue to demand that. Would you please elaborate on those comments?
Mr. Pendleton: So, in -- last year, in 2016, we looked at the readiness rebuilding plans of all the military services, including the Navy, as well as how the Department of Defense was overseeing it. And we came away with the conclusion, not to put too fine a point on it, that they didn't have a comprehensive plan for how they were going to go forward. There was a lot of recognition of the problem, a lot of priority being assigned to it, but what we couldn't see was, if you put money in, how much readiness were you going to get out? And also, there was the question of how you were going to manage the demands.

So, what we suggested, hopefully was practical: What are your goals? In some cases, the goals weren't clear to us. You know, how are you -- what are you -- how much are you going to be able to get next year and the year after? What's it going to cost? How long is it going to take?

Those kinds of things. Because our concern was, we would look up in 5 years and be in the same situation.

Senator Peters: The concern that was expressed by Senator Ernst and I last year -- in fact, we sent a letter to Secretary Mabus -- concerned with individuals and the Navy's dependence on electronic devices for navigation. I know we don't know the reason for these incidents and the accidents, but sometimes over-reliance on electronics can lead to some problems. When you think about the warfare of
the future, a conflict in a space, we could have -- GPS
systems could be compromised, communications systems could
be compromised. All sorts of issues could be related to
that. And there is a sense that we need to make sure that
we're training our sailors in good old-fashioned seamanship,
which means navigating the old-fashioned way, with charts
and other types of navigational aids that were done before
electronics, and make sure that there are eyeballs out to
the sea at all times, not just relying on the electronics.

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

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

We need to fund these things on a continual basis. It's
easy to say, "These are things of the past. Why can't we
tick them to the curb?" But, you bring up some very salient
points about what happens when we're denied access to
certain technologies.

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

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

Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis.

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

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

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

Mr. Pendleton: Probably not, in a microsense like that, but I will say that I think the way that plays out, actually, is in making choices of short-term versus long-
term plans. If you look in my -- in our statement that we
provided for the record, we show the Navy's plans to build
ships kind of goes that way, and its personnel plan goes
that way.

Senator Tillis: Right.

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

Senator Tillis: Yeah.

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

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

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

Admiral Richardson? I do have some other questions
that I'd like to get to fairly quickly.
Admiral Richardson: Sir, the -- our investigations really concentrate on what is within our span of control. We get the resources that you give us, and it's our responsibility, and the responsibility of command, to take those resources, operate safe and effectively.

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

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

Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir.

Senator Tillis: Now, we -- I think that Chair McCain mentioned his concern with, maybe we're getting more breadth and not enough depth as we're training up men and women to fill these roles. And one question that I have, If you have the average length -- assignment length for a CO on each of these ships to be 1.8 years, and a commander to be 18 months, are we kind of tightening the length of time that we're actually giving these people an opportunity to get
that depth of experience before they're put in a command role? And do you think that that's an okay thing, or something that we should look at?

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

To be honest, sir, we look at that constantly. It's not like we're waking up, you know, from a long sleep, here. But, we need to give it a fresh look as part of the comprehensive review.

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

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

Senator Tillis: One other quick question. And, as I said, I've got a number that I'm going to submit for the record -- but, do we have a surface warfare community retention problem?
Admiral Richardson: There's nothing really that's been brought to my attention for the community, writ large. The exception would be nuclear-trained surface officers. That's a community under particular pressure that we watch very closely.

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

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

Thank you.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]
Mr. Spencer: Mr. Chairman, could I provide one more answer? Would that be possible?

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

Chairman McCain: Senator King.

Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Admiral Richardson: Sir, got the same questions. It's
very hard to understand, with the sophisticated systems onboard these warships, that we let a ship get in that close, to the point of collision. And so, that is a direct --

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

Admiral Richardson: Right.

Senator King: -- with merchant vessels.

Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir.

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

Admiral Richardson: There are.

Senator King: -- on these ships --

Admiral Richardson: Yes, sir.

Senator King: -- that would detect --

Admiral Richardson: The primary --

Senator King: -- anything within the range?

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

Senator King: Is there a black box on these ships, like there is on an aircraft, so we can determine what the sequence of events was?
Admiral Richardson: We'll get to the sequence of events, yes, sir.

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

Admiral Richardson: We do.

Senator King: -- anymore?

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

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

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

Senator King: Or if they're not in a conflict situation, to emit some kind of signal to a -- to another --
Admiral Richardson: That's been an immediate action, is that there is this Automatic Identification System, AIS, that the Secretary mentioned. And we had, I think, a distorted perception of operational security that, if we kept that system secure -- off in our -- on our warships. One of the immediate actions following these incidents is that, particularly in heavily trafficked areas --

Senator King: In trafficked areas, like --

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

Senator King: -- like Japan.

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

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

Admiral Richardson: Those --

Senator King: -- of the radar system.

Admiral Richardson: Those specifics are forthcoming.

Senator King: Forthcoming soon?

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

Senator King: All right.

Let me turn from this subject, for a moment, to maintenance. I think the testimony from our friend from the
GAO was that the maintenance capacity is not adequate, and that, therefore, we have ships that are in port too long, and that puts a strain on the ships that are left at sea. Is that accurate?

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

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

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

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

Admiral Richardson: We need more, yes, sir.

Senator King: And is that in the plans anywhere? Is that in any submissions of budgetary priorities in the future?
Admiral Richardson: One of the other reports that Mr. Pendleton just recently issued was a report on our shipyards. And so, how to increase the capacity through modernizing our shipyards. We work closely with the private sector to have these discussions all the time, in terms of: How do we increase that capacity? So, it's something that has our attention, yes, sir.

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

Admiral Richardson: Now --

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

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

    Senator King: Thank you.

    Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

    Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

    Admiral Richardson: Right. Senator, we're taking sort of a two- -- response along two timescales, if you will, sir, so we want to get the full investigation done with alacrity. And we are doing that. And so, this fall, you know, timeframe, we'll get those complete. But, we're not
waiting for those things to be done to act. And so, there are a number of tactical immediate actions. I mentioned the Automatic Identification System. We're going to turn that on so that we're much more visible to other ships. Mandating that we perform both manual and electronic tracking of all other vessels that will come within 2 and a half miles. We've got mandated commanding officer review and approval of the watchbills, the watchteams that will be doing that. So, there's a number of actions, my point being, that we are doing now to enhance the things that Senator King and you are talking about.

Senator Donnelly: How many radar systems do you have on at a time? And are there --
Admiral Richardson: There are --
Senator Donnelly: -- are there backups for --
Admiral Richardson: For navigation and safety, two radar systems, a primary and a backup. And then there may be a third commercial radar that we use sometimes.

Senator Donnelly: Were they working at the time of these incidents, on both ships?
Admiral Richardson: Sir, I don't have those details, so we'll get to that.

Senator Donnelly: Mr. Pendleton, in your statement, you identify a number of recommendations from past GAO reviews that the Navy has not yet implemented. Which do you
consider the most urgent of those?

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Spencer: $4.86 billion to get our yards back in
shape. We're going to have to do something to move that
ball down the road.

Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

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

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

The other thing is this -- there is a cultural factor
here, where, you know, you've got -- it's just a little bit
more -- you know, you're more dedicated, if you will, if you
can go to the extra mile and stay awake. That's like
pulling an all-nighter in college. I have two daughters in
college, and, you know, they -- it's too common there, as
well. And so, it's a combination of education and culture
change to make sure that people are seeking this rest.
Senator Donnelly: And the last thing I want to ask is, as you do these investigations, very often, as I know you're aware of, the people who know the best as to how to fix it are the ones who are on the front line and who are right there on the ships or in the submarines. And I want to know what we're doing to make sure we incorporate their ideas in how we move forward.

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

Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

On behalf of Chairman McCain, Senator Sullivan, please.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

I also want to offer my condolences to the families. And, you know, this is just completely unacceptable, period. No debate about that. I don't think anyone's debating that. But, you know, when the men and women of our military do
what less than 1 percent of Americans do in this country,
which is raise your right hand to support and defend the
Constitution and keep us safe, we've got do a better job,
all of us -- the Navy, the Marines, the Army, the Congress.
And it's unacceptable.

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

Admiral Richardson: Right.

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

Admiral Richardson: Well, I --

Senator Sullivan: -- can we better understand it?
Admiral Richardson: Right. Sir, my experience is, just as yours, that these catastrophes really result from the accumulation of a number of small errors that build up and line up eventually to create a sequence that results in an incident of this magnitude.

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

With respect to the technology that this -- the equipment for all of those critical systems -- navigation, steering, propulsion -- we have a primary and a backup system for every one of those. So, GPS is backed up by inertial navigators. We have a primary and a backup radar. For the rudders -- we have two rudders, and each of those rudders has a primary and a backup hydraulic cylinder. And so, there's a lot of redundancy built into these systems, because they are so fundamental to safety.

And so, now you get a sense -- and it goes back to
Senator Donnelly's question and Senator King's point, which is, How could all of that break down so catastrophically to result in a collision of this magnitude. And that's why we have to do the thorough investigation.

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

Mr. Secretary, can you try to address --

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

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

Mr. Spencer: It definitely is a problem. Not only will you hear from my report group as to any actions done at
the Senate level or need to be adjusted here in this chamber or other chambers, you are going to hear from them. We're going to address DOPMA, we're going to address the NUA amendment, we're going to address how joint chiefs task. We have given this committee an infinite rein literally to address everything. At the operational level, the secretariat, the OPNAV, the CMC are all going through their instructions, going, What are we focused on? We're focused on readiness and lethality. What do all our instructions support? And if we find instructions that are not focusing us on those two items, we're going to bring them to your attention if you have control of them. If we have control of them, we're going to try to adjust this. It's the -- it's as I said earlier, the rucksack issue. All the best-intentioned in the world, put a rock in to do a training on smoking cessation, put a rock in to do other sorts of training. No one's taking a rock out, and the rucksack's getting pretty damn heavy.

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

And, Admiral, I'm assuming you would agree with that. But, I implore you to bring those issues back to us, because we're -- there's only so many hours in the day, and the mission of the Navy -- you know what that mission is. And we need to make sure our sailors are trained in the best way possible. And this rucksack issue you're talking about --
as a reservist, myself -- in the Reserves, it's even worse, because there's less time in a year to train. So, please bring those back.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

On behalf of the Chairman, Senator Blumenthal, please.

Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Senator Reed.

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

I am struck by a number of the questions and answers
that have been elicited so far, in dealing with this
intensely human tragedy in such an abstract way, which maybe
makes it easier to address. But, I think most Americans
find these crashes incomprehensible.

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

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

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

Senator Blumenthal: By the way, I did not mean to
imply that anybody on this panel, and particularly you,
Admiral, who has devoted your life to the Navy and service
and sacrifice, would feel anything but the most intense pain
and grief as a result. And, having a son who has served in
the Navy, another in the Marine Corps, I know that, as a
dad, I felt proud of the fact, not only that they were
serving, but that they were surrounded by people who really
cared for them. And they were the best-trained and the most
dedicated of any military force in the history of the world.
And yet, human error, as you've just pointed out, even with
the best equipment, may result in failure to operate the
equipment properly, which comes back to training.

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

Mr. Pendleton: Yeah, you're -- most of that's coming
from our work. The increase in overseas-based ships, I
think, went from 20 to 40, which was about 7 percent of the
Navy to 14 percent of the Navy. The certification numbers
that you described, that is from 2015 January until mid this
year. If you imagine -- the 11 ships that are based in
Japan, we looked at all the certification areas, 22 of them.
When we looked at that in 2015 -- imagine a bunch of little
squares -- 7 percent of those were red. When we came back, in preparation for this hearing, 37 percent of them were expired. Some of them, 2 years or more. And so, that was a trend that we alerted the Navy to and that we put in our updated work. For the most part, you have it right, but just wanted to make sure the specifics were --

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

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

Mr. Pendleton: Yeah.

Senator Blumenthal: And that means that --

Mr. Pendleton: That means --

Senator Blumenthal: Go ahead.

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

Senator Blumenthal: What does it mean?

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

Senator Blumenthal: Right.

Mr. Pendleton: -- to be certified that you can do
things: drive a ship, work your coms, everything -- and in warfare areas, as well. So, that means that they had missed that certification time.

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

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

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

Senator Blumenthal: Well, not acceptable, I agree.

Thirty-seven percent -- and going from 7 percent to 37 percent in just 2 years is pretty --

Admiral Richardson: Egregious.

Senator Blumenthal: -- staggering.

Thank you.

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

Senator Sullivan: Just two --

Chairman McCain: -- question.
Senator Sullivan: -- two quick ones, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Spencer: Two -- yes, Senator. Two things that have, regrettably, come out of this, as far as I'm concerned. And Mr. Pendleton hit on metrics. I'm a true believer in metrics. We have to know what we're measuring and what we're looking at. And this is a prime example of, Can we get ourselves a dashboard that is very easy for, quote/unquote, "management" to look at the dashboard and have the appropriate indicators on there at any one time? This is what we need to do. We don't need to actually be
having our hands and fingers into what's going on there. We have to have the first indicators on when to react and say, "Uh-oh, trending in the wrong position, let's address."

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

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

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

 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you.

 Admiral Richardson: Sir, if I could pile on.

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

 Admiral Richardson: We need to --

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

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

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

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

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

So, I appreciate all the studies you've ordered, and all the assessments and all that. There are some that, all you have to do is use common sense and make some changes that would, obviously, relieve some of the strain. When somebody's working 100 hours a week over a period of time, they're going to make mistakes. Any manager can tell you that.
So, Mr. Secretary, I'm glad you have all these plans. I'm glad you're going to make changes. I'm glad you've got RAND and whoever the hell else it is that's studying it. There are some aspects of what we're subjecting the men and women who are serving, especially in the overseas deployment ports, that you could change -- you could make the change tomorrow. And what we would like to see is some significant changes. Fire a few people, that's fine. But, I'm not sure it relieves that individual who's still working 100 hours a week. And one of the reasons why that person is working 100 hours a week, obviously, is because the enormous burden that have been placed on them, not only to do their job, but also a lot of additional requirements that, every time there's been a problem, "Well, let's give another lecture, let's have another training session, let's have another test."

So, again, it's -- I appreciate what you're saying. I appreciate what you're doing. But, I'd also like to see some immediate commonsense actions taken that anybody with a -- any manager, any leader will tell you that if you work somebody over 100 -- 100 hours a week, you're not going to get an efficient output. And there's many other aspects that are -- of that are doing. If you deploy -- if you keep deploying ships more than 7 months a year, you're not going to keep good people in the Navy. You're just not. They prefer a better life.
And so -- and finally, speak truth to power. One of the reasons why you are having to impose these burdens and the extended deployments and the lack of readiness is because of sequestration. When you don't know from -- as you mentioned, when you don't know in September what you're going to be doing in October, that's not right, and it's not fair. So -- and, Admiral Richardson, I'd like to thank you for your very frank and candid comments on that issue before this committee.

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

I thank the witnesses.

Ask Senator Reed if he has any additional comments.

Senator Reed: Mr. Chairman, I would simply join you in expressing profound condolences to the families, and also a
profound commitment on behalf of the Congress and, I know, the Secretary and the CNO, to take the steps necessary to protect our men and women who wear the uniform of the United States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCain: Hearing is adjourned.

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