



November 12, 2014

Letter to Congress

As retired Admirals and Generals who have had the privilege of leading our military forces, we write to express our concern that the United States Department of the Navy is underfunded and overextended, placing our national defense, our Sailors and Marines, and the stability of the global economy at risk.

We urge Congress to provide the full funding the Department of the Navy needs for ships and aircraft, personnel, maintenance, training and operations.

During times of war, peace and those periods that defy conventional labels, United States naval forces play a unique role in defending our national security and projecting American force, influence and assistance around the world. We know the critical function served by the forward-deployed naval forces in countering threats from our enemies, promoting regional stability and responding to humanitarian crises.

In peacetime, the Navy-Marine Corps team provides a sense of security to regions around the world that allows national economies, free trade practices and democracies to flourish. In times of danger for our nation and our allies, the Navy-Marine Corps team brings swift and lethal responses to our enemies.

The Department of the Navy is able to engage in numerous and diverse missions because it is flexible and forward-deployed. The fleet can quickly go anywhere and can work from international waters, uninhibited by foreign authority. The Department of the Navy will always respond with an enthusiastic “can do” whenever asked to take on a mission.

In the past year alone, United States naval forces have been called upon to:

- Launch the first combat strikes that halted the advancement of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).
- Demonstrate U.S. support for partner nations around the Black Sea to promote peace and stability.
- Deliver disaster relief to victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.
- Combat pirates off the coast of Africa.
- Provide support to our forces in Afghanistan.
- Pressure Bashar al-Assad into giving up Syria’s chemical weapon supply.
- Fly crisis response forces for long-distance rescue operations in Sudan and Iraq.

The Department of the Navy’s mission will continue to be demanding as the nation confronts unpredictable and varied challenges around the world.

We are concerned that if the Department of the Navy is required to continue to respond to crisis after crisis without the funding needed to build new ships, repair old equipment and provide routine

maintenance to existing equipment, the nation risks permanent damage to our national defense and negative impacts on the domestic and international economies that rely on the safety and security that U.S. sea power provides.

USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) and its accompanying strike group completed two back-to-back deployments with only a two-month break in between. The USS *Bataan* Amphibious Ready Group recently completed its second extended deployment in 18 months. The Chief of Naval Operations has called these extended deployments “unsustainable.”

Ships, crews and equipment cannot continue the current pace of operations, and the retention of trained personnel will suffer, ultimately leading to reduced readiness for combat and other missions.

Additional funding is designed to do nothing more than provide the Navy-Marine Corps team the resources required to perform critical operations around the world. The increase in funding will support the implementation of our nation’s maritime security strategy, allowing the Navy and Marines to continue their first-line role in protecting our nation’s vital interests.

Increased funding will enable the Navy-Marine Corps team to:

- Build and maintain the 306 ships required (an increase from 289 today).
- Continue to provide vital combat support to our forces wherever they may be engaged.
- Update and maintain existing aircraft, invest in new designs and continue with critical modernization programs.
- Restore the fleet maintenance schedule that has been badly disrupted by 13 years of war combined with severe reductions in the number of ships.
- Replenish weapons inventories to required levels.
- Invest in the next-generation capabilities necessary for the Navy to remain relevant in the future.

U.S. Navy and Marine Corps forces deployed on the oceans of the world are highly effective in deterring those nations and ideologies that would threaten the geopolitical and economic security of our country and the security of our allies.

As China and Russia modernize and greatly expand their navies’ operations at sea, we know that we must act now, and we request your strong support.

Please contact Greg McCarthy at gmccarthy@powelltate.com if you have any questions or would like to discuss our concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

[Names of cosigners follow on next page]

ADM Stan Arthur, USN (Ret.)
ADM Jim Busey, USN (Ret.)
ADM Archie Clemins, USN (Ret.)
GEN James Conway, USMC (Ret.)
ADM Leon A. "Bud" Edney, USN (Ret.)
ADM Tom Fargo, USN (Ret.)
ADM Mark Fitzgerald, USN (Ret.)
ADM Bobby Inman, USN (Ret.)
ADM Jerry Johnson, USN (Ret.)
ADM Bob Kelly, USN (Ret.)
ADM Joe Lopez, USN (Ret.)
ADM James "Ace" Lyons, Jr., USN (Ret.)
GEN Robert Magnus, USMC (Ret.)
ADM Henry Mauz, USN (Ret.)
ADM Snuffy Smith, USN (Ret.)
ADM Steven White, USN (Ret.)
VADM Phil Balisle, USN (Ret.)
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VADM Brent Bennitt, USN (Ret.)
VADM Bill Bowes, USN (Ret.)
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RADM Joe Horn, USN (Ret.)
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RADM Corky Lenox, USN (Ret.)
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