

STATEMENT OF
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AND
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BEFORE THE
SEAPOWER SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
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Introduction

Madame Chairwoman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak before you today. As demonstrated through combat operations in the Balkans, and humanitarian efforts in Albania and Turkey, the forward-deployed forces of SIXTH FLEET are ready and capable to support U. S. national interests when called upon.

In many ways, however, our responsiveness to theater crises is fragile. Simply put, the U.S. Navy does not always have enough assets to cover missions assigned without multiple taskings of individual ships, submarines and aircraft. Across the board we

face force structure constraints even as theater demands increase.

The SIXTH FLEET is proud of its ability to respond immediately to crisis; but when facing the expanded challenges today in Southern Europe, the Balkans, North Africa and the Black Sea regions, numbers count.

Numbers Count

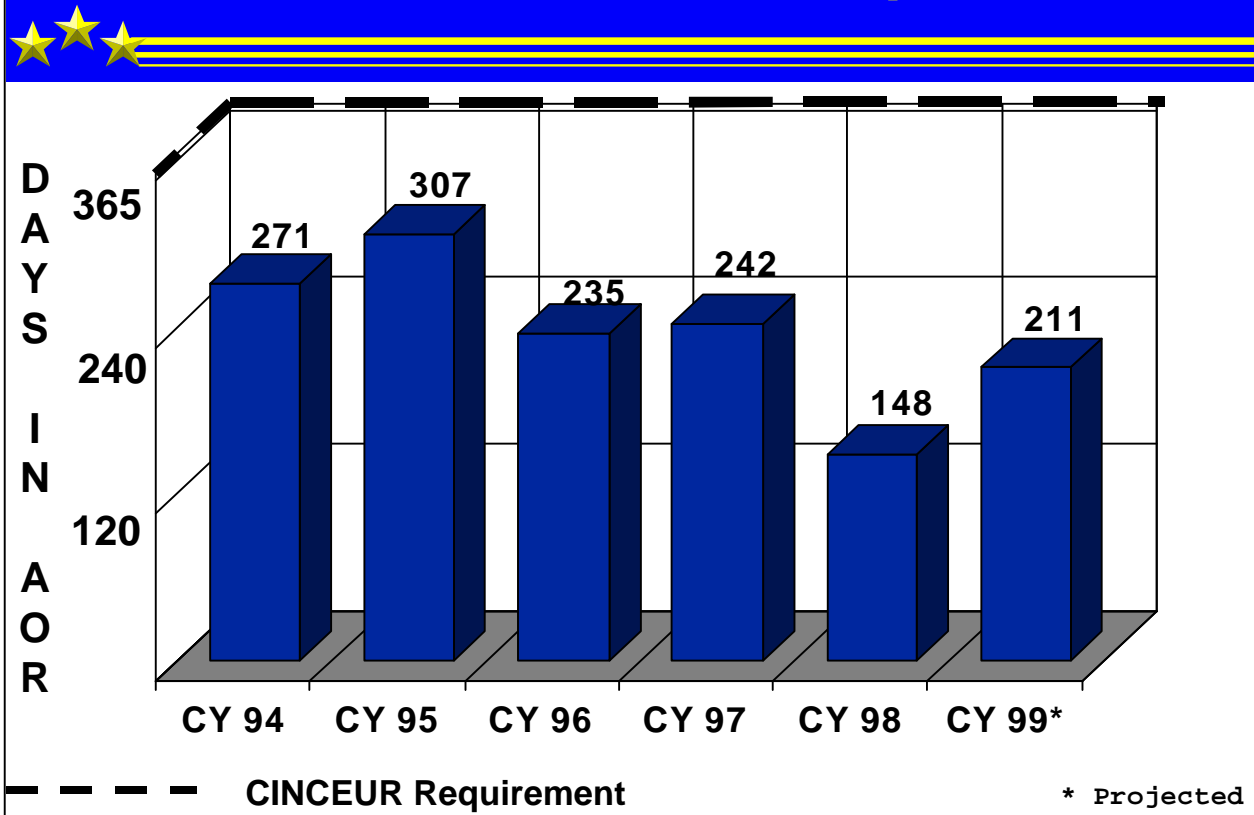
The drawdown toward the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) force structure during this decade is taxing our ability to do what is asked of us. On any average day, the SIXTH FLEET today has one third fewer combatants than prior to QDR reductions. Yet the range of missions and number of countries with which we must interact have expanded significantly. All elasticity is gone. As the Chief of Naval Operations has testified on several occasions, there is no shock absorber in the system.

CVBG And ARG/MEU

The heart of modern naval capability resides in our carrier battle groups (CVBG) and amphibious ready groups / marine expeditionary units (ARG/MEU). Their combined presence offers a level of responsiveness and range of options to the theater CINC unachievable by any other force combination. In recognition, the

Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (CINCEUR) has established a requirement for the continuous presence in the European Theater of at least one CVBG and one ARG/MEU. Regrettably, force structure limitations deny our ability to meet this requirement. In the case of CVBGs, we have been unable in recent years to come anywhere close. In fact, last year, CVBG presence dropped to a historical low as a consequence of the continuous need for naval power in the Arabian Gulf to contain Iraq.

EUCOM Carrier Battle Group Presence



The sharing of carriers, surface combatants, amphibious ships and submarines between the Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf is something we must do in order to balance our precious and limited resources against competing requirements. There are simply not enough carrier battle groups, amphibious ready groups and submarines in the Navy to meet global tasking. These critical assets are essentially time-shared between theaters.

Time-sharing based on immediate and projected need is formalized in an annual process, overseen by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and approved by the Secretary of Defense, which

produces the Global Naval Force Presence Policy (GNFPP). Last year's CVBG presence in the Mediterranean totaled only 40 percent of the CINCEUR requirement and little more than half the fair share objective. This year, because the THEODORE ROOSEVELT Battle Group was diverted from the Central Command to conduct Operation Allied Force, the percentage is somewhat higher, but still less than 60 percent of the CINCEUR requirement. As this committee well knows, THEODORE ROOSEVELT and the accompanying Tomahawk shooters made a significant contribution to the NATO air campaign against Serbia. This is where they needed to be at the time. Their loss to the Central Command, though, had serious ramifications. The KITTY HAWK Battle Group was surged from Japan to fill the void and the Pacific Command, despite tensions in Asia, was left without a CVBG presence. This ripple effect puts considerable strain on our people and increases risk in the theater from which forces are pulled.

When a full CVBG is absent from the SIXTH FLEET, a half dozen surface combatants and submarines must pick up the load. Though very capable, they do not satisfactorily fill the carrier's combat capability void. Fewer hulls to meet increasing operational commitments have also forced reduced U.S. participation in important training exercises with our allies and friends. The loss is not only in training and engagement

opportunity, but also in important American visibility and leadership in the region.

Maritime Patrol Aircraft

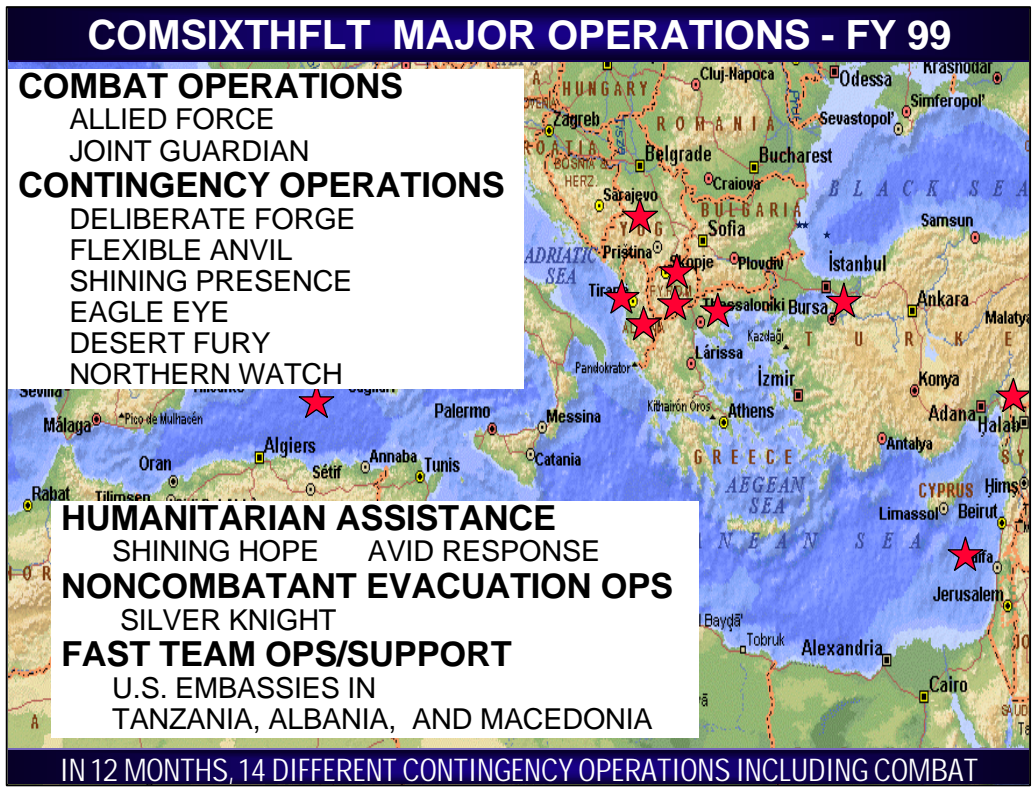
Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), both VP and VQ, span the entire theater, from the Azores to the Republic of Georgia, and from Scandinavia to South Africa. Operating in support or independent of CVBGs and ARG/MEUs, MPA have proven indispensable to the success of joint operations in southern Europe.

While assuming an expanded role in support of land operations it is essential the VP community retain its core competency in anti-submarine warfare. In the European theater, reduced numbers of airframes and crews, combined with expanded tasking and a broadened mission, threatens our ability to sustain the necessary level of ASW proficiency. During the past decade we have reduced SIXTH FLEET VP squadrons from two to one, and further reduced aircraft per squadron from 12 to nine. These nine aircraft were heavily tasked during Operation Allied Force and continue to fly regular surveillance missions over the Balkans. We essentially time-share the airframes between very different joint and maritime missions, asking the same crews to be as proficient in finding a tank as a submarine.

The VQ community is even more seriously stretched. In exceptionally high demand, our single squadron deploys to Turkey and Bahrain in support of both Northern and Southern Watch. Closer to home, VQ-2 flies daily over Bosnia and Kosovo. With only three aircraft normally available, there is little opportunity for employment of this key capability in its intended maritime intelligence collection role.

Maritime Patrol Aircraft (both VP and VQ) assigned to SIXTH FLEET have evolved into joint theater assets, tasked principally by CINCEUR for overland missions, and as available, by me for maritime missions.

Recent Employment of Forces: Theater "Walk Around"



Since assuming command fifteen months ago, I have regularly directed the SIXTH FLEET to respond on short notice to events on the European Continent, in Africa and the Middle East.

In August 1998, our Fleet Anti-terrorism Team (FAST) deployed to Tanzania immediately after the bombing of the American Embassy in Dar es Salaam. For over a month they provided security for investigators and our embassy personnel. During the same period, the SAIPAN ARG/22 MEU provided a SEAL platoon and approximately 100 Marines for protection of the American Embassy in Tirana, Albania, while simultaneously preparing for non-combatant evacuation of American citizens there and in the Congo, which required splitting the ARG.

In September last year, I became the Commander of Joint Task Force Flexible Anvil. In partnership with my USAF counterpart, we began extensive strike planning on board the SIXTH FLEET command ship, USS LaSALLE, in support of NATO efforts in the Balkans.

In November, our FAST platoon provided security for our Maritime Pre-Positioned Ships during NATO Exercise Dynamic Mix in Turkey, which occurred while Turkey was engaged in armed conflict with insurgent rebels.

In December, as the Balkans crisis continued, the SIXTH FLEET supported military operations against Iraq, providing assets to

the FIFTH FLEET and Central Command, repositioning forces from the Mediterranean to the Arabian Gulf.

At this time, with only a handful of ships remaining in the region, the SIXTH FLEET was stretched very thin. For example, USS PHILIPPINE SEA was placed on call to conduct Tomahawk (TLAM) strikes simultaneously in Iraq and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, even while participating in the U.S. effort to assist Israel in defense against possible SCUD missile attack from Iraq. The SAIPAN ARG/22 MEU, while participating in NATO Exercise Cooperative Best Effort in Macedonia, was tasked also to plan and possibly conduct extraction from Kosovo of observers from the Verification Commission and Organization for Security and Cooperation for Europe (OCE).

The NASSAU ARG/24 MEU relieved the SAIPAN ARG/22 MEU in late November and found itself quickly multi-tasked as the cornerstone of the strategic reserve earmarked to reinforce SFOR in Bosnia; on stand-by to extract Ambassador Walker and Kosovo Verification Commission observers; and as the U.S. contribution to the NATO Initial Entry Force in Kosovo, poised to enter Kosovo had the Rambouillet talks succeeded.

From August through December, SIXTH FLEET was on a short tether to conduct potential Tomahawk and tactical air strikes in support of NATO objectives. During its deployment, ENTERPRISE Battle Group did double duty as it twice departed the

Mediterranean for the Arabian Gulf to support the Central Command. During those times SIXTH FLEET air power consisted only of our two maritime patrol aircraft squadrons, fully committed to surveillance operations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq.

On 24 March, Operation Allied Force commenced against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Only eight days before, ENTERPRISE had departed for the Arabian Gulf to maintain constant pressure on Iraq. This was a difficult choice, which exposed the risk of our time sharing approach to naval deployments. CINCEUR wanted to keep ENTERPRISE but we simply did not have the numbers. We did, however, keep several of the ENTERPRISE Battle Group's Tomahawk-capable surface combatants and submarines. They, in combination with their THEODORE ROOSEVELT Battle Group replacements, launched more than 200 TLAMS and destroyed large percentages of critical target sets. At key times, when weather precluded effective laser guided munitions delivery, it was these few platforms that kept the air campaign moving.

ENTERPRISE's replacement, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, arrived from Norfolk two weeks into the conflict. Air Wing Eight commenced strike operations as ROOSEVELT raced into the Ionian Sea. They had to be fully ready upon arrival, and they were. Under the most difficult weather, terrain and air defense conditions they responded magnificently. By the end of the conflict, despite a

late start and with only eight percent of the total Allied aircraft, CVW EIGHT accounted for 30 percent of all verified kills against fielded forces in Kosovo. Had the CINCEUR requirement for continuous carrier presence been met, a Navy airwing would have been in the fight from day one. Though we can only speculate as to the difference naval air would have made in the first two weeks, I believe it would have been substantial.

The NASSAU Amphibious Ready Group and Marines of 24 MEU offered NATO immediately available ground forces from the outset of the conflict. TWO FOUR MEU was first called upon to provide security at refugee camps in Macedonia. Their SEAL detachment next teamed with the deployed FAST platoon to secure our embassy in Skopje, Macedonia, within hours after it was ransacked on 25 March by demonstrators protesting the NATO bombing. As the refugee flow shifted to Albania the ARG/MEU moved from the Aegean to the Adriatic and commenced AV-8B strike sorties into Kosovo. Simultaneously, 24 MEU Marines teamed with MH-53 helicopters from USS INCHON to distribute supplies and build refugee camps in Albania. In mid-stride the NASSAU ARG/24 MEU was relieved by the KEARSARGE ARG/26 MEU. They didn't miss a beat.

When President Milosevic capitulated, the ARG/MEU swung back to the Aegean and inserted two thousand Marines through Greece and Macedonia into Kosovo. Fully integrated into the NATO

command structure yet self-sustaining, the MEU performed flawlessly as the U.S. contribution to the Initial Entry Force. During the first very difficult 27 days they established a security framework in eastern Kosovo upon which the U.S. Army Fifth Corps has been able to build. Though the work in Kosovo is far from finished, the Marines and Sailors of KEARSARGE ARG/26 MEU ensured we got off to a sound start.

Shortly after re-deploying from Kosovo, the KEARSARGE ARG/26 MEU, again demonstrating the flexibility and diversity of expeditionary forces, was called to Turkey to provide earthquake disaster relief. They established a multi-agency command center, distributed and erected tent camps, and produced potable water. In the words of our Ambassador to Turkey: "the presence of the KEARSARGE Group provided not just a symbol of U.S. military power, but real proof of how the U.S. supports an ally in need, and your efforts will reap rewards for U.S. policy interests in the years to come."

As events of this past year illustrate, CVBGs and ARG/MEUs are among our most effective, versatile and responsive national assets. Yet there are only twelve of each worldwide, and they cannot be where needed all the time. Thus far, by time-sharing and splitting apart these assets, we have retained minimally sufficient numbers to do the job.

In most cases, however, numbers arrive just in time, leave a gap elsewhere, and place a strain on the Navy globally.

Contributors

Essential contributors to effective employment of available assets are theater-based ordnance, fleet maintenance, and fuel.

While we met all our TLAM mission requirements during Allied Force, this and other recent combat operations have eroded already low stockpiles, necessitating routine cross decking between deployed ships. Since October 1998, we have moved significant numbers of TLAM among 17 ships and submarines to meet minimum requirements in both the European and Central Command regions. Because TLAM transfers can only be conducted in port, the evolutions are subject to host nation approval. Our experience indicates that even with our closest allies, such approval is not guaranteed.

High expenditure rates of air to ground precision ordnance during Allied Force exposed shortfalls in our stocks of laser guided bombs and assemblies. While pre-positioned munitions ships provided timely re-supply, and cross-service lateral support offered stop-gap availability, we could not have continued much beyond day eighty without replenishment from stocks belonging to other CINCs. On the final day of the air

campaign, war reserves from the Atlantic and Pacific Commands were being readied for immediate shipment to Europe. As with ships and TLAMs, meeting the Allied Force PGM requirements exacted a price from other regions.

Fleet maintenance is a good news story. Deployers, both Navy and Marine Corps, are universally in top material condition when they arrive and experience no measurable degradation while in theater. Organic repair capability in our CVBGs, ARGs, and MEUs is of high quality. Recent investments in CVBG and ARG intermediate maintenance capability have served us well. Theater logistics infrastructure is as good as ever and repair part delivery from CONUS is timely. I am fortunate to have one of the two tenders remaining in the Navy inventory, and it is essential to meet repair needs beyond the capacity of our deployers. USS EMORY S LAND, though a submarine tender, routinely services surface combatants and amphibious ships. Additionally, she provides the only TLAM storage and battle damage repair available in the theater.

Our existing, organic fuel storage and distribution capability provides quality support during routine operations and proved essential during Allied Force. As a result of recent shore based fuel stock and infrastructure drawdowns, two prepositioned fuel ships were required to provide critical aviation fuel during the initial phases of the air campaign. Without the partnership of

the Military Sealift Command and SIXTH FLEET Combat Logistics Force, joint air operations would have been impacted while emergency commercial fuel contracts were being put in place.

Peacetime Engagement: Pre-QDR and Now

Continuous naval (Navy and Marine) engagement is what keeps doors open in this neighborhood. Though its value is difficult to quantify with precision, SIXTH FLEET engagement with Mediterranean and Black Sea countries is a powerful tool. In the past year I have met with the Presidents of three nations (Georgia, Bulgaria and Algeria) emerging from desperate conditions. Each expressed a strong desire to train regularly with the SIXTH FLEET and to host as many ship visits as we can support. Because we have lived in the neighborhood for a half-century, regional leaders place special significance on SIXTH FLEET interaction. To them we represent America's strength and, when engaged, commitment to their future.

To meet the growing demand for engagement, SIXTH FLEET bilateral partnerships have expanded from ten only six years ago to twenty today. The Black Sea, until recently a virtual inland water of the Soviet Union, now offers a common bond between the United States and four new nations (Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, and Georgia). Where previously we conducted no exercises, we now

engage in nine annually. As Caspian Sea gas and oil reserves are developed over the next decade, a secure Black Sea will be very much in the United States' economic as well as political interest. Building solid relations takes time and patience. We have begun the process.

As important as we know engagement to be, the SIXTH FLEET cannot cover all U.S. regional interests. Even as the demand has increased, the average number of combatant ships in the Mediterranean has decreased from fifteen to eleven. We have compensated by discontinuing all historical, Cold War era exercises, reducing interaction with our NATO allies and paring maintenance availabilities. We have also used the U.S. Coast Guard to help meet Partnership for Peace commitments. Only through the deployment of two USCG Cutters were we able to meet key engagement commitments while prosecuting the conflict in the Balkans.

Even with these significant measures, we are finding it difficult to meet our scheduled exercise commitments. Of the 94 exercises planned for this past year, inadequate numbers forced us to cancel or significantly scale back our participation in fifteen.

Conclusion

In March I reported to Congress that the principal shortfall in SIXTH FLEET readiness was an insufficient numbers of ships, aircraft and ordnance to perform fully the mission. This statement remains true today.

Events of the past year have clearly demonstrated the key role in safeguarding U.S. interests played by the Sailors and Marines of the SIXTH FLEET. In order to deter aggression, foster peaceful resolution of conflict, underpin stable foreign markets, encourage democracy and inspire nations to join together for peace, America must keep a multi-dimensional naval force ready to exert influence and extend U.S. leadership in the region.

I thank each Member of this subcommittee for your support in making it so.