

STATEMENT OF SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE
NAVY BUDGET OVERVIEW HEARING
MARCH 5, 2008

TODAY, WE WELCOME THE HONORABLE DONALD WINTER, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, ADMIRAL GARY ROUGHEAD, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, AND GENERAL JAMES CONWAY, COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, TO PRESENT TESTIMONY ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST INCLUDES \$149 BILLION TO SUPPORT THE NAVY AND THE MARINE CORPS IN THE COMING FISCAL YEAR. ALONG WITH THE FORTHCOMING REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS, THESE FUNDS WILL SUPPORT THE FORWARD DEPLOYMENT OF SAILORS AND MARINES TO THE FARTHEST CORNERS OF THE GLOBE.

THIS FORWARD PRESENCE CONTRIBUTES TO OUR SECURITY BY DETERRING CONFLICT IN STRATEGIC REGIONS, PERFORMING VITAL HUMANITARIAN RELIEF MISSIONS, AND CARRYING OUT COMBAT MISSIONS IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM. MANY AMERICANS MAY NOT BE AWARE OF THE FULL ROLE OF THE NAVY AND THE MARINE CORPS IN THE WARS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN. THERE ARE CURRENTLY 25,600 MARINES AND 7,800 SAILORS WITH BOOTS ON THE GROUND IN THESE TWO

COUNTRIES. OUR NATION OWES THEM, AND ALL THEIR FELLOW SERVICE MEMBERS, A SPECIAL DEBT OF GRATITUDE.

ONE CHALLENGE TO MAINTAINING THE POSTURE OF THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS IS TO EQUIP OUR FORCES WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO COMPLETE THEIR MISSIONS, BOTH TODAY AND INTO THE FUTURE. HOWEVER, HIGH-PROFILE MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS, LIKE THE LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP, THE EXPEDITIONARY COMBAT VEHICLE, AND THE PRESIDENTIAL HELICOPTER, HAVE EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS WITH COST AND SCHEDULE. THE COMMITTEE INTENDS TO UNDERTAKE A CAREFUL REVIEW OF THESE AND OTHER IMPORTANT PROGRAMS TO DETERMINE THE BEST COURSE TO MODERNIZE OUR FORCES IN THE MOST FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE MANNER POSSIBLE.

NOT ONLY ARE THERE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED ABOUT THE NEXT GENERATION OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS, BUT THERE ARE ALSO CONCERNS ABOUT HOW FUNDS ARE BEING INVESTED TO MEET THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF OUR SERVICE MEMBERS. THE RECENT GROUNDING OF P-3 AIRCRAFT IS ONE SUCH CONCERN, AND JUST RECENTLY, NEW QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED ABOUT WHETHER THE BUREAUCRACY ACTED QUICKLY ENOUGH IN GETTING M-RAPS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT TO THOSE CURRENTLY SERVING IN HARM'S WAY.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO OUR WITNESSES SHARING THEIR VIEWS ON BOTH THE CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES THAT THEY SEE FOR THE NAVY AND THE MARINE CORPS, AND HOW THE 2009 BUDGET REQUEST ADDRESSES THOSE ISSUES. BUT BEFORE CALLING ON OUR PANEL FOR THEIR OPENING STATEMENTS, THERE IS ONE OTHER MATTER I WISH TO RAISE.

AS THE COMMITTEE EXAMINES THE FISCAL YEAR 2009 REQUEST, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE BUDGET BEFORE US IS BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE SIX MONTHS AGO, AND IT WILL BE SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE OUR BILL MAY BE APPROVED AND SENT TO THE WHITE HOUSE. IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THE TIME IT TAKES TO ASSEMBLE AND REVIEW THE DEFENSE BUDGET, AS WELL AS THE INFORMATION GLEANED FROM THESE HEARINGS, THERE ARE LIKELY TO BE SEVERAL CHANGES WARRANTED IN YOUR REQUEST IN ORDER TO BEST SERVE OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE.

MY CO-CHAIRMAN, SENATOR STEVENS, AND I HAVE WORKED FOR MANY YEARS TO PROPOSE ADJUSTMENTS THAT MAKE SENSE. I BELIEVE OUR COUNTRY IS BEST SERVED WHEN CONGRESS AND THE MILITARY SERVICES WORK AS PARTNERS IN IDENTIFYING AND CARRYING OUT THE ADJUSTMENTS MADE DURING THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH EACH OF YOU TO CONTINUE THAT SAME

SPIRIT OF COOPERATION, WHICH IS NOW A TRADITION THAT HAS SERVED
OUR NATION SO WELL.

THE FULL STATEMENTS OF EACH OF THE WITNESSES WILL BE
INCLUDED IN THE RECORD. I NOW TURN TO MY CO-CHAIRMAN,
SENATOR STEVENS, FOR HIS OPENING STATEMENT.