

**Chairman Richard Shelby Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense**

**Hearing to Review the FY2019 Budget Request for the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps**

**April 24, 2018**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Good morning, the Subcommittee will come to order.

I am pleased to welcome Secretary Spencer, Admiral Richardson and General Neller to the committee for an update of U.S. Naval operations, and to review the fiscal year 2019 budget request for the Navy and Marine Corps.

For fiscal year 2019, the Navy and Marine Corps are requesting \$194.1 billion, which is an increase of about \$4.5 billion over amounts appropriated for fiscal year 2018, and is consistent with the two-year budget deal passed earlier this year. However, the funding level in this request is still below what the Navy had projected for the upcoming year before the Budget Control Act was passed in 2011.

Secretary Mattis has warned that “failure to modernize our military risks leaving us with a force that could dominate the last war, but be irrelevant to tomorrow’s security.”

This increase is a necessary first step to reverse the harm to our military by five years of sequestration budgets.

Today there are over 100,000 sailors and Marines and more than 100 ships forward deployed - including three aircraft carriers and three Amphibious Assault Ships.

Our nation has tasked our Navy and Marine Corps with assuring access to the world’s oceans and far-away regions, while defending our interests in those areas, protecting U.S. citizens across the globe, and preventing adversaries from using the worlds’ oceans against the United States.

Gentlemen, we look forward to your testimony and working with you during the appropriations process to meet the needs of the Department of the Navy in an increasingly complex strategic environment.

Now I turn to the Vice Chairman, Senator Durbin, for his opening remarks.