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### **HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON REBALANCING TO THE PACIFIC**

On 24 July 2013, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) held a hearing involving the rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region and implications for U.S. National Security. HASC Chairman, Representative Buck McKeon (R-CA-25), opened the hearing by asking several questions that he hoped to resolve in this hearing involving the rebalancing of the Pacific. He asked and focused on issues such as what security threats are present in the Pacific, what resources are missing, and if sequestration will create a threat to completing this rebalance. HASC Ranking Member, Representative Adam Smith (D-WA-09), stated that more attention on the region is needed to build relationships, especially with China, and he expressed the need to continue to re-balance to the Pacific while keeping our eyes on the rest of the world as well.

Witness opening statements began with Dr. Michael Auslin, Resident Scholar, Asian Studies and Director, Japanese Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, addressing questions and problems that are associated with the re-balancing of the Pacific. Dr. Auslin believes that there is a lack of clarity in regards to what the rebalancing is supposed to do. He brings up this point as there is very little change in regards to U.S. security posture and end strength. Dr. Auslin also talks about how the effects of the sequester and its future impact upon our pivot to the Pacific needs to be addressed more publically. Dr. Patrick Cronin, Senior Advisor & Senior Director of the Asia Program at the Center for a New American Security, expressed his belief that Naval military power is the main instrument in deterrence. He wanted to see the creation of an international community in the future years to promote relationships amongst all countries which can be done at a low cost. Admiral Gary Roughhead, USN (Ret.), former Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), stressed that the rebalancing of the Pacific is necessary and must be done in a strategic, realistic, and optimistic way. He stated how it was important the U.S. maintain stability in the area, while increasing readiness power in the Navy and even the Air Force. Dr. James Shinn, lecturer at the School of Engineering at Princeton University and former Assistant Secretary of Defense, began his opening statement by saying that rebalancing is a good idea, but enough resources need to be applied to make it successful. He would like to see China be deterred from an aggressive expansion, while continuing to analyze the actions of China decision makers.

Many questions, especially in regards to the future of China, were raised by the Committee. Chairman McKeon noted that increased nationalism can sometimes lead to armed conflict. He then asked how this would affect stability in the region. Admiral Roughhead replied that the Asia-Pacific region does not want a conflict, but a possible misstep could create maritime disputes. Admiral Roughhead used this to demonstrate the importance of having readiness protocols and procedures in place. Dr. Cronin also notes that Asia is moving from an “arms walk” to an “arms trot.” This statement later prompted a question from Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA-03) regarding why Asia, specifically China, is so invested in arms deals. Admiral Roughhead replied to this question by stating that China has the resources to do it, so they are attempting to preserve their own options. Representative J. Randy Forbes (R-VA-04) inquired about the capabilities of the Navy, asking if there were any additional capabilities that were needed to counter potential threats in the region. Admiral Roughhead replied by saying that a thoughtful approach is required, but the United States does have the lead in this area. However, as he expressed the need for more near term readiness, he would like to see the complete relocation of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) to Southeast Asia.

### **SENATE VETERANS’ AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MARKUP OF PENDING VETERAN BILLS**

On 24 July 2013, the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee (SVAC) held a markup of several AUSN bills of interest. SVAC Committee Chairman, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and Ranking Member, Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), held a 2 hour long markup session, hearing the cases for consideration along with notable amendments to a package of bills, known as an Omnibus bill, for pending Veteran bills of interest. This markup included provisions of S. 257, S. 294, S. 889 and S. 629, all top AUSN bills of interest, in the conduit of the omnibus Veteran bill markup, S. 944, the Veterans’ Educational Transition Act of 2013.

Overall, the marked up Omnibus Veteran bill, in the form of S. 944, would improve the delivery of care and benefits for Veterans who experienced sexual trauma in the military, provisions of S. 294, the Ruth Moore Act introduced by Senator Jon Tester (D-MT). AUSN sent a [letter of support for S. 294](#) AND [Legislative Alert #113-5](#). In addition, the SVAC passed markup Omnibus bill would extend to caregivers for Veterans of all eras, eligibility for the family caregiver program which currently provides benefits and services to caregivers of seriously injured post 9/11 Veterans. It also requires quarterly reports to Congress on efforts to eliminate a backlog of benefits claims by 2015 and improves Veterans health care through increased access to complementary and alternative medicine, chiropractic care and transportation services. Finally, amongst the other provisions, the bill expands employment opportunities for Veterans through new programs that will encourage employers to hire Veterans and by renewing the popular Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) from the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011.

Amongst the AUSN bills of interest included as provisions of the markup were S. 257, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013, introduced by Senator John Boozman (R-AR), which expands access to education benefits for Veterans and their survivors, including making recently separated Veterans eligible for tuition at the in-state rate and improving the level of benefits offered to survivors of servicemembers killed on Active Duty. Another bill included in the markup, also introduced by Senator Boozman, was the S. 889, the Servicemembers’ Choice in Transition Act of 2013, which would provide veterans with additional tools to ensure the successful utilization of VA benefits, specifically the provision which requires that transitioning servicemember receive information regarding disability-related employments and educational protections. AUSN sent Senator Boozman a [letter of support for S. 257](#) and a [letter of support for S. 889](#). Finally, a top priority for AUSN, included a provision of S. 629, the Honor America’s Guard-Reserve Retirees Act, introduced by Senator Mark Pryor (D-AR). In the Omnibus Veteran bill, the provision of S. 629 states that Guard and Reserve retirees with 20 years of service would be given the honor of being called a Veteran of the Armed Forces. AUSN sent a [letter of support for S. 629](#) to Senator Pryor as well sent out [Legislative Alert #113-9](#). With the House companion bill already passed by HVAC and ready for floor consideration, and included in the House’s Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), AUSN is optimistic that this Veteran Status legislation will pass this year in one form or another.

### **HOUSE ARMED SERVICES, PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON WOMEN IN UNIFORM**

On 24 July 2013, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing regarding the recent decision to open combat positions to women and the effects that it would have as well as how it would be implemented. Notable witnesses included Ms. Juliet Beyler, Director of the Officer and Enlisted Personnel Management Office at the Department of Defense (DOD), Lieutenant General (LTG) Howard B. Bromberg, Deputy Chief of Staff G-1, United States Army (USA), Brigadier General (BrigGen) Gina M. Grosso, Director of Force

Management Policy and Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services for the United States Air Force (USAF), Lieutenant General (LtGen) Robert E. Milstead Jr., Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, United States Marine Corps (USMC), and Rear Admiral (RADM) Barbara Sweredoski, Reserve Deputy, Military Personnel Plans and Policy, United States Navy (USN).

In his opening statement, HASC- Military Personnel Chairman, Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC-02), provided a summary of his hopes for the future; with expanded opportunities and neutral gender positions with the same standards and an emphasis on inclusion. In her opening statement, HASC- Military Personnel Ranking Member, Representative Susan A. Davis (D-CA-53), provided background by reiterating the end of the direct combat policy that had prevented women from serving in those positions in January and the goal to have all positions open to women by 1 January 2016. She also expressed an emphasis on capabilities and experience instead of gender and spoke for providing more open and not lower rules and requirements. Ms. Juliet Beyler, in her opening statement, reiterated the full implementation deadline as well as stated how the standards would be carefully reviewed in order to enhance readiness and combat effectiveness in the military and create a climate where women would be able to succeed and flourish. LTG Bromberg ensured the Subcommittee that no sacrifices in quality would be made and the best soldiers would be selected because of their qualifications and not their gender. He believed that the Army of the future would require more mental ability and teamwork and repeated the desire for a climate of trust and respect where every soldier could thrive regardless of gender. BrigGen Grosso and the rest of the witnesses repeated their commitment to completing the necessary steps in order to open all of the positions by 1 January 2016.

In the question and answer section of the hearing, Representative Joe Heck (R-NV-03) expressed his concern about backlash against the Armed Forces if some of the physical standards were lessened during the reviewing process to allow women. Ms. Beyler emphasized the process of validating the standards (not raising or lowering) in order to ensure that they are correct for the occupation of a member of the Uniformed Services. LTG Bromberg re-emphasized Ms. Beyler's point, saying that he would address the concerns with a factual basis that would be difficult to question. Representative Jackie Walorski (R-IN-02) brought up the issue, as she questioned the witnesses, of the possibility of increased sexual assault. Ms. Beyler assured her that sexual assault would not be tolerated and stated her belief that the more women were treated equally, the more the soldiers would treat each other with respect. LtGen Milstead addressed the issue and noted that it would be a process that would not happen overnight and needed time to implement. Representative Niki Tsongas (D-MA-03) asked the witnesses about the services considering different training for men and women so they would be able to meet the gender neutral goals. In response, LtGen Milstead answered the question from the point of view of the Marine Corps by discussing how men and women are separated during boot camp because of the transformations being on different tracks. He emphasized that the end result of becoming a U.S. Marine was the same and that the next steps of training were gender mixed.

#### **HOUSE PASSES FY14 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

On 24 July 2013, in the late evening, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2397, the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) Defense Appropriations Bill, by a vote of 315-109. The House, under approval of the House Rules Committee, considered 100 amendments, of the over 160 proposed, to the Defense Appropriations bill that shifted funds and established parameters for the Department of Defense (DOD) to operate under. One of the amendments approved included hindering funds from implementing furloughs of DOD civilians in Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14), while another amendment would further bar furloughs of DOD civilians employees, including uniformed National Guard personnel on civilian payroll, stopping continued Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) furloughs. This particular measure would subtract **\$2.6 billion** from the war budget and use **\$1 billion**, put into the Defense-wide Operations and Maintenance (O&M) account, to help halt or prevent further civilian furloughs.

The impact of this exemption of funds for civilian DOD employees from furloughs caused by sequestration is unclear at this point. It seems that if DOD has to meet budget caps, and has to take some of the cut out of personnel, and continues to exempt uniformed personnel from cuts, and, as a result of this amendment, can no longer furlough civilian employees, the Pentagon may have no choice but to start firing individuals (something that the authors of the amendment did not have in mind). However, Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Chuck Hagel has already plainly told Defense workers this month layoffs are in the offing anyway, absent of any budgetary relief by Congress. An amendment, which may help curtail future furloughs for the remainder of the year and into FY14, which passed early in the week, was a bi-partisan amendment sponsored by Representative Tom Cole (R-OK-04), which provided that no funds would be made available to implement continued furloughs of DOD employees who are paid from the Working

Capital Fund (WCF) account, which is a revolving fund and does not receive direct funding from Congressional appropriations to finance its operations.

The House also voted on and passed an amendment that established a ban on TRICARE for Life (TFL) enrollment fees, while increasing **\$500,000** for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) research, offset by Army Environmental Restoration account, and another amendment for **\$14 million** for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and mental health programs, offset by reductions in the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund. One of the more heavily debated amendments, which passed the House by a vote of 215-206, was an amendment by Representative Mick Mulvaney (R-SC-05) which reduced Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding by **\$3.5 billion**, however it would preserve the level of funding for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA), for modernization shortfalls for equipment for homeland defense and emergency response.

Notable amendments that were rejected included an amendment by Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR-03) which would have reduced funding for the Ohio-class submarines by 10 percent to help prepare the Department of Defense (DOD) for the sequestration. This amendment failed by a vote of 176-242. Another amendment that was rejected was an amendment by Representative Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI-02) which would have increased funding for the Navy Air-Launched Long Range Anti-Ship Missile program by **\$17 million** and reduces the (O&M), Defense-wide account by **\$17 million**. This amendment failed by a vote of 50-372.

Overall, the House passed Defense spending bill would provide **\$512.5 billion** in base funding for the military, which would provide **\$5.1 billion** less than Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) and **\$3.4 billion** below the President's Budget (PB) request for FY14. This is also approximately **\$28.1 billion** above the current level caused by the automatic spending cuts, aka 'sequestration', as a result of the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011. The bill originally included **\$85.8 billion** in war funding for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), but the passage of Representative Mulvaney's amendment reduces OCO funding to **\$82.3 billion**. Despite such actions, earlier in the week, on 22 July 2013, the [White House issued a Veto Threat](#) of the bill in its current form citing reasons, among many, to include excess OCO funds it deems 'unnecessary' as well as its disapproval of the House rejecting Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations and its disapproval of the House rejecting TRICARE fee increases. Once the revised bill text is available, to reflect the added amendments, AUSN will work on and post its Analysis of the FY14 Defense bill in its [AUSN Legislative Analysis of Defense Appropriations section of the website](#).

#### **HOUSE ARMED SERVICES, SEAPOWER SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP**

On 25 July 2013, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a hearing on the continued procurement of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) regarding recent reports from the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The witnesses present at the hearing were Mr. Paul Francis, Managing Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management, GAO, Vice Admiral (VADM) Richard Hunt, Director, Navy Staff, Department of Defense (DOD), and The Honorable Sean Stackley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Research and Development (R&D), DOD. The hearing was held by HASC- Seapower Chairman, Representative J. Randy Forbes (R-VA-04), and Acting Ranking Member, Representative Joe Courtney (D-CT-02), subbing in for Ranking Member, Representative Mike McIntyre (D-NC-07).

The HASC-Seapower Subcommittee started its hearing with opening remarks made by the Chairman, Ranking Member, and all three witnesses. Chairman Forbes expressed his concern that that recent GAO analysis of the LCS procurement program was doubtful of the efficiency of the vessel, in particular the program's initiative to complete sea frames and variable mission modules while further tests are needed to determine the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for which the LCS will be employed. Acting Ranking Member Courtney remarked that, "The LCS is a critical element of the Navy's long-term shipbuilding plan and our national security strategy," but acknowledged the need of this hearing in regards to the program's cost growth, procurement delays, and challenges meeting capabilities. VADM Hunt in his opening statement noted that the LCS is the, "right ship for the fleet," while Secretary Stackley explained that only through acquisition of the LCS can the Navy achieve the Chief of Naval Operations' (CNO), Admiral Jonathan Greenert's, goal for a fleet that is balanced, capable, variable, and composed of 306 ships. Meanwhile, Mr. Francis voiced concerns with DOD's policy of building the ship first, then completing operational testing. Mr. Francis agreed that the LCS is a necessary ship for the Navy, but that there must be proper studies to determine possible design changes and the possibility of slowing production to meet the current economic situation.

Following these opening remarks, Chairman Forbes deferred to the Subcommittee members for rounds of questioning. Representative Courtney opened by asking for DOD's response to Mr. Francis' assessment of the situation. Secretary Stackley commented that as with all procurement programs the Navy is participating in reviews of the LCS program that are specifically focusing on corrections of deficiencies identified by the USS *Freedom* (LCS-1) deployment to Southeast Asia, establishing commonality with fleet systems between the *Freedom* and *Independence* Classes of the LCS, and completing the development of the individual mission modules. This analysis was followed by Mr. Francis' response that until further progress has been made in developing these mission modules and a CONOPS has been established for how the LCS is going to be used, the current block buy effort under which 4 LCS will be completed each year through Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) should be reevaluated.

Through further questioning by the Subcommittee members, the witnesses reached what Mr. Francis termed a "violent agreement," by which the GAO understands the Navy's need for the LCS program while DOD warrants the concerns that rapid production of a sea frame before its mission modules are active may lead to future constraints on Navy capabilities. The consensus of the witnesses was that LCS acquisition should continue as planned through FY15 by which 4 seaframes will be completed per year, after which production should decrease to 2-3 seaframes per year while the Navy reports any design changes or a possible merging of the *Freedom* and *Independence* classes. However, the witnesses continued to differ on the economic merits of LCS procurement, with VADM Hunt and Secretary Stackley arguing that any further reduction would lead to increased building costs as shipbuilders would lose skilled workers. On the other hand, Mr. Francis repeated his concerns that with Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Mine Countermeasure (MCM) modules not coming online until 2017 and 2019, further construction of the LCS would be a reckless use of DOD funds.

#### **AUSN ON THE HILL**

In addition to monitoring this week's hearings, AUSN closely watched the House floor debate all week on the amendments to the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) Defense Appropriations bill. Of the over 160 amendments offered, the House Rules Committee allowed only 100 to make it to the House floor for consideration. In addition, AUSN had another successful Navy Now Forum at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, VA where the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Admiral Papp, drew a crowd of almost 100 industry, Navy and Coast Guard members at this luncheon session. Our Board of Directors met where they heard from our Executive Director about his meeting with the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Jonathan Greenert, last week who stated that AUSN is, "growing, and your influence is growing," noting some of our legislative work, which begins with our members being engaged through our Legislative Alerts and participating in the Legislative Liaison program!

#### **PRIORITY BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK**

**S. 1361, WWI Merchant Mariners Service Act.** Introduced by Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT), the bill would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept additional documentation when considering the application for Veterans status of an individual who performed service as a coastwise merchant seaman during World War II for purposes of Veteran consideration by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

**H.R. 2841, (*Official title yet to be released*).** Introduced by Representative Nick Rahall (D-WV-01), the bill would amend Title 10, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Defense affords each member of a Reserve Component of the Armed Forces with the opportunity for a physical examination before the member separates from the Armed Forces.

**H.R. 2785, Military Reserve Jobs Act of 2013.** Introduced by Representative Tim Walz (D-MN-01), the bill would amend Title 5, United States Code, to improve the hiring of Veterans by the Federal Government and State governments.

**H.R. 2749, Veterans Education Transparency Act.** Introduced by Representative Rick Larsen (D-WA-02), the bill would amend Title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain records available to educational institutions where Veterans or persons receiving educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary are enrolled.

In the advocacy section of the website, you can click on [Bills of Interest](#) to get daily revisions on Congressional action for all AUSN priority bills. We STRONGLY encourage you all to visit our [Advocacy](#) page, especially the [Capitol Hill Blog](#) which receives almost daily submissions when Congress is in session to see what AUSN is doing for you on Capitol Hill.

We also encourage you and your friends and family to visit the [AUSN FACEBOOK PAGE](#). If you have an account, please Login and “Like” us, which will allow you to see our [TWITTER](#) feeds and other updates from AUSN that shows us monitoring Capitol Hill on your behalf!

### **NEW LEGISLATIVE ALERTS**

There were no new legislative alerts this week. Again, when these alerts are sent to your email, please click on the **TAKE ACTION** link that is at the top of the alert email to send a letter response to your Members of Congress (a few of you have written in that you wish to send letters, but don’t know how). Please continue to go to the [Legislative Alerts](#) section on the AUSN webpage and/or check your e-mail and submit ones you haven’t seen yet to your Congressional delegation.

### **NEXT WEEK OUTLOOK**

Next week, both the House and the Senate will be in session for the last week before the August recess. There are a few hearings of interest, such as a House Veterans’ Affairs Committee (HVAC) markup on pending Veteran bills of interest and a Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee (SVAC) hearing on financial opportunities for Veterans and their families. In a recent development, however, the Senate Appropriations Committee (SAC) has indicated it intends to markup its Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) Defense Appropriations bill by next week Thursday, keeping on pace with the House’s recent passage of its FY14 Defense Appropriations bill this week. In addition, AUSN will be having meeting with staff of Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) as well as with Representative J. Randy Forbes (R-VA-04). In addition, AUSN will be meeting with the Office of the Chief of Navy Reserve (CNR) as well as with VADM Mel Williams, USN (Ret.) who now heads up Military and Veteran initiatives at George Washington University (GWU).

### **AUSN LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT ACCEPTING LEGISLATIVE INTERN APPLICANTS FOR FALL 2013**

The Association of the United States Navy (AUSN) is looking for a full or part time unpaid Legislative Intern for their offices in Old Town, Alexandria.

Candidates should have, or be pursuing, an undergraduate degree in Political Science/Government Affairs/Communications. Strong writing and personal skills a must! An interest and passion for the United States Navy and Navy Reserve is highly desirable. In addition to administrative tasks, i.e. answering phones and helping to schedule appointments, interns will monitor and write After Action Reports on Congressional Hearings of interest such as House and Senate Armed Services, Appropriations and Veterans’ Affairs Committee hearings. Interns will also have the opportunity to attend meetings with Congressional Staff along with the Legislative Director as well as other meetings off of Capitol Hill.

The Legislative Director is also willing to oversee a research project of the intern’s interest if they are pursuing class credit for the internship. Candidates can submit a cover letter, resume and 1-2 page writing sample to the Director of Legislation, Mr. Anthony A. Wallis at [Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org](mailto:Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org) or fax it to 703-683-3647. Schedules are flexible/negotiable for the summer and Metrorail travel reimbursement is available to interns as well as free parking at our headquarters off of King Street in Alexandria. Please apply by **10 AUGUST 2013**. More information can be found on [AUSN’s Legislative Department Intern webpage](#).

### **CALL FOR AUSN NATIONAL RESOLUTIONS**

In preparation for AUSN’s Annual Business Meeting, [Annual Meeting Registration Now Open Here](#), (formerly Annual Conference) in Alexandria, VA on 26- 27 September 2013, proposals for 2013 National Resolutions are currently being accepted. Any AUSN member may propose a Resolution or Resolution change which should address a legislative or policy issue related to the missions and goals of our organization. Resolutions are received, reviewed, and processed by the Resolutions Committee at the Annual Business Meeting.

Resolutions must be timely, concise, and include sufficient background information. Resolutions must be submitted 30 days in advance of the 25 September 2013 meeting in order for proper staffing, review and formatting as needed.

A listing of current Resolutions, adopted by the Resolutions Committee at the 2012 meeting, can be found and reviewed at the [AUSN National Resolutions webpage](#). For new submissions, changes and edits, as well as instructions on formatting, changing or adding new Resolutions, please visit our [“How To/ Resolutions Format”](#) which also includes a downloadable form for submission at the top right of the page as well. Please follow instructions on the form carefully.

Proposed Resolutions and Resolution changes can be sent by mail to AUSN Headquarters, ATTN: AUSN National VP of Government Relations and Resolutions Committee Chair, RDML Robin Graf, USN (Ret.), 1619 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. They can also be sent by email to [anthony.wallis@ausn.org](mailto:anthony.wallis@ausn.org) at least 30 days before the Annual Business Meeting, no later than **25 AUGUST 2013**.