



Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing
*To consider the nomination of Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., USN,
for reappointment to the grade of Admiral and to be Commander,
U.S. Pacific Command*

Adm. Harris Opening Remarks

2 December 2014

As delivered

Mr. Chairman, ranking member Inhofe and distinguished committee members, I'm honored to appear before you today as the nominee to lead Pacific Command. I want to thank President Obama for nominating me and I also want to thank Secretary Hagel General Dempsey, Secretary Mabus and Admiral Greenert. I'm deeply humbled by their confidence in me.

I'm fortunate to be joined today by my wife, Bruni -- I simply wouldn't be here without her love and support. Bruni served in the Navy herself for 25 years, after she graduated from Annapolis in 1984. We met in Japan when we were both stationed there. I chased her to Hawaii, and thank God she agreed to marry me in 1989. Bruni represents a growing number of military spouses who serve our nation in uniform.

The all-volunteer force is sustained by our families. I'd like to thank this committee for your enduring support of our service members and their families.

I'd be remiss in not specifically thanking Chairman Levin, who will retire in 2015. Sir, your four decades on this committee have made all the difference.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee as our nation confronts the complex and compelling challenges in the vibrant Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Our most volatile and dangerous threat is North Korea, with its quest for nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them intercontinentally. The dramatic rise of China's military, the uncertainty about how it will use its growing capabilities, and its provocative actions in the region represent our most enduring challenge.

As we continue to defend our national interests abroad, our efforts are bolstered by our teammates in the State Department and across government. Our collective efforts amid the challenges I mentioned underscore the importance of America remaining strong and engaged in the region. American leadership does matter.

Since our strategic rebalance was announced three years ago, we've broadened our operations with Japan, deployed Marines to Australia, and improved missile defense cooperation with South Korea. We've also signed an important security agreement with the Philippines. The rebalance is real and although we all have concerns about the fiscal landscape, I believe that America has the staying power to sustain it. But there is more work to do and if confirmed, I will remain laser-focused on deepening our regional alliances and partnerships to increase our combat agility and readiness.

I'm fortunate to have had operational and policy experiences, command assignments, and educational opportunities that align completely with PACOM's mission. I believe they have prepared me well for the challenges ahead. If confirmed, I would follow the trails blazed by some truly great leaders like Admiral Sam Locklear, Bob Willard and Tim Keating who mentored me and shaped my understanding of the region. Admiral Locklear's leadership of PACOM for the past three years has been of critical importance, and I'm proud to have served as his Navy Component at Pacific Fleet.

I look forward to serving alongside the world's best Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, civilians, and their families ... as well as working with this committee and the Congress as a whole to address the national security challenges we face.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished committee members, leading PACOM is a significant responsibility. If confirmed, I pledge to all of you that I will devote all of my energy and focus to the job. I look forward to your questions. Thank you.