

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
ANOTHER CROSSROADS?
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY
EDUCATION TWO DECADES AFTER THE GOLDWATER-NICHOLS
ACT AND THE SKELTON PANEL
NOVEMBER 30, 2010**

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Chairman Snyder, Representative Wittman, and distinguished members of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, thank you the opportunity to discuss Navy's views on the Committee's April 2010 report, *Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades after the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel*.

We appreciate the Subcommittees efforts in conducting such a comprehensive assessment of Professional Military Education (PME) since enactment of Goldwater-Nichols. The major findings are accurate in identifying the fundamental issues warranting critical deliberation as we continue in our commitment to improve PME and the professional development of the officer corps. We concur with the Subcommittee's assessment that, while the PME system is basically sound, there are areas that need improvement. We are engaged with the Joint Staff and other Services in a deliberate, collaborative assessment to evaluate recommendations to improve officer in-resident PME. Our approach is to seek solutions that enable development of a broad portfolio of core capabilities to support vital interests, realized by well-prepared, highly-motivated and ably-led professionals.

Navy places significant value on PME as we develop and enable resilient and adaptable leaders to meet challenges at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. Naval War College, renowned for its PME program, has once again received accreditation through the Process for Accreditation of Joint Education (PAJE), for Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) Phase I, and first-time accreditation for JPME Phase II. Navy continues to emphasize PME as we provide unique and complementary maritime war-fighting skills to joint and combined force commanders. We support these commanders with operational forces led by commanding officers who have completed PME.

In response to the need for increased joint and service-specific subject matter to be taught earlier in an officer's career, Navy has established a career continuum of PME. We have a sequenced continuum of learning that provides relevant education aligned to career progression spanning E-1 through O-8, with a goal of providing Navy's Total Force with a standardized, comprehensive understanding of the Navy and its war-fighting capabilities. PME, at the primary, intermediate, senior, and flag levels, involves developing habits of thought and key attributes such as critical thinking, effective communication, and risk management.

We concur with the report's observation that, while PME is a factor in cultivating strategists, it is not the primary means for developing future strategic decision-makers. As noted, Navy has a relatively advanced process for cultivating strategists. We are actively engaged in a review of how we develop our senior leaders, as we work to further enhance development and tracking of strategists, through improvements to Navy's politico-military education, utilization and community sponsorship program.

Competing demand for time in the career track of officers of the Unrestricted Line (URL) remains a primary challenge. We continually review officer development timelines to explore innovative avenues to provide increased opportunities for education, training and experience. Recently, we implemented new approaches to officer development through introduction of specialty career paths for URL officers, which are not typically available within the warfare enterprises. These specialty career paths, including Antiterrorism/Force Protection, Missile Defense, Strategic Sealift, Operations Analysis, Operational Planner and Training Management, allow Navy to better integrate training, education and experience tours focused on specialty areas, while officers continue to serve in their warfare communities. Our executive

officer/commanding officer (XO/CO) fleet-up program, by which prospective CO's are first assigned to serve as XO of the ship or squadron they will ultimately command, capitalizes on direct experience received within a particular command, and captures valuable career path time for fulfilling other developmental assignments, including education. We are continuing to explore other potential innovative opportunities.

We concur with the report's observation that Naval War College's detailed appointment letters provide well-defined expectations related to appointment renewals and performance appraisals, and serve as positive examples for use by the other services to recruit and sustain quality faculty. We are currently evaluating the report's recommendation that Navy consider instituting a quality board process for selection of in-resident PME students, by evaluating our process of screening top performing officers for eligibility to attend service colleges. This recommendation was an agenda item before the Vice Chief of Naval Operations-chaired Advanced Education Review Board (AERB) last month. Navy has appointed a cross-functional working group to evaluate the current selection board processes for JPME in-residence education. Results of the group's evaluation will be presented to the AERB in April 2011.

Navy takes a balanced approach to professional education that views operational competency and primacy of command as the key professional measures for Naval Officers. PME has been instrumental in developing a highly educated and more effective leader. We value the flexibility provided by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which permits Navy to manage the content, quality and conduct of our PME Continuum.

Thank you again for your strong support of military members and their families and for your leadership in the professional development of the Navy Total Force.