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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

March 21, 2012

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Panetta:

As you are aware, Chapter 9, Section 231 of Title 10 United States Code, requires the Secretary of Defense to submit with the President's Budget each year a long-range plan for the construction, delivery, and decommissioning of naval vessels. As of this dated letter, we have not yet received this report and the committee has been told that it is uncertain as to the date we will actually receive it.

I bring this to your attention for a few reasons. First, this report is crucial to our subcommittee as it relates to the oversight of naval shipbuilding programs and our understanding of how the Department plans to develop sufficient force structure to meet geographical combatant commander warfighting requirements, as well as, our understanding related to any force structure capability gaps or shortfalls that may exist in meeting the National Military Strategy. Second, the subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces has a hearing scheduled for March 29, 2012, to discuss with requirements and acquisition officials from the Department of the Navy regarding many aspects of the information that is contained within the long-range shipbuilding report. Without having this report in hand prior to our hearing date, our oversight is hampered because many of the topics discussed in our hearing stem from information contained in this report. Third, and just as concerning, this is the fourth consecutive year that this report has been submitted late to the congressional defense committees.

I respectfully request your support in addressing my concerns at your earliest convenience and, if at all possible, make arrangements for the subcommittee to have access to the report prior to our scheduled hearing date next week. As always, thank you for your service to the Department of Defense and I look forward to working with you to resolve this matter.

Sincerely,



TODD AKIN

Chairman, Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee