



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fleet Forces Outlines Fiscal Impact on Readiness for Commanders

From U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. — Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command sent a personal for message to commanders and commanding officers Feb. 8 about how he plans to maintain fleet readiness through fiscal uncertainty.

Adm. Bill Gortney sent the message to discuss some of the impacts on the fleet following the secretary of defense's approval to delay the scheduled deployment of the Harry S. Truman Strike Group. SECDEF made the decision based on current continuing resolution funding and the prospect of across-the board spending cuts known as "sequestration."

"Even with this change, we continue to maintain a carrier presence in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility, as well as a mix of other assets, fulfilling enduring commitments to our partners," said Gortney in the message.

John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group is currently deployed to the CENTCOM AOR. The new plan calls for Truman and her strike group to remain in a ready status in the event they are needed to respond to national security contingencies. The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) and USS Hue City (CG 66) will deploy to CENTCOM later this month. The two ships returned early from a previously scheduled nine-month deployment as a way to mitigate the aircraft carrier Nimitz's delay because of maintenance.

"This new lineup helps us to sustain our readiness for as long as possible, and train follow-on carrier strike groups for deployment later this year and next," said Gortney. "To do otherwise under these very uncertain budget conditions would mean sending these ships on deployment without reliefs behind them. We will not do that. No one is going on deployment without a projected return date."

Gortney said he'll look at all Fiscal Year 2013 deployments in light of the current budget uncertainty. "While we believe the vast majority of deployments will be unaffected, there could be some additional changes," he said.

He closed the message with a promise to commanders to provide them updated information as it is available. He asked his commanders to maintain a good dialogue with their Sailors, civilians and family members.

U.S. Fleet Forces will provide updated information on the command website and the command Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/usfleetforces>

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