



# NEWS RELEASE

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## STATEMENT BY ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY THE HONORABLE SEAN O'KEEFE

On June 18, 1992 former Navy Secretary H. Lawrence Garrett, III asked the Department of Defense Inspector General to review the Navy's investigations of Tailhook '91 and to conduct additional investigations as necessary to ensure a thorough and independent review. This step was taken to eliminate any possible question regarding the fairness and completeness of the investigation.

Earlier today, Derek Vander Schaaf, the Deputy DoD IG, issued a review of the Navy Department's investigatory efforts. The DoD IG has stated that a second report addressing the actions at the September 1991 Tailhook convention will be issued at a later date. The report that Mr. Vander Schaaf released today raises some significant questions about the Department of the Navy's performance in investigating the Tailhook incident.

It is vital that confidence in the naval service is maintained by the public, Congress and ourselves. Most importantly, we owe it to the sailors and Marines who keep the vigil in the Persian Gulf, stand watch off the coast of Sarajevo, and are helping rebuild south Florida. These are the men and women whose courage inspires confidence. This afternoon I am announcing a number of steps to ensure that the public trust in them remains steadfast.

These actions will improve our ability to promptly and objectively examine allegations, to publicly acknowledge when shortcomings are found and, most importantly, to take whatever corrective actions are necessary.

Our intention is to guarantee that future investigations:

- \* are thorough and objective
- \* are legally sound
- \* have clear findings and
- \* carry solid conclusions and recommendations

I remind you that today's report is only one step in the process. The DoD IG is still working on the findings of the events at the Tailhook convention in September 1991. We are pledged to taking appropriate action when we receive that report. Within the bounds of law, those whom investigations identify as being involved in

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criminal wrongdoing or violating the high standards of conduct will be held accountable. I cannot predict when this report will be forthcoming or speculate about what its contents might be.

I need to emphasize a very important message - We get it. We know that the larger issue is a cultural problem which has allowed demeaning behavior and attitudes towards women to exist within the Navy Department. Over the past two and a half months, the Navy Department has pursued an aggressive campaign to address this issue.

- \* During the months of July and August, over one million men and women, both military and civilian, of the Navy and Marine Corps were required to take part in training regarding core values, human dignity, sexual harassment and the alcohol abuse which so often is a precursor of untoward behavior.

- \* We have formed a Standing Committee on Military and Civilian Women in the Department of the Navy. They are already hard at work identifying ways of enhancing professional opportunities for women; promoting respect for the rights, concerns and contributions of women; and eliminating demeaning behavior. The Committee will report to me no later than September 30th on a series of potential initiatives which we announced last week.

- \* Our senior leadership is totally committed to confronting this problem and demonstrating that sexual harassment will not be tolerated - those who don't get the message will be driven from our ranks.

We are pleased that Chairman Aspin's House Armed Services Committee report last week recognized that the Naval service has a program in place that will result in a successful fight against sexual harassment just as we overcame racial inequality and drug problems in the past. Their caveat is that the program must be methodically pursued and carried out - I assure you it will be.

The DoD IG's report issued today, however, is designed to address a different aspect of the problem - the Navy Department's performance in investigating the events in Las Vegas in September 1991 - it is, if you will, the results of an investigation into the investigation.

It is apparent that the problems experienced in the Tailhook investigation, in large part, came from inadequate coordination among the various organizations conducting investigations, insufficient provision for oversight by the senior leadership, and in some instances lack of experience in investigatory practice.

While I have no personal knowledge of what transpired last winter and spring - since I was then the Department of Defense Comptroller - the clear picture I get from reading the DoD IG's report is that despite all the people who were involved in the Navy's investigations, no one was clear as to who was in charge.

In addition, in an examination of the problems of this and other investigations, questions arose regarding the organization and structure of the Department's investigative arms.

To address all of these issues, I am taking a number of immediate steps.

\* I am strengthening the independence and expertise of the NIS. I am replacing the Navy one star admiral position of Commander, Naval Investigative Service with a senior executive service civilian who will now report directly to the Secretary of the Navy. We have begun a search for a seasoned law enforcement professional to assume that position. As such, this civilian director will be better able to investigate uniformed officials of any rank with independence. This professional will have as deputies two senior line officers, one each from the Navy and Marine Corps. I would expect the new head of this organization to quickly review its structure and senior management for other necessary changes to enhance its professionalism.

Rear Admiral Duval M. Williams will be replaced as Commander of the Naval Investigative Service Command. He has requested retirement and I have granted that request.

The NIS will be renamed the "Naval Criminal Investigative Service." In order that the NCIS keep its attention on its primary mission of criminal investigations we are examining the extent to which it should be divested of other responsibilities. As an example, I have asked the DOD IG to take over responsibility for procurement fraud investigations now conducted by NIS.

\* I am increasing the authority of and resources available to the Naval Inspector General. Future Inspectors General will be officers of the three-star, Vice Admiral level - thereby upgrading the position from the present two-star status. To ensure their independence and objectivity, they will know that this assignment will be their final job while on active duty. We are preparing nomination papers for an incumbent three star admiral to assume this position and will soon ask that his name be submitted to the U.S. Senate for confirmation.

Rear Admiral George W. Davis, the Naval Inspector General will be reassigned as soon as the Senate confirms the three-star officer who will shortly be nominated to serve as the IG. He will continue in office in the interim.

In order to ensure that the IG has the information and assets available to him that he needs, I am directing that officers in the field who are now performing IG functions at lower echelon commands within the Department of the Navy, and who now report directly to the commands at which they are assigned, be given "additional duty" orders to the staff of the Naval IG. These additional duties will include keeping the Naval IG informed on the initiation of significant or otherwise sensitive investigations, keeping the chain of command apprised of the status of cases, requesting support and technical expertise when needed, and assisting in the conduct of investigations when requested by the Naval IG. This will increase the flow of information among IGs and give the Naval IG additional resources upon which to call. These second echelon Igs have available to them several hundred military and

civilian personnel who can be called upon when needed for investigations. In essence, the Naval IG will be the first among equals in the investigation business and will receive priority on all tasks assigned. This is going to be a thankless task, but a job that is crucial to maintaining the naval service's objectivity.

\* In addition:

Rear Admiral John E. Gordon, will step down as the Judge Advocate General of the Navy, the senior uniformed lawyer. He has requested retirement and I have granted that request.

I am continuing to review the IG's report and will be considering additional administrative or disciplinary action for individuals whose performance has been called into question.

The Inspector General's report further recommends that I consider whether the Under Secretary should continue in his current leadership role. I have done so, and it is my conclusion that he should continue as Under Secretary of the Navy. I make that decision based on his proven skills in the job and his future value to the Navy.

In this case, he was relegated to the task of being a referee, because he relied upon those with professional expertise in investigative matters. The professionals named in the report did not give him the support and advice that he needed to properly stay on top of the investigation. It became an impossible task to coordinate an effort in which the individual investigative arms refused to cooperate with each other.

I continue to have confidence in his ability to serve me and the Navy.

\* I am also establishing a position on my staff as Special Advisor to the Secretary for Investigations. This individual will be charged with advising me on steps necessary to ensure that appropriate policy is developed and implemented on investigatory practice. This advisor will ensure that there is full coordination and cooperation among the criminal and non-criminal investigative arms of the Navy Department.

The Special Advisor will see to it that investigations of a sensitive and significant nature receive my attention and that of appropriate top-level officials. When necessary, the Special Advisor will recommend the expansion of investigatory efforts - but will never inhibit or impede ongoing investigations. The Advisor will also be alert to the need, when appropriate, to recommend that the Secretary ask for outside help from the FBI and other organizations. Among the other tasks of this person will be to identify ways to improve the professionalism within the investigative branches of the Navy Department including improved training and report writing. Let me stress that this will be a single advisor on my staff, and will not entail setting up a new layer of bureaucracy. This will also be a thankless job because the primary task is to raise a red flag to the senior Navy leadership when investigations appear to be falling apart or bogging down due to bureaucratic infighting or negligence.

So that we can get to work immediately on setting up the office of the Special Advisor, I have asked Mr. Manny Briskin to assume those duties on an interim basis. Mr Briskin retired in June after 32 years of civil service. He was chief counsel to the DoD IG for the past ten years and was assistant General Counsel of the DoD for twenty years. His extraordinary experience will be of great value to us as we set up this new office.

Before closing and taking your questions, I want to emphasize the seriousness with which we are tackling this task. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that Navy Department investigations are unquestionably thorough, objective and fair. With the initiatives I have announced today, I believe they will be.

The first phone call I made on July 7th after being named Acting Secretary of the Navy was to the Deputy DoD IG. In that conversation I told Derek Vander Schaaf that the Department of the Navy would be totally supportive of his investigation. I stressed that he should let me know if anyone in the Department of the Navy failed to cooperate. He did not. I assured him that the Navy Department personnel would be fully responsive in this effort -- we want to get to the bottom of this issue.

Beyond any doubt, this has been the most difficult and agonizing issue I have wrestled with during my years in public service. I have done much soul searching about the proper course of action that is fair and appropriate for the country, the naval service and the individuals directly affected.

We owe it to the American people to do our very best to improve our performance as a Department.

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