

WASHINGTON, DC – At a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee today, Congressman Joe Courtney asked Sec. of Defense Leon Panetta to explain his views on the role of the submarine fleet in handling current and future threats.

Panetta responded: “I’ve always considered our submarine fleet to be an essential part of our forward presence, our projection, and also, the capability of being able to respond to the kind of surprises that we run into in the Defense business. I think we need a full range of capabilities in order to be able to address the threats of the future and the threats of the present. Submarines have actually provided that additional arm, particularly with regard to our fleets that I think is absolutely essential to our defense in the future.”

A video of the complete exchange is below. It includes a discussion of the SSBN replacement, in which new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey calls the program “indispensible.”



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