



One Navy-Marine Corps Team: Strategic Guidance From The Secretary of the Navy

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STRATEGIC GUIDANCE FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY**

Purpose

This guidance articulates my vision to build, train, and equip the world's most powerful naval force to meet both today's operational demands and the warfighting needs of the future. It is designed to reinforce and better align service-specific guidance already issued by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps with the Secretary of Defense's overall direction for the Department. I expect leaders across the Department – both uniformed and civilian – to use this document to inform our strategic planning, investments, budgeting, and personnel decisions.

Introduction

In the 76 years following the end of World War II, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps – working alongside like-minded allies and partners – have kept the seas open and free. On station, around the globe, and around the clock, we have helped sustain a maritime order based on international law that has benefitted the whole of humankind. Yet today, after three quarters of a century of relative maritime stability, that order is in jeopardy. Authoritarian nations are once again challenging international norms and laws, while transnational threats present unprecedented challenges to our stability and security.

Since my confirmation as the 78th Secretary of the Navy, I have characterized the most pressing challenges facing the Department of the Navy as the “Four Cs”: China, Culture, Climate Change, and COVID. The People's Republic of China represents the pacing challenge against which we must plan our warfighting strategies and investments. Cultural challenges that we must tackle include confronting sexual assault and harassment, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, preventing suicide, and demanding integrity and accountability across our naval leadership. Climate change poses a rapidly intensifying spectrum of risks to our operating environment, our allies and partners, and our planet. And COVID has posed an unprecedented test of the resilience of our people, their families, and our health system. We must tackle these Four Cs with a sustained sense of urgency and a strong bias for action.

Of the four, the long-term challenge posed by the People's Republic of China is the most significant for the Department. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has radically expanded both its size and capabilities, growing to become the world's largest fleet. Complementing its modern surface combatants are hundreds of coast guard and maritime militia vessels that Beijing employs to compete in the “gray zone,” the contested arena between routine statecraft and conflict. For the first time in at least a generation, we have a strategic competitor who possesses naval capabilities that rival our own, and who seeks to aggressively employ its forces to challenge U.S. principles, partnerships, and prosperity. Similarly, Russia, Iran, and other authoritarian states use gray-zone aggression and coercion to challenge the rules-based

international order. The Department of the Navy will be expected to contribute our unique warfighting potential to compete in the gray zone, deter further aggression, and prepare to prevail in conflict as part of an integrated warfighting approach with our fellow Services.

As President Biden stated in his March 2021 *Interim National Security Guidance*, “our world is at an inflection point.” In the President’s words, “The United States must renew its enduring advantages so that we can meet today’s challenges from a position of strength.”

The Navy-Marine Corps Team is one of America’s unmatched enduring advantages and will be a vital part of realizing the President’s vision. With the resources entrusted to us by Congress, we have an ongoing responsibility to provide and maintain a naval force that is always ready to defend our shores, maintain sea control, and protect our national security and economic interests. **As our central governing concept, the top priority for the Department of the Navy will be to develop concepts of operations and capabilities that bolster deterrence and expand our warfighting advantages vis-a-vis the People’s Republic of China.** We will ensure our Fleet and Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) are organized, trained, equipped, and employed in support of this priority, and that we are able to campaign and win now and in the future. In doing so, we must remain able to deter the full range of threats to our Nation’s security from other authoritarian states and transnational challenges that will continue to threaten our national security and economic interests. The Department of the Navy must always stand ready to address the multitude of crises that develop globally.

This strategic guidance articulates the my vision to build, train, and equip the world’s most powerful naval force in support of President Biden’s national security priorities and Secretary Austin’s forthcoming National Defense Strategy. This document is the principal guidance for the U.S. Department of Navy, aligning service-specific guidance documents including the *Navigation Plan*, *Force Design 2030*, and *Advantage At Sea* with Secretary Austin’s overall direction for the Department. This document will inform all future strategic and budgetary initiatives, and will focus and guide all activities within our Department, including prioritization of personnel and resources.

Mission: The Department of the Navy will recruit, train, equip, and organize to deliver combat ready naval forces to campaign, deter, and as necessary, win conflicts and wars through sustained forward naval presence in support of the Joint Force.

Vision:

All Sailors, Marines, and Civilians in the Department of the Navy will operate as one team to protect the American people and our interests in the most effective and efficient way possible, with our actions guided always by our core values. We will invest in the health, readiness, capability, and the leadership ability of our force. We will maintain forward maneuverability, build our maritime advantage, and strengthen partnerships across government and the joint force, with industry, and around the world.

Enduring Priorities:

Maintaining Maritime Dominance in Defense of Our Nation

We will build, train, and equip the world's most powerful naval force, one that continues to defend the Nation, our allies, our values, and our interests. We will build toward more integrated all-domain power within the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Developing the Fleet and FMF will require trade-offs and tough, sometimes unpopular, choices. We will prioritize capabilities that create advantage relative to the pacing threat. We will develop and maintain the strategic concepts and warfighting capabilities, readiness, and sustainment necessary to generate integrated, all-domain naval power against an evolving threat environment to secure and protect our economic interests.

1. Expand Forward Presence

We will prioritize strategic competitive advantage over China and Russia by expanding our global posture to ensure the presence of naval forces with the right mix of platforms, capability, and capacity to maintain freedom of the seas, support international law and norms, stand by our allies and continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows. We will continue to promote sustained, persistent mobile operations forward. We will make tough decisions to maximize precious resources, ensuring our future naval supremacy against the full spectrum of potential threats, while seeking additional resources to support our increasing responsibilities in the Indo-Pacific region. It will be essential for us to set our naval posture forward to be able to effectively transition from competition to crisis to conflict as needed.

2. Enhance Warfighting Readiness

The Navy and Marine Corps Team must be ready to compete, fight, and win whenever and wherever needed. To reduce the time our platforms are offline for maintenance and repairs, we will invest in sustainment, critical readiness infrastructure, and the industrial workforce, while adopting the best practices of private industry to increase overall efficiency and reduce preventable mishaps. We will integrate and streamline our combined logistics apparatus and supply chains to ensure constant readiness throughout the Fleet and FMF. We will redirect savings towards transformative modernization wherever possible to enhance future and long term readiness. We will also enhance the readiness of our warriors through targeted investments in advanced training methods, ranges, and facilities on naval installations. Warfighting readiness is critical to deterring the People's Republic of China.

3. Innovate and Modernize

From artificial intelligence and cyber weapons, to unmanned platforms, to directed energy and hypersonic weapons, we are on the cusp of technological breakthroughs that will define future conflict. Our Department will make targeted investments in key emerging technologies and capabilities to enhance and sustain amphibious battlefield maneuverability, dominance at sea, and information superiority. We will treat

information as a strategic asset and make cybersecurity a top priority, increasing our lethality, improving readiness, and sustaining resilience in cyberspace. We will also affordably invest in the facilities, infrastructure, and systems we need to maintain our critical advantage in supporting and sustaining our combat forces.

4. Combat Climate Change

It is a national security and warfighting imperative for the Department of the Navy to address the impact of climate change on our readiness, operations, and ability to fight and win. Climate change seriously increases the potential for greater conflicts on a global scale. We must be prepared to understand increased threats to other nations and the impact they may have on our own national security interests.

Climate change increases risk and exposes vulnerabilities to our people, installations, platforms, and operations, and it impacts and expands the mission set our naval forces must support. Our Department will stand as a global leader in taking action on and adapting to climate change. We will develop a climate-cognizant force that considers climate elements through all aspects of training and equipping the force and planning and executing the mission. Internally, we have an opportunity for innovation and efficiency. We will responsibly invest in sustainable fuels, alternative energy sources, conservation, working towards reducing our carbon footprint and our reliance on fossil fuels. Towards this end, we will fully leverage available legislative authorities, and identify other innovative opportunities and approaches to increase efficiencies and savings. Externally, we will work collaboratively and proactively with allies and partners to understand how to operate together as our joint operating environment changes and prepare for the exigent circumstances and building instability that severe weather and resource scarcity drive. Lastly, the readiness of our force has a deep dependence on the resilience of our infrastructure and systems. We will invest meaningfully, thoughtfully and creatively in these foundational elements of our force's capability and fortify against the future fight.

Empowering Our People

Our people provide the foundational strength for this Department. In fact, I believe our high-quality force provides us a competitive warfighting advantage in relation to our strategic competitors. We will build and sustain a strong, diverse, and healthy force, ready at all times and focused on warfighting and leadership at every level. We will reward initiative and creativity, and further enhance the reputations of the Department of the Navy and its Services as great places to lead, work, grow, and build families.

1. Eliminate Harmful Behaviors

The Department of the Navy will relentlessly pursue a force that keeps faith with all who serve, and where no one ever has to feel unsafe. There will be zero tolerance whatsoever for sexual assault, sexual harassment, or any other behaviors that constitute a betrayal of our sacred oath and solemn responsibility to our teammates and our Nation. We will repudiate extremism and relentlessly confront racism and all forms of discrimination. It is

a warfighting imperative that we do so throughout the entire Navy-Marine Corps Team. We will treat every individual with respect; those who do not will not be tolerated within our ranks.

2. Leverage Naval Education as a Critical Warfighting Enabler

Our mission demands leaders who possess the highest intellectual and warfighting capabilities in order to confront the many dangers of a complex world. The institutions of our naval education enterprise will work together to develop leaders with the warfighting rigor, intellectual dynamism, and innovative creativity to maintain strategic advantage against competitors and global adversaries. We will create a continuum of learning that develops such leaders to serve at every level through ready, relevant education, attuned to the battle rhythm of active duty service. We will invest in the Naval War College, the Naval Post Graduate School, and the Naval Academy, and build on the creation of the U.S. Naval Community College to expand access for all personnel, ensuring all naval learning institutions provide world-class curricula, research opportunities, and partnerships, tailored and prioritized to meet our most pressing warfighting requirements.

3. Cultivate Talent and Teamwork

We will build the strongest possible warfighting force by recruiting, retaining, and promoting the best that America has to offer. Our Department can only overcome the complex challenges we face every day by cultivating the talent and unique insights of individuals from diverse personal, cultural, and professional backgrounds. We will continuously identify opportunities for all Sailors, Marines, and Civilians to develop warfighting and leadership skills throughout the ranks, emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in every aspect of our force. The Department will also evaluate recent pandemic-driven distributed workforce initiatives for potential long term efficiencies and opportunities for the workforce of the future.

4. Take Care of Our People

We will review and reform operating procedures and promotion practices to reward leadership, warfighting skills, initiative, applied problem solving, and innovative strategic thinking at every level. We will continuously evaluate personnel practices with the needs and challenges of military families in mind. Senior leaders will also take a personal and hands-on approach to ensure enduring excellence in all aspects of quality of life for our military families, including housing and support programs for individuals and families. We will prioritize mental health readiness with the same intent that we prioritize physical readiness.

Strengthening Strategic Partnerships

The Department of the Navy's partnerships – internally, across the United States Government, and among our global network of naval allies and partners – provide an unmatched and irreplaceable advantage. We will work to sustain and expand that advantage by seeking to

achieve seamless integration, communication, and collaboration with each of our partners. Among our government partners, we will endeavor toward greater agility, adaptability, trust, and transparency in support of our warfighters. Globally, we will strengthen our relationships with like-minded maritime democracies, deepening interoperability in order to enable mutual action to address shared challenges.

1. Build Trust and Collaboration

Leaders at all levels across the Secretariat and the Services will work together to build a strong culture of collaboration, trust, transparency, and communication across our Department, supported by appropriate tools and processes. Across the Department of the Navy, our Sailors, Marines, and Civilian personnel will plan and execute as one team to maintain our warfighting edge.

2. Modernize Business Systems to Enhance Performance and Affordability

Leaders in every functional unit and discipline will take action to enforce business systems modernization on an accelerated and integrated path that is sufficiently resourced and supported. We will use data-driven decision-making to achieve tangible savings while consistently working to become more effective and more efficient as a core element of our warfighting discipline. Building on the findings of the audit process and other evaluations, our Department will foster a culture that encourages innovation, solves problems, and achieves results to get the most out of every dollar entrusted to us by the American people.

3. Strengthen Alliances and Partnerships

As strategic competitors pursue confrontation and coercion, we respond with partnership and alliances, standing alongside a global community of nations in defense of our common values. Our Department will strengthen military-to-military relationships with existing allies, leverage specialized allied experience in regional operations, and expand and deepen our partnerships with like-minded democracies around the world. We will build opportunities for Sailors, Marines, and Civilians to train, learn, and operate side-by-side with their counterparts in partner and allied forces, and operationally integrate our allies and partners into strategic concepts and warfighting concepts to deter those that challenge us.

Conclusion

Implementation of this strategic guidance in every aspect of our operations is critical for meeting the challenges of a dynamic world. Failure to do so impairs the combat readiness of our Sailors and Marines and their ability to execute the mission and return home safely to their families. We are one fully integrated naval force, and it is my expectation that every one of our personnel will meet the requirements and intent of this document.

From the seabed to the shoreline to the skies, cyberspace, and beyond, our Navy and Marine Corps Team will provide the networked and skilled capabilities for effective integrated

deterrence to hold adversaries accountable and stand by our allies and partners. We will make difficult trade-offs, but also fight tenaciously for the resources needed to properly fulfill our national security responsibilities. We stand ready to respond with the agility and lethality the American people require, wherever, and whenever, there is a need. We will be there, and we will be ready.