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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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ON THE POSTURE OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

BEFORE THE

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Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the posture of the United States Navy. Moreover, on behalf of all our Sailors, Navy civilians, and their families, thank you for your continued leadership and support. With the funding authorized by Congress these last several years, we increased our readiness, modernized our capabilities, and kept our fleet deployed forward in the most critical regions of strategic competition.

Since the founding of our Republic, the U.S. Navy has played a critical part in defending and advancing national policy by delivering sea power far from American shores. Our Navy's role—and consequently, its composition—has steadily evolved to ensure American security and defend our interests around the world. From our humble beginnings as a small maritime force, fending off pirates and protecting American shipping, we have become a globally postured fleet that underwrites world stability by deterring war, upholding international law, and assuring access to the maritime domain.

Today, our Navy's mission has never been more consequential or expansive. We now face potential adversaries who are attempting to undermine the rules-based international order, aggressively modernizing their militaries, and fielding offensive warfighting capabilities at unprecedented speed and scale.

This is a critical decade. Peaceful, free, and open oceans are vital to America's and our allies' security and prosperity in the 21st century. As global challengers rise, we must strengthen America's naval power to protect and defend our national interests.

The Maritime Challenge to U.S. National Security

As a maritime nation, America's maritime superiority is a global imperative. Two expansive oceans connect us to our allies and trading partners. For all of us, our way of life depends upon free, open, and secure maritime areas. Sea control and power projection are essential to U.S. national security and long-term economic health. The People's Republic of China (PRC), our pacing threat, clearly recognizes this and has publically stated that it intends to grow its sphere of influence by challenging the United States' military access to the western Pacific.

Over the past two decades, the PRC has built a comprehensive sea-denial, anti-access system of sophisticated sensors and long-range precision weapons. Backed by a robust industrial base and the largest shipbuilding infrastructure in the world, the PRC has extensively modernized its military and tripled the size of the People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN). It is also building next-generation strategic missile submarines, erecting hundreds of new missile silos, and growing its cyber and space capabilities.

Under the cover of this anti-access umbrella, the PRC has embraced the use of "gray zone" activities to turn incremental gains into long-term strategic advantages. Using a multi-layered fleet of naval ships, maritime militia, and coast guard, the PRC is undermining international norms by staking illegal maritime claims, militarizing geographic features in the South and East

China Seas, and intimidating its neighbors regarding offshore resources. Additionally, the PRC is extending its global reach with its Belt and Road Initiative—leveraging predatory lending practices, aggressive mercantilism backed, and hard military power—to access critical maritime terrain, ports, and waterways.

Additional threats persist around the globe. Russia remains an acute threat, seeking to fracture NATO and reestablish its sphere of influence using a combination of diplomatic, economic, and military force. Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has shattered the post-Cold War peace in Europe. The support of like-minded nations for the brave citizens of Ukraine has reminded would-be aggressors of the global intensity of purpose to uphold a nation's inherent right to freedom. As the struggle continues, Russia is risking broader escalation with threats of nuclear attack, deployments of missile-carrying submarines close to American and allied shores, and sophisticated cyber-attacks. North Korea continues to develop both nuclear and missile programs; Iran's missile program is also concerning. All the while, violent extremist organizations remain persistent threats.

Other serious transboundary challenges, including climate change and emerging pathogens, are also increasing the complexity of the security environment. Strategic competitors and non-state actors are gaining access to cutting-edge commercial technologies and wielding them to disrupt America's interests and national security. Artificial intelligence, ubiquitous sensors, and long-range precision weapons are making contested spaces more transparent and more lethal, and these systems are proliferating globally at a rapid pace.

These are several of the many considerations shaping the future strategic environment. When examined together, they illustrate the complexity of 21st century security challenges, particularly in the maritime domain. In a rapidly changing world, a formidable naval force is crucial to effectively implement the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) and protect American security and prosperity. The Nation cannot afford to have its Navy to pull back and cede influence at a time of rising tensions and challenges to freedom of the seas. Nor can it afford our fleet to lose its warfighting advantage.

Meeting the Challenge

Looking to the future, the U.S. Navy must continue to deploy our fleets forward to meet an unpredictable strategic environment. We must also modernize to field the most capable force possible against evolving threats. America needs a Navy capable of prevailing over any naval adversary to protect and sustain our interests worldwide and deter crises that could lead to war.

Together with the U.S. Marine Corps and Coast Guard, we must deliver integrated all-domain naval power to the Joint Force: delivering the lethal, resilient, sustainable, survivable, agile, and responsive fleet that the NDS requires. Specifically, in support of NDS and Department of Defense requirements:

- The Navy must **defend** the Homeland with an assured nuclear deterrent from beneath the sea to deter all forms of strategic attack.

- The Navy must be capable of controlling the seas to **deter** aggression against our allies and partners, and project power ashore as an integral part of the Joint Force.
- The Navy must be able to distribute and mass effects, integrate with the Joint Force across all domains, and **defeat** adversary forces in conflict.

To prevail in competition, crisis, and conflict, our naval forces must be *combat-credible*—measured by our ability to deliver lethal effects in contested and persistently surveilled battlespaces. We will deliver these forces by aligning our planning, resources, and investments with national policy end-state objectives:

Strengthening Integrated Deterrence. Integrated deterrence is backstopped by a safe, secure and effect nuclear deterrent. The Navy operates and maintains the most survivable leg of the nation's nuclear triad. Our strategic submarines represent approximately 70% of America's deployed nuclear arsenal. Synchronized with the retirement of *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines, we must deliver *Columbia*-class submarines on time, as we continue to modernize our nuclear command, control, and communications systems and supporting infrastructure. These efforts are essential to ensure the United States can deter nuclear coercion or nuclear employment in any scenario.

Deterrence also relies on forward-deployed, combat-credible conventional forces to control the seas and project power. These roles are central to integrated deterrence now and in the future. Employing a host of kinetic and non-kinetic effects launched from platforms on, under, and above the sea, conventional naval forces deploy globally to deter military aggression, support diplomacy, and give national leaders options to protect American interests across the spectrum of conflict. Should conflict arise, the Navy is consistently deployed forward to respond decisively, supporting the Joint Force to end hostilities on favorable U.S. terms.

The Navy also provides the first physical line of U.S. Homeland Defense, preventing potential adversaries from using the oceans to directly threaten America or our allies and partners. No other element of national power can fulfill this role across every domain, from the seabed to space.

Campaigning forward. Naval forces across the globe provide the United States strategic advantages in power projection, diplomacy, influence, and flexibility, without over reliance on access to overseas land bases. Our enduring, forward posture in support of the Joint Force guarantees our nation the ability to respond to crisis, blunt gray-zone incrementalism, and preserve a stable and secure global maritime order. The Navy's global maneuverability supports diplomacy, reassures our allies, and generates favorable influence in key regions.

Our alliances and partnerships remain our key strategic advantage. They recognize U.S. naval forces as their on-scene partner for building combined maritime strength. Every day, the Navy operates forward alongside allies and partners through combined operations, theater security cooperation, and capacity-building initiatives. These activities strengthen interoperability, increase information sharing, and build capacity for resilient, integrated logistics. Working together—particularly with interoperable, critical-capability allies—we strengthen our ability to

prevail in conflict and further bolster integrated deterrence by demonstrating a united front against potential adversaries.

In September of last year, President Biden announced a trilateral security agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (known as AUKUS). The announcement launched an intensive 18-month consultation period among the three governments to seek an optimal pathway for delivering a conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability to Australia at the earliest achievable date. The Navy is playing a key leadership role in developing this plan to ensure that our nation's preeminent expertise is applied to the nuclear-powered submarine initiative. We are focused on ensuring Australia understands the full scope of capabilities necessary to design, build, operate, and maintain a nuclear navy. AUKUS represents a tremendous strategic opportunity for the United States to expand our cooperation and collaboration with two of our closest allies, and we are on pace to respond to the President's tasking.

The Navy is also uniquely equipped to contest gray zone incrementalism by our adversaries. Gray zone aggression thrives with non-attribution. The best way to oppose these activities is to deny our adversaries anonymity with persistent domain awareness, the effective leveraging of intelligence, and the agile application of sea power. Together with whole-of-government partners, the Navy exposes malign behavior, imposes reputational costs, diminishes the effectiveness of propaganda, and galvanizes international resistance.

Building enduring warfighting advantages. Based on the PRC's current and long-term security challenge, the Navy must set a stable and sustainable trajectory to a larger and more capable force *now.* To ensure we remain adaptable and relevant, our future force design relies on six overarching imperatives to sustain our warfighting advantage, expand our options, and constrain those of our adversaries:

Expand **Distance**. Long-range precision fires across all domains—and platforms with greater reach—enable naval forces to strike hostile targets while increasing our survivability.

Leverage **Deception**. Deceptive measures—including stealth, concealment and maneuver, emissions control, and electronic warfare—degrade enemy surveillance and increase adversary uncertainty, enabling naval forces to operate effectively in contested seas.

Harden **Defense**. Integrating directed energy with hard-kill and soft-kill defensive systems disrupts attacks and keeps naval forces survivable when targeted by adversaries.

Increase **Distribution**. Distributing naval forces geographically and in all domains enables them to threaten an adversary from multiple attack axes. Smaller, lethal, and less costly platforms—including manned, unmanned, and optionally-manned—further complicate threat targeting, generate confusion, and pose dilemmas for our adversaries.

Ensure **Delivery**. Resilient logistics connecting the foundry to the fleet—enabled by secure communications and information technology—refuel, rearm, resupply, repair, and revive distributed naval forces down to the last tactical mile.

Generate **Decision Advantage**. Naval forces will out-sense, out-decide, and out-fight any adversary by accelerating our decision cycles with secure, survivable, and resilient networks, accurate data, and artificial intelligence. Connecting sensors, weapons, and decision-makers across all domains enables naval forces to mass firepower and influence without massing forces.

These six force design imperatives enable Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO), the Navy's foundational operating concept of our team-centric Fleet construct. Today's priority investments are delivering on these imperatives. For example:

- Investments in hypersonic weapons, space-based capabilities, unmanned tanking, and long-range precision fires deliver capabilities for effects at an expanded distance.
- Investments in undersea platforms, weapons, and systems, next-generation aircraft and surface platforms, cyber capabilities, counter-surveillance, and integrated weapons systems deliver increased deception and defense.
- Investments in smaller, lethal platforms, autonomous systems in all domains, artificial intelligence, resilient logistics, and integrated combat systems and networks enable a more distributed fleet, the delivery to sustain it, and expand our decision advantage against peer adversaries.

Accelerating America's Advantage at Sea

The Navy is implementing the 2022 NDS, preparing for the challenges ahead of us, and accelerating America's enduring advantage at sea. Within the scope of the President's FY23 Budget Request (PB-23), we are delivering a combat-credible Navy designed to deter conflict and help win our nation's wars as we maintain a global posture to assure our prosperity. To do this, we remain focused on four priorities: **Readiness**, **Capabilities**, **Capacity**, and our **Sailors**.

These four priorities are especially relevant because of today's fiscal environment. We face the simultaneous task of recapitalizing our strategic nuclear deterrent, our century-old dry dock facilities, and our strategic sealift capacity. These programs are all critical to our national defense. Meanwhile, Navy manpower, operations, and maintenance costs continue to grow above the rate of inflation. This means we must carefully invest in capabilities and capacity that offer the most significant payoff and warfighting value for strategic competition.

Based on these priorities, I have consistently said that the Navy's size—our capacity—ultimately will be dictated by the budget's top line. We will not field a fleet larger than we can sustain. We also will not grow the Navy at the expense of building the *Columbia*—our top acquisition priority. Nor will we increase capacity by failing to modernize and sacrificing our combat credibility.

The U.S. Navy cannot outpace an increasingly capable PRC by retaining platforms that are decreasingly relevant in modern naval warfare. While some of these platforms may have day-to-day utility in permissive environments, the Navy's first obligation is to deliver a ready, combat-credible fleet with the funding Congress appropriates. Simply maintaining the capabilities of

today's fleet will be insufficient to both preserve our long-term interests and protect America. Quantity is not synonymous with quality. We must modernize to maintain our maritime edge.

Therefore, our focus is on delivering *capable* capacity. America needs a modern strategic deterrent; greater numbers of undersea capabilities; more distributable surface combatants; a host of manned, unmanned, and optionally-manned platforms—under, on, and above the seas; and a resilient logistics enterprise to sustain our distributed naval force. Based on past and ongoing force structure analysis, it is my best military advice that the size of the Navy grows to a 500-ship hybrid fleet by 2045. Integrated with the Joint Force and interoperable with our allies and partners, this all-domain, hybrid fleet will ensure our maritime superiority.

Our Navigation Plan Implementation Framework supports these priorities, implementing lines of effort to deliver measurable outcomes, driving a new Force Design process to improve our agility, and energizing a fleet-wide movement to strengthen our learning culture. Our Navy is addressing the challenges we face with clarity, determination, and urgency. We made significant progress over the past two years, and we are continuing to press forward to deliver the readiness, the capabilities, the platforms, and the people necessary to protect the American people and our interests around the world.

Readiness

To accelerate America's advantage at sea, we must prioritize readiness to keep combat-credible forces forward to deter conflict and protect the free and open system underpinning American security and prosperity. Our competitors are increasing their naval power every day, and their malign behavior and growing presence worldwide places an enormous demand on our forces. Moreover, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and ensuing global instability have provided a stark reminder of why the Navy must be ready to deploy globally in defense of U.S. interests. In FY21, the Navy-Marine Corps team executed more than 22,000 steaming days and more than one million flying hours. Because naval forces remain in high demand, PB-23 emphasizes critical aspects of our readiness.

The Navy continues to make readiness gains with increased shipboard manning, better maintenance performance, increased weapon inventories, more training for our crews, and enhanced spare parts availability. Sustained funding and systematic reforms throughout the fleet have enabled those readiness gains. Despite this momentum, we are not satisfied. Our focus remains on continuous improvement.

Deploying combat-credible forces starts with performing high-quality maintenance on time and in full. To this end, we are using data-driven reforms such as Performance-to-Plan (P2P), the Naval Sustainment System (NSS), and other initiatives to improve maintenance processes, increase operational availability, and save taxpayer dollars. We continue to see positive results with these methods, especially in our aviation community. By leveraging the power of the aviation Maintenance Operations Center (MOC), we sustained a mission-capable rate of 80% for our F/A-18E/F Super Hornets across three consecutive fiscal years. Additionally, we have seen

five more aircraft types achieve this high mission-capable rate as we have incorporated them into the MOC construct over the last 18 months. With more aircraft available, our aircrews are more ready to dominate the skies than at any point over the last decade.

We continue to take a similar, data-driven approach to improve surface ship maintenance, and we see positive results across the fleet. Since FY20, P2P-driven improvements—such as the goal of awarding contracts 120 days before the start of a maintenance availability, level loading ports through better prediction of workload, better availability planning, and improved long-lead-time material acquisition—have generated a 58% decrease in days of maintenance delay. PB-23 prioritizes private sector ship depot maintenance in line with enacted FY22 levels to provide industry with a stable and predictable demand signal. The Other Procurement, Navy (OPN) pilot, is seeing positive early results, including more efficient use of contracted ship maintenance throughout the entirety of the fiscal year, improved on-time delivery of long-lead time materials, and reduced impact of growth and new work. We are grateful for the support from Congress in continuing this budgetary authority.

Despite COVID-19, public shipyards have also seen improvements over the last two years, with fewer maintenance delay days and increased on-time completion percentages. However, submarine maintenance remains a pressing challenge. We are working hard to reduce submarine idle time at public shipyards by conducting thorough, early material condition assessments to reduce Days of Maintenance Delay and maximize operational availability. Through the Performance to Plan-Shipyard (P2P-SY) and Naval Sustainment System-Shipyard (NSS-SY) efforts, we continue to focus on achieving on-time maintenance availability completion. We are looking for opportunities to balance public and private sector workload and maintain a healthy industrial base for submarine maintenance and new construction. In addition, we are creating a Long Range (15-year) SSN Depot Maintenance Plan to improve workload forecasting in both the public and private sectors for FY23 and beyond.

Sustaining our platforms also requires critical investments in our infrastructure ashore. Our worldwide constellation of bases must be capable of sustaining and supporting our fleet at sea, including our public shipyards and aviation depots. The average age of U.S. naval shipyard facilities and related infrastructure is 61 years, while the average dry dock age is approaching 100 years. Our Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP) provides a strategic roadmap for necessary investments in dry docks, capital equipment, and layout optimization of these vital national assets. PB-23 prioritizes SIOP, investing over $1.7B in FY23, including funding for three major shipyard projects. Additionally, the Fleet Readiness Centers Infrastructure Modernization and Optimization Plan (FIOP) will ensure our industrial facilities are resilient and optimized to maintain both legacy and next-generation aircraft, and their associated weapon systems.

Our commitment to improving readiness also includes our information forces. We have established a dedicated team to improve our ability to generate and deploy forces for cyberspace operations. We are learning from other highly technical warfighting domains such as aviation and nuclear power to keep pace with cyber-force growth. This effort looks at all aspects of our

readiness to include recruiting, training, assignment, and retention. This comprehensive review sets a course for the Navy to meet and sustain United States Cyber Command's demand.

Readiness also extends to the training facilities that generate warfighting advantages. The modernization and expansion of the Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) is critical. As the capabilities and ranges of our platforms have grown, our training ranges have not. The FRTC is now far too small to allow carrier-based aircraft to adequately train for high-end conflict with precision-guided weapons, and it is too small for SEALs to conduct mobility maneuver training in a realistic tactical environment. Our Sailors need the most realistic training possible if they are going to defeat a strategic competitor. FRTC modernization will ensure that future generations of warfighters remain the most effective in the world. We understand the challenges associated with this project, and we are deeply committed to listening and working with every stakeholder towards a mutually acceptable modernization plan.

Capabilities

To accelerate America's advantage at sea, we must modernize our capabilities to credibly deter war and, if necessary, win in conflict. Disruptive technologies are changing the potential applications and impacts of military activities from the seafloor to space. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, autonomy, quantum computing, and new communications technology are transforming the character of future warfare. Modern naval warfare demands integrated systems, resilient kill chains, better terminal defense, and a robust logistical footprint to support a more distributed force. Transitioning to these capabilities will increase our deterrence posture by expanding our ability to distribute our forces and mass effects.

As we build and put to sea a force able to deter and, if necessary, defeat a strategic competitor, we must prioritize capabilities that support Distributed Maritime Operations, or DMO—our previously mentioned foundational operating concept. Kinetic and non-kinetic effects must be distributed geographically—on, under, and above the seas—as well as in the information environment, the cyber domain, the electromagnetic spectrum, and in space. To operate effectively, platforms, sensors, and weapons must all operate and work together as one cohesive, integrated team. The teams are centered on our Numbered Fleet construct—our cross-domain contribution to the Joint Force. The Navy must empower these teams through secure, survivable, resilient, and common networks. Project Overmatch will deliver the Naval Operational Architecture (NOA), the Navy's contribution to Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2) making major improvements in both resilience and capability to plan, coordinate and execute missions as a critical member of the Joint Force. PB-23 includes $195M in FY23 and $898M across the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) for core activities of Project Overmatch, which is an increase of $122M in FY23. This increase represents a deliberate and executable investment to accelerate the delivery of NOA Increment 1 to carrier strike groups by next year.

Strategic competitors are continuing to develop sophisticated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities that complicate our operations globally. Our PB-23 investments accelerate and enhance core Counter-Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Combat Systems, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting (C-C5ISRT) activities that generate warfighting advantage by degrading adversaries' understanding of the operational environment. In support of both offensive and defensive DMO, these investments integrate three Counter C5ISR&T tenets required to sustain operations in a contested environment with acceptable risk: (1) understand the risk of detection posed by adversary capabilities; (2) orchestrate actions to reduce naval units' targetability; (3) synchronize delivery of kinetic and non-kinetic effects.

As an example, to pace the growing air and missile defense threat set, the Navy developed and approved a strategy over the past budget cycle to deliver enhanced radar sensitivity and electronic warfare capabilities to our DDG Flt IIA ships. This strategy is called DDG Mod "2.0" and includes the back-fit installation of the Shipboard Electronic Warfare Improvement Plan (SEWIP) Block 3, adding enhanced capabilities to current SEWIP Block 2; a 24 Radar Module Assembly SPY-6 radar to replace SPY-1; and Aegis Baseline 10.

PB-23 also includes investments in developing and demonstrating conventional sea-based hypersonic strike weapon systems. The Navy Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS) Program Office and Army Hypersonic Project Office are using a common missile design and joint test opportunities to field non-nuclear hypersonic weapon systems. In 2021, we conducted two First Stage and one Second Stage Solid Rocket Motor static fires, marking the first successful tests of the newly developed missile. The CPS Program also completed an eight-shot Solid Slug Launch Test Campaign, which provided initial validation of the cold-gas launch approach for use on Navy platforms. Stable funding at the requested level will keep this critical capability on track to field on *Zumwalt*-Class DDGs followed by *Virginia*-class SSNs equipped with the Block V Virginia Payload Module.

We are incorporating other long-range, highly capable weapons into our magazines to improve lethality across domains. PB-23 sustains the production of the Blk-I/IA SM-6 and the modernized Blk-V Tomahawk Missile, and it funds the transition of the Maritime Strike Tomahawk to a Program of Record. Additionally, we are arming our submarines with better MK-48 Heavyweight Torpedoes and pursuing more advanced variants. We are also improving the effectiveness of our fighter aircraft, extending their all-domain reach with the Advanced Anti-radiation Guided Missile, AIM-120 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile, and Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile. Altogether, the weapons procurement in PB-23 is our best capability insurance against near-term threat escalation while keeping us postured for the future.

In parallel, we are maturing multiple directed energy projects to improve overall fleet survivability in contested environments. We have successfully deployed three directed energy weapons systems in the 7th and 5th Fleets to support Counter-ISRT and Counter-Unmanned Aerial Vehicle missions. To reach our goal of "bottomless" magazines, we will need continued advancements and investments in directed energy, scaling and platforms with enough space,

weight, power, and cooling (SWAP-C). PB-23 funds $262M across the FYDP to install the eighth Optical Dazzling Interdictor and provides continued funding for Solid State Laser-Technology Maturation, High Energy Laser with Integrated Optical dazzler and Surveillance (HELIOS), and the High Energy Laser Counter Anti-Ship Cruise Missile Project (HELCAP). Our future Navy surface combatants, such as FFG-62 and DDG(X), include SWAP-C reservations to accommodate such systems. We are taking a truly holistic view of this emerging portfolio to carefully incorporate directed energy into the fleet in an evolutionary way.

Capacity

To accelerate America's advantage at sea, the Navy will build a combat-credible, hybrid fleet, bolstered by mature, cost-effective unmanned technologies and operational concepts. A new platform can take up to a decade to go through the planning process, receive authorization from Congress, and complete construction before joining the fleet. To keep up with the accelerating pace of innovation, the Navy must build future platforms with modernization in mind—hardware upgradeable and software updateable at the speed of innovation.

Our number one acquisition priority remains the on-time delivery of the *Columbia*-class ballistic missile submarine, which constitutes our nation's most secure and reliable strategic nuclear deterrent. Together with the Trident II D5LE2 Strategic Weapons System (SWS), *Columbia* will ensure the effectiveness and availability of the nation's Sea-Based Strategic Deterrent through the 2080s. With the *Ohio*-class submarines nearing the end of their service life, there is no further margin for delays in this once-in-a-generation program without impacting U.S. Strategic Command requirements. *Columbia* must be on patrol no later than October 2030. The first submarine began construction last year, with the second boat on track for procurement next fiscal year. We will continue to advocate for aggressive construction schedules and incorporate "lead ship learning" to guarantee on-time delivery of the entire class to ensure this national asset's capability in the decades ahead. *Columbia* will continue to grow substantially as a proportion of the total shipbuilding budget beginning in FY26, exceeding 25% when *Columbia* enters full-rate production.

Sea control and sea denial from beneath the waves are among our Navy's core advantages, and we refuse to yield any ground to the competition. PB-23 underscores our sustained support for procuring two *Virginia*-class submarines per year, and it invests in developing a follow-on attack submarine program, SSN(X), which will be key to sustaining our undersea advantage—setting the conditions for the warfighting advantage of our fleet.

Unmanned systems will play a key role in DMO. We released the Unmanned Campaign Framework in March 2021 to serve as the comprehensive strategy for a future wherein unmanned systems serve as an integral part of the Navy's warfighting team. U.S. 3rd Fleet executed Unmanned Integrated Battle Problem 2021 to integrate manned and unmanned capabilities in operational scenarios. To further operationalize the Campaign Plan, we established Task Force 59 (CTF-59) to accelerate unmanned and AI solutions, demonstrating the importance of warfighters and industry partners in operational experimentation with available

technologies. We intend to scale these lessons to 7th Fleet. We also continued work with partners and allies in events such as NATO Maritime Unmanned Systems Initiative Exercises and International Maritime Exercise 2022.

We completed MQ-25A "T1" aircraft in-flight refueling of Navy carrier-based aircraft and its first carrier demonstration and completed over 4000 hours and 46,000 nautical miles of USV operations. Additionally, we recently established the Unmanned Task Force, a cross-functional team focusing on rapid experimentation and solving operational problems to quickly inform acquisition strategies. The focus remains on enabling technologies to provide near-term capability, take an evolutionary approach, and lay the foundation for the future hybrid fleet.

This year, we celebrated the centennial of our aircraft carriers. They have proven to be the most survivable and versatile airfields in the world, and our nuclear-powered carriers will remain a cornerstone of the Navy's conventional deterrence for decades to come. *USS Gerald R. Ford* (CVN 78) achieved Initial Operating Capability in December 2021, completed flight deck certification, and is scheduled to deploy later this year. PB-23 supports procuring our follow-on aircraft carriers. CVN 79 construction is 85% complete and on track to deliver in FY24; CVN 80 construction is 12% complete and scheduled to deliver in FY28.

The sustained striking power and adaptability of our Carrier Air Wing is vital to controlling the seas and projecting power in contested environments. Today's air wings are more capable than ever with the addition of the F-35C, the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye, and the CMV-22B Osprey. Carrier Air Wing TWO recently completed a deployment with these capabilities, showcasing the cutting-edge lethality of naval airpower. PB-23 adds to our F-35 inventory to expand our fourth- and fifth-generation fighter mix, and it funds the unmanned MQ-25 Stingray, on track to deploy in 2026, which greatly extends the reach of our Carrier Air Wings into contested battlespaces.

We are also laying the groundwork for tomorrow's air wing through the Next Generation Air Dominance portfolio. This highly networked sixth-generation family of systems will leverage manned-unmanned teaming to further advance the cross-domain lethality of our air wings in contested battlespaces. Delivering this capability is vital to outpace PRC fighter development.

Our future fleet design places emphasis on a balance of greater numbers of large and small surface combatants as the foundation of distributed operations. Our newest class, the *Constellation*-class frigate, is a versatile, multi-mission platform that will support operations across the spectrum of conflict. The future large surface combatant, DDG(X), will bring additional space, weight, and power to support evolving capabilities for a high-end fight. Together, these two ship classes will form the center of our cross-domain teams, bringing more lethality, survivability, and endurance to the fleet.

The Naval logistics enterprise continues to become increasingly agile and resilient to deliver the means to refuel, rearm, resupply, repair, and revive distributed forces, ensuring the Joint Force stays combat credible against any adversary. Over the past two years, we have improved our afloat fuel distribution systems, introduced more secure digital systems for better logistics

planning and execution, and validated our Future Afloat Logistics Forces Initial Capabilities Document, which defines the capabilities and capacities needed to sustain naval forces. Adequate capacity is a continuing challenge and PB-23 pursues several platform solutions to close the gaps we have identified, including the continued construction of the John Lewis (T-AO 205) Class Fleet Replenishment Oiler Program, the Submarine Tender AS(X), and continued research and development to support the Next Generation Logistics Ship. Additionally, we are continuing to leverage the generous authorities Congress has provided us to renew our surge sealift capacity with used vessels, helping us meet combatant commander readiness requirements. We are grateful for this Committee's support.

Sailors

To accelerate America's advantage at sea, we must invest in trained, resilient, and educated Sailors who can adapt faster than our adversaries in today's rapidly changing strategic environment. Our Sailors and civilians remain the true source of our naval power. We must continue to prioritize and care for them. From culture to training and education, to overall health and wellness, PB-23 supports the most important element of our Navy—our people.

History shows that the navy which adapts, learns, and improves the fastest gains an enduring warfighting advantage. The essential element in doing so is fostering a healthy ecosystem—a culture—that assesses, corrects, solves problems, and learns faster than the opposition. Our "Get Real, Get Better" movement will help us reduce the variability in performance between our best and worst performers. Get Real, Get Better will train and educate our leaders on the leadership behaviors required to create this culture, along with the supporting tools to solve our hardest problems. Focusing on our people, and their leaders, will further expand the asymmetric advantage that is the American Sailor.

Through the Ready Relevant Learning (RRL) initiative, we are providing Sailors with practical, accessible knowledge and skills that can adapt to the needs of the Navy. Today, RRL provides timely, relevant training using an agile, multi-path approach to ensure our operators have the knowledge they need on the deck plates to succeed in combat. RRL supplements our traditional brick-and-mortar schoolhouses with modern, multi-media, multi-platform solutions. Recently, we transitioned 8 enlisted ratings to this model and completed requirements development for 39 additional ratings. With the funds provided by PB-23, the Navy will advance the Career Long Learning Continuum effort, which is critical to the program goal of maintaining continuity and currency of individual training.

The Navy has prioritized the Fleet Training Wholeness initiative to integrate live platforms and simulators across our strike groups. This initiative funds Live, Virtual, Constructive (LVC) unit and strike group training. In the fleet, LVC continues to be a game-changer in training our combat leaders. From the pilot in the cockpit to the technician on the radar scope, LVC allows all domains to train together at unprecedented levels of integration and complexity. PB-23 builds upon the continued integration of live ranges, ships at sea, and aviation shore simulators, and includes funding to integrate aircraft and information warfare systems and capabilities into LVC

training. These investments are advancing our Sailors' tactical skills and proficiency against our most advanced competitors.

Building upon the momentum of the Navy's Culture of Excellence campaign, we will implement a holistic and prevention-based Total Sailor Fitness framework. This effort will maximize Sailor, unit, and organizational performance while improving Sailor trust, resilience, mental health, connectedness, and behavioral metrics. Our Warrior Toughness program enables better performance before, during, and after critical events, providing concepts and skills to develop peak performance and make Sailors more resilient and ready for the Fleet. We integrate these programs into the curricula of the Recruit Training Command, Officer Training Command, United States Naval Academy, and our NROTC units. As we drive forward with this Culture of Excellence, the Navy seeks to put the most combat-credible Sailors to sea—first-rate warriors who are willing and able to defend our Nation.

In addition, suicide prevention, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR), and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion remain pillars on which the Culture of Excellence will continue to build. As part of our suicide prevention efforts, the Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life Program provides rapid assistance, ongoing risk management, coordination of care, and reintegration assistance for at-risk service members. Continued resourcing of this program saves lives. A full continuum of mental health and wellness support is also available worldwide, including at specialty and primary care clinics, Navy installation counseling centers, on the waterfront, embedded within the Fleet, and via virtual health platforms. Non-medical mental health services are available for Sailors and their family members through Fleet and Family Support Centers, Military and Family Life Counseling, and Military OneSource. Navy Chaplains provide confidential counseling and are essential in ensuring the spiritual readiness and resiliency of the Naval Force. There is "no wrong door" for our Sailors to get help.

The Navy is leveraging metric-based, sexual assault data to better understand sexual assault risk factors. This strengthens our SAPR programs with research-informed approaches to prevention programs and policies. We are also implementing recommendations from the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, using a deliberate, methodical approach to improve accountability, prevention, climate, culture, and victim care and support. These include addressing gaps in leader training to develop inclusive cultures that foster healthy command climates, providing sexual harassment victims with SAPR victim advocacy services, completing a SAPR Workforce Study to ensure unfettered support to sexual assault victims that phases out non-deployable collateral duty victim response personnel, and the phased hiring and integration of a primary prevention workforce.

The Navy is building a force that looks like the nation we serve. We benefit from our Sailors' talent, experience, and insights. Today, the Navy is more demographically diverse than ever before. As we strive to become a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive force, we have built on lessons learned from our findings in Task Force One Navy, implementing 36 task force recommendations, with 18 more in progress. We must actively include all perspectives to harness the creative power of diversity, accelerating the Navy's warfighting advantage.

To support our Sailors, increase productivity, and generate cost efficiencies, the Navy is modernizing its Manpower, Personnel, Training, and Education Enterprise. Our Human Resources (HR) processes and operations have not fundamentally evolved in over 70 years. For too long, we have been managing our force with over 55 aging information technology systems, some of which are over 40 years old. These systems are not interoperable and do not provide a single authoritative data source. MyNavy HR Transformation is fixing this. We continue to make strides towards our Navy Personnel and Pay system rollout, which is an important foundational step for the overall transformation. By synchronizing and streamlining all aspects of personnel readiness, this overhaul will improve the lives of all Sailors and their families.

The Navy is a family, and our families serve along with us. Having witnessed the steadfast resilience of Navy families every day of my career, I have made it a daily practice to think about how to improve their lives. As all service members know, when we take care of them, they take care of us.

Conclusion

The U.S. Navy's mission has never been more essential for the preservation of American security and prosperity. Facing increasingly aggressive challengers, the Navy's priorities—Readiness, Capabilities, Capacity, and our Sailors—will help us maintain our combat credibility in contested seas.

We will need Congress's continued support. Since 2010, the Navy's buying power has not kept pace with inflation. "Must pay" once-in-a-generation strategic deterrence recapitalization and once-in-a-century shipyard infrastructure investments—along with rising readiness, labor, and material costs—are consuming larger shares of the Navy's budget. This loss in buying power has delayed modernization, reduced procurement, and constrained our ability to grow the force. To simultaneously modernize and build the capacity of our fleet, the Navy would need sustained budget growth at three-to-five percent above actual inflation. Short of that, we will prioritize capability over capacity. This will decrease the size of the fleet until we can deploy smaller, more cost-effective, and more autonomous force packages at scale.

The investments we make this decade will determine the maritime balance of power for the rest of this century. Ships, submarines, and aircraft are undoubtedly expensive instruments of national power, as are the associated costs of maintaining them at a high level of readiness. But history shows that without a powerful Navy, the price tag is much higher.

On behalf of more than 600,000 active and reserve Sailors and Navy Civilians, thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am grateful to this committee and to your colleagues in Congress for your steadfast commitment to the Navy. We look forward to sailing alongside you to sustain our advantage at sea.