

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

THE HONORABLE CARLOS DEL TORO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

ON DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY POSTURE

BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

MAY 12, 2022

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Introduction

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you alongside General Berger and Admiral Gilday to discuss the posture of the Department of the Navy (DON). I look forward to working with you to ensure that our Sailors and Marines are equipped, trained, and prepared to the best of our ability, so they can fulfill their vital role in support of the Joint Force, protecting our national security interests.

The United States requires a strong Navy and Marine Corps. The global economy, and the self-determination of free nations everywhere, depends on sea power. Thirty-one million American jobs and \$5.4 trillion in annual commerce rely on the sea lanes, and one third of all international commerce transits the South China Sea. Without a ready, and capable Navy and Marine Corps protecting the sea lanes and lines of communications, the global economy could easily halt.

The national and economic security of our nation depends on free and open access to the sea. And the rules-based international order that benefits us all requires a strong maritime force, campaigning forward alongside allies and partners to provide the sea control and integrated deterrence we need to counter strategic competitors, from Beijing, Moscow, and beyond.

As Secretary Austin stated in his testimony before this Committee, “Integrated deterrence means combining our strengths across all the warfighting domains to maximum effect to ward off potential conflict.” The Navy and Marine Corps Team offers forward maneuverable strengths in every domain that serve as a force multiplier within the Joint Force and alongside our allies and

international partners. We are determined to ensure the integrated all domain force required to ensure maximum effect for civilian and military leadership, across the range of military options.

Thanks to the leadership of President Biden and Secretary Austin, PB23 provides the right balance of capacity, lethality, modernization, and readiness needed to field the globally engaged and dominant naval force required by the National Defense Strategy. This budget will maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of each dollar entrusted to us by the American taxpayer, ensuring sufficient resources for today's challenges, while building future overmatch.

We will invest these resources through a concise, clear, and transparent strategy centered on three primary lines of effort:

1. Strengthen Maritime Dominance.
2. Empower Our People.
3. Expand Strategic Partnerships.

Admiral Gilday, General Berger, and I are executing these lines of effort as one fully integrated DON. The Navy Navigation Plan and Marine Corps Force Design 2030 are complementary visions working together to ensure the distributed capacity, long range fires, amphibious mobility, and network of allies and partners our Sailors and Marines need to make mission.

Together, we are committed to working with you to ensure these plans are fully resourced, with vigorous oversight, to deliver maximum value to the American taxpayer, and to fulfill our sacred oath to protect the American people.

Strengthen Maritime Dominance

The security and freedom of the seas, and the resulting prosperity and security of our nation, did not happen on its own. It required significant investment and foresight by generations of legislative and executive leaders.

Two hundred and twenty-five years ago, Congressional funding led to the commissioning of *USS Constitution*. One hundred years ago, the Navy launched our country's first aircraft carrier, *USS Langley*. Eighty years ago, the Marine Corps began purchasing Higgins Boats. And seventy years ago, President Truman laid the keel for *USS Nautilus*, the first nuclear submarine.

Each of these investments yielded exponential returns, fueling the remarkable growth and global leadership of the United States during centuries of conflict and change. We stand at a similar inflection point today, where our national and economic security depend on the investments we make today to build and maintain our maritime dominance.

Just as our first frigates defended American shipping from foreign aggression, tomorrow's networked frigates and destroyers will define the future of sea control. Just as our early aircraft carriers provided the critical edge at Midway, *Ford*-class carriers will transform the forward posture of our Nation in the conflicts ahead.

Just as the Higgins Boats seized the shorelines from Guadalcanal to Okinawa, tomorrow's amphibious platforms will maintain our combat credibility throughout the Indo-Pacific. And just

as our undersea fleet maintained the most survivable leg of the nuclear triad for the last seven decades, our strategic future depends on delivering *Columbia*-class submarines, our top acquisition priority.

Sea power has always required foresight and investment, and the future of our Nation will be defined by the strategic choices we make today. The posture and availability of naval forces must always reflect the strategic needs of the Nation, providing effective options for the President and Secretary of Defense to counter every challenge.

The DON FY23 budget request delivers these forces through sustained investment and performance improvement, developing more lethal, networked capabilities and concepts, closely integrated between the services and with our Joint Force and government partners, as well as our allies and international partners.

Fleet Investments

The CNO's Navigation Plan refocuses our integrated all-domain naval power on the core functions of sea control and power projection through Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO).

DMO places a high priority on the long range fires and advanced connectivity that will result in a resilient, networked, and dispersed fleet, providing decision advantage and unified action in contested environments.

PB23 will invest in both manned and unmanned platforms to meet the strategic and operational demands of DMO, and will invest in the industrial capacity and capability to meet availability

and maintenance demands as required to defend the Nation. PB23 focuses on delivery and maintaining platforms that will provide the greatest combat capabilities and readiness across the fleet, while divesting in platforms that have less relevance in contested maritime environments where adversaries have advanced weapon systems. This budget provides funding for nine battle force ships in the coming year, including two *Virginia*-class attack submarines and two *Arleigh Burke* Flight III Destroyers, and also continues funding for the *Columbia*-class and *Ford*-class programs.

PB23 increases innovation and modernization efforts in Research and Development by 9% for the Navy and 6% for the Marine Corps. A \$2.7 billion investment in long range fires and hypersonic technologies will extend the lethality and capability of our platforms, and ensure maximum reach, survivability and decision space for our Sailors and Marines. With an increase of \$81 million for Operation Overmatch in FY23, the Navy will field a resilient, networked, and dispersed fleet, connected through the Naval Operational Architecture and Project Overmatch to provide decision advantage in contested environments. PB23 also commits \$1.2 billion of Research and Development funding to recapitalization of all portions of the undersea leg of the triad including the submarines, TACAMO, Trident D5, and our Nuclear Command, Control and Communications network.

To increase availability, improve maintenance, and maximize throughput for our warships, PB23 continues targeted shore investments designed to increase fleet readiness. I was honored to break ground on a new drydock facility at our public shipyard in Portsmouth last fall, and have visited each of the Navy's four public shipyards as Secretary. Each of these facilities provides critical

contributions to the availability and maintenance of our fleet, and each has modernization imperatives which are being addressed.

In order to improve naval maintenance production capacity at these facilities, the DON is fully committed to the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP), more than doubling SIOP investments over the previous budget, with over \$1.7 billion in funding for dry dock recapitalization, facility optimization, and capital equipment and modernization.

Expeditionary Capabilities

PB23 continues planning and design for the future Light Amphibious Warship (LAW). This budget provides for one Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD) and one Amphibious Assault Ship (LHA). Amphibious warships like the LHA and LPD are vital for the organic mobility and expeditionary persistence of our Marine Corps, and remain in high demand as a “Swiss Army Knife” for the Joint Force, meeting varying needs in dynamic situations. These ships provide the sealift necessary to deploy Marines for crisis response, contingency missions, humanitarian assistance, and integrated deterrence, supporting Marine Corps Aviation as well as diverse capabilities such as ISR/sensing, long range fires, and decoys.

The Joint Force needs a truly expeditionary and persistent Marine Corps - armed, agile, and postured – capable of operating persistently inside actively contested environments, and ready to respond in force at the speed of relevance. To answer these needs, the Marine Corps has put into motion an aggressive modernization of the Service through Force Design 2030, a transformational effort rooted in the anticipated challenges of the future operating environment.

I thank the Congress for its support of this transformation in the FY21 and FY22 authorization and appropriation bills. Your support is critical to the future readiness and lethality of the Marine Corps. Building on the cooperative efforts of all of our sea Services, the Marine Corps is reinvigorating the Fleet Marine principle to execute expeditionary warfighting concepts including Expeditionary Advanced Basing Operations (EABO) and Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE).

Agile, smaller combined-arms warfighting units, such as the Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR), Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) are the 9-1-1 force for our Combatant Commanders in the most dynamic and volatile situations. For example, during the evacuation efforts at Kabul International Airport last August, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit was first on the ground, keeping the aviation lifeline open.

The ARG/MEU is able to support a variety of mission sets, from humanitarian assistance, to coordinated operations with our allies and partners, to agile and lethal response in the combat zone. All of this requires investment in organic mobility, from the fleet, to the field, to the air.

Accordingly, PB23 prioritizes and fully funds Marine Expeditionary Forces, and will advance the expeditionary vision of Force Design 2030 through aircraft like the CH-53K King Stallion, with rotary heavy lift capability unmatched across the Joint Force. Platforms like CH-53K and C-130J will play a key role in the rapid deployment of Marines and equipment wherever and whenever needed.

Air Wing of the Future

As we mark the centennial of American carrier aviation, naval aviators from both the Navy and Marine Corps are achieving exceptional results in the operational deployment of the F-35 Lightning.

From the short takeoff and nimble capabilities of the F-35B, to our unmatched, carrier-based, precision strike F-35C, the Joint Strike Fighter is having a transformational effect on the reach and capability of naval aviation. In the coming years, a combination of F-35 and Next Generation Air Dominance systems will provide even greater power projection from our carrier force. PB23 will procure additional F-35C and F-35B aircraft, and will also invest in the Navy's MQ-25 unmanned aerial refueling system and MQ-9 Reaper, a crucial enabler for the effectiveness, visibility, and maneuverability of Marines in the field.

We are taking a comprehensive approach to modernizing the Navy's Fleet Readiness Centers (FRCs), which conduct depot level maintenance, repair, and overhaul of U.S. Navy aircraft, engines, components and support equipment. To build on the positive trend lines we have achieved in operational availability and readiness, PB23 includes an 11% increase in airframe, engine depot, and component funding. We continue to see positive results in aircraft availability, sustaining a mission-capable rate of 80 percent for F/A-18E/F Super Hornets for three consecutive fiscal years, and five additional airframes achieving 80 percent mission capability over the last 18 months.

Through the Performance to Plan (P2P) initiative we're using data-driven decision-making across the Navy to identify the root causes of maintenance delays and operational mishaps. This data-driven decision-making is integral to a "Get Real, Get Better" approach being applied across the Navy, demanding rigorous self-assessment, detailed analysis characterizing current performance, and providing opportunity to implement improvements. And in order to ensure every dollar is maximized to equip and prepare the warfighter, we are building on our financial statement audit success to improve our business systems, account for every asset, and leverage data as a strategic asset.

Sustaining Maritime Information Superiority

Modernization of our information technology infrastructure is a critical warfighting priority for the DON. As an information age naval force, every Navy and Marine Corps warfighting function and mission area is dependent on data and information to rapidly inform decision-making throughout the entire competition to conflict continuum. We are using data driven decision-making to achieve tangible savings while consistently working to become more effective and more efficient. For example, the Marine Corps has implemented Artificial Intelligence-enabled counter-intrusion systems aboard bases, and we will continue to explore the use of information technology to harden defenses and enable capabilities.

Effective use and management of data is key to our digital transformation, and will change how we will fight and win at every level. We are exploring the warfighting enabling capabilities of 5G expansion, and seeking additional ways to leverage new technology for distributed warfighting and unified command and control. Leaders in every functional unit and discipline

have been directed to set business systems modernization on an integrated path that is sufficiently resourced and supported across the DON.

Climate Readiness

The United States Navy and Marine Corps recognize the reality of global climate change and the need to prepare for its short and long term effects on operational capability, as well as our responsibility to mitigate our environmental impact.

To make our shore infrastructure more resilient to a changing climate, the Department is incorporating sea level rise modeling and modern facility standards into our new building designs. Navy and Marine Corps installations are adding a resilience component to their master plans and taking steps to ensure critical-mission infrastructure has access to reliable energy sources.

Reducing fuel consumption also reduces overall costs, not only related to end-point consumption, but also costs associated with transporting fuel and resources to protect those assets. New technologies are reducing fuel consumption, including hybridization for newer platforms. In addition, advanced batteries and synthetic fuels are the starting point for platforms that are smaller, more lethal, and more integrated into future battlefield networks.

PB23 resources \$719 million for climate-cognizant solutions including hybrid vehicles and propulsion system efficiencies. Reducing energy demand and fuel consumption through

advanced technology will enable warfighters to remain forward and self-sufficient for a longer period of time while also contributing to climate change goals.

Especially noteworthy are the regional challenges facing Naval forces in the Arctic, from the changing physical environment and greater access to sea routes and resources, to increased military activities by Arctic states, such as Russia, and non-Arctic states and their attempts to alter Arctic governance. Harsh operating conditions in the Arctic affect our meteorological forecast capability, hydrographic surveys, modeling, and sensors have the potential to impact sea lines of communications.

I have therefore directed a review of our current strategic document for the Arctic, the Arctic Blueprint, to ensure we are adequately preparing our forces for climate change within and through the region. The Navy is also engaging with our Arctic partners and allies through programs such as the Denmark Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative recently co-hosted by the President of the US Naval War College and Commandant of the Royal Danish Defense College.

Empowering Our People

Everywhere I've gone as Secretary of the Navy, I have been impressed with the professional dedication of every Sailor, Marine, and Civilian executing the many missions of the DON.

Admiral Gilday, General Berger, and I are determined to ensure opportunities for every Sailor, Marine and civilian to advance and grow without barriers or discrimination. It all starts with a culture of warfighting excellence, where all are treated with dignity and respect.

Building the Future Force

To maintain a Fleet prepared to fight and win in long term strategic competition, we must continue to evaluate and improve our capability to attract, retain, and develop a talented and diverse workforce. We face an intensely competitive job market for talented workers, and a rapidly evolving tactical and technical landscape, driving us to modernize and enhance our entire talent management approach in order to succeed.

We are expanding opportunities for civilians with prior military service to contribute their unique experiences to our force through the Targeted Reentry Program. We are also expanding avenues for personnel to learn, operate, and innovate with partners from the private sector, across the Joint Force, and alongside our allies.

We are continuously identifying opportunities for personnel to develop their leadership skills throughout the ranks, promoting equal opportunity in every aspect of our force. For example, the Marine Corps Talent Management 2030 is focused on identifying the individual strengths of every Marine and matching these talents to the needs of the Corps.

Our mission demands leaders who possess the highest intellectual and warfighting capabilities to confront the many dangers of a complex world. We value critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem solving. The institutions of our naval education enterprise are developing leaders with the warfighting rigor, intellectual dynamism, and innovation to hold our strategic advantage against competitors and global adversaries. We are creating a continuum of learning through ready, relevant education, attuned to the battle rhythm of active duty service.

PB23 invests \$425 million in our naval education institutions, including the US Naval Academy, Naval Postgraduate School, Naval War College, and Marine Corps University. This funding will expand access to the Naval Community College ensuring that all of our personnel have access to a high quality college education, no matter where their service takes them. We are investing in distance learning and increasing shipboard training and certification opportunities, while expanding opportunities for personnel to work and research alongside our industrial and academic partners.

We appreciate the Congress's interest in ensuring our naval forces have the right facilities to train, fight, and win. Specifically, we are grateful for the Congress's continued attention to the urgent need to expand the Fallon Training Range Complex, which is necessary to the readiness of every naval aviator and Navy SEAL. I have personally met with Tribal and local community leaders, as well as my counterparts across the Federal Government, and I am committed to finding a favorable solution for everyone involved.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In order to meet the challenges of a complex world, we must continue to recruit, retain, train, and promote the best from all of America. We need a diverse force, so every child in America can see themselves wearing the uniform or working in our civilian ranks tomorrow, and every viewpoint is represented in our operations today, so that we can draw talent from all of America to build our warfighting advantage. This is a national security imperative, and a critical aspect of the DON's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives.

We have been reaching out across the Department, through efforts like Task Force One Navy, the Executive Diversity Advisory Council, the USMC Diversity Review Board and the Navy DEI Council to understand what is working, and where we fall short. We are looking at areas of under-representation in military and civilian occupations, and finding ways to build diversity, equity and inclusion efforts into our Navy and Marine Corps culture.

We are expanding recruitment efforts like our Junior Officer Diversity Outreach Program, to build recruitment networks in diverse and underrepresented communities. We are expanding and increasing awareness of career development and mentorship opportunities to help cultivate the next generation of diverse leadership through the ranks. And in accordance with the 2017 Women, Peace and Security Act, we are working with partner nations to expand the meaningful participation of women in defense around the world.

We continue to expand gender integration in Marine Corps recruit training and operational units, strengthening our entire force. Out in the fleet, women are leading as never before. In December,

I commissioned *USS Daniel Inouye*, under the command of Commander DonAnn Gilmore. In January, *USS Abraham Lincoln* Captain Amy Bauernschmidt became the first woman to command an aircraft carrier at sea. And in February, I was honored to preside over the change of command at *USS Constitution*, as Commander Billie Farrell became the first woman to command our Nation's flagship.

And many more outstanding women are on their way up the ranks. This semester at the U.S. Naval Academy, five of the six people chosen through a competitive process to serve on the staff of the Brigade Commander, the highest ranking midshipman, are women, including the Brigade Commander, herself.

From the E-Ring to the Air Wing, the deckplates to the field, our force is stronger today because of the many women and minorities in our ranks and leadership. But there is still more work to be done. We are working to reduce under-representation by examining our accession and promotion pipelines to recognize and value the service of all our enlisted and commissioned personnel. And our office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion continues to identify areas for improvement and action. We look forward to working with the Committee to continue expanding opportunities for all Americans to serve and lead.

Destructive Behaviors

Leaders at all levels are expected to set the tone for a healthy climate and culture where destructive behaviors are never tolerated. Trust is at the heart of all our warriors do. Extremist

ideologies are a strategic threat to that trust and have no place within the Navy and Marine Corps.

Throughout 2021, DON representatives participated in the Secretary of Defense's Countering Extremist Activity Working Group to develop recommendations to address extremism in the ranks. Specific focus areas included military justice and policy, training and enhancing the insider threat program.

This budget requests \$240 million for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response activities – an 84% increase over FY22. We have focused our efforts on recognizing and preventing harmful behaviors in the first instance, and ensuring that leaders at every level have the training, skills, and tools available to ensure offenders are held appropriately accountable.

I appreciate the work of this Committee to include new tools within the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to deter misconduct and prosecute sexual assault, domestic violence, and other covered offenses. The Department of Navy is moving forward to create Offices of Special Trial Counsel, as required by the NDAA, and we welcome the meaningful change these offices will help enable. Trained and independent military prosecutors will capably oversee sensitive investigations of covered offenses and independently determine, based on the evidence, which cases are referred to trial by court-martial. They will be led by a senior judge advocate who will report directly to me.

DON leaders have circulated the “Watch List” throughout the force. This prevention tool details warning signs that increase the risk of sexual assault within a command, including sexual harassment, gender discrimination, lack of responsibility and intervention, workplace hostility, and lack of respect and unit cohesion. In conjunction with this training tool, we encourage leaders at every level to speak up and take action when they see these or other behaviors on the continuum of harm.

This fiscal year, we will begin hiring an integrated prevention workforce across the force to redouble our focus on early identification and prevention of harmful and destructive behaviors. I have also directed the DON to expedite the implementation of five recommendations of the Secretary of Defense’s Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military. These five accelerated recommendations focus on developing, educating, and promoting leaders dedicated to fostering command climates in which all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

These changes will improve our ability to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, hold offenders accountable, and create a safer, stronger and more inclusive Navy-Marine Corps team. I am releasing the DON “No Wrong Door” policy, ensuring victims receive professional care to the fullest extent practicable, regardless of where they initially seek support. This new policy will also serve to supplement existing efforts to further professionalize our workforce, prioritize the prevention of sexual harassment and eliminate collateral duty personnel with full time personnel. This “No Wrong Door” policy also recognizes that sexual assault, sexual harassment, and

domestic abuse exist on a continuum of harm. The DON's implementation efforts, led by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, are already underway.

Take Care of Our People

The DON is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being for all members within our military community. We are reforming operating procedures and promotion practices to reward initiative, applied problem solving, and innovative thinking at every level. A top priority as we evaluate personnel practices are the needs and challenges of military families, particularly to ensure our policies respect the needs of single parent and dual service families.

The DON offers a variety of mental health and counseling resources, encouraging positive help-seeking behaviors and eliminating the stigma around mental health care among service members. The importance of this issue and the continued emphasis on suicide prevention has been highlighted in recent weeks as we mourn the loss of young Sailors aboard *USS George Washington*. We continue to emphasize suicide prevention efforts, breaking the silence, and increasing visibility and access to critical resources.

Through a combination of non-monetary, quality of life, and customer service programs, we are responding to the needs of our warfighters and their families. For example, this budget increases Child and Youth Services funding by 38%, including \$56 million for a new Child Development Center at Point Loma, childcare data management system upgrades, and full funding for the Fee Assistance Program.

PB23 also includes significant funding for construction and oversight of family housing, including \$249 million for new family housing at Joint Region Marianas – Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, and \$75 million for construction improvements to family housing in Yokosuka, Japan. PB23 also includes the funding necessary for DON to sustain our increased oversight as necessary to ensure Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) projects on Navy and Marine Corps bases provide quality housing and a positive living experience for Sailors, Marines and their families.

As demonstrated by recent quality issues at barracks buildings in Naval Support Activity (NSA) Bethesda in Maryland, the DON must also ensure that our unaccompanied housing is properly maintained and consistent with modern living standards. I have recently visited the barracks at NSA Bethesda to confirm that these quality issues have been appropriately addressed, and I am committed to improving our unaccompanied housing facilities and preventing future problems. PB23 also includes significant investment in unaccompanied housing, including \$101 million for phase II of a Navy barracks project at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, and \$101 million for a Marine Corps Barracks Complex at Kadena, Japan.

Finally, I fully support the Secretary of Defense's decision to defuel and permanently close the Red Hill facility, and I take very seriously the DON's responsibility to make things right after fuel releases contaminated the drinking water system at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. I will continue to work closely with our federal interagency partners and the Hawaii Department of Health to protect the environment and support the military families and residents who have been impacted by fuel-contaminated water on Oahu, Hawaii.

COVID-19

With consistent personal and fleet discipline, vaccine distribution, and continued refinement of best practices, we have ensured a robust, proactive, and coordinated COVID-19 response across the DON. I particularly want to note the contributions of the 265,000 civilian employees across the DON, whose faithful service has continued through the many challenges brought on by the pandemic, continuing critical and essential roles to enable our force to continue making mission.

Guided by Health Protection Condition (HPCON) determinations and mission requirements, we continue to implement flexibilities to help minimize risk to our people and their families as we respond to evolving situations and ensure the continual readiness of our force. We are well positioned to emerge stronger than ever, as the pandemic has forced us to rethink and refine our recruitment, training, and personnel movements across the DON, as well as shipyard operations, deployments, and maintenance schedules, with efficiencies and applications of technology that can continue to benefit our operations and throughput long after COVID-19 is in our wake.

Strengthen Strategic Partnerships

Our partnerships provide an unmatched and irreplaceable advantage over every potential adversary. From our fellow Joint Force and government personnel, to our vital industrial base, to our global network of allies and partners, we will sustain, expand, and strengthen strategic partnerships by building seamless integration, communication, and collaboration with each of our partners at the same time that we cultivate new relationships.

Joint Force and Government

Across both services and throughout the DON, PB23 will invest in the readiness of integration-ready platforms to ensure continued freedom of action throughout the maritime domain, from amphibious and ground element equipment, to agile warships and submarines, to dominant aircraft carriers and air wings. Successful implementation of the concepts within the Navigation Plan and Force Design 2030 will be pursued through a unified, integrated effort at every echelon.

But our fully integrated naval force is only part of the formidable Joint Force team that stands united in the protection of the American people. Collaboration between Departments, from the Pentagon to the operational front line unit, is critical to the defense of the United States. We are constantly seeking opportunities to maximize the combined efficiency and effectiveness of our force in cooperation with the Army, Air Force, and Space Force. For example, we continue to work with our fellow services on critical advanced research programs including hypersonic weapons. And worldwide, the Joint Strike Fighter program is yielding unprecedented reach and agility for the entire Joint Force.

We are also proud to serve alongside our fellow sea service, the United States Coast Guard. Building on Advantage at Sea, our Tri Service Maritime Strategy, we are continually seeking ways to leverage our combined capabilities, from ice breakers to coastal facilities to embarked personnel. For example, last year *USS Tulsa* and *USS Charleston* conducted missions with embarked Coast Guard detachments as part of the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative. This joint effort improves our maritime domain awareness in the Indo-Pacific to reduce illicit fishing, combat transnational crimes, and enhance regional security. PB23 will build on cooperative efforts like this to safeguard every part of the maritime domain.

We continue to work with the United States Strategic Command, the National Security Council and the United States Air Force to support the Strategic Deterrent Forces. We work closely with our Joint Force partners to ensure DON is fully integrated into the national command authority, and ensure the Navy's sea based strategic deterrent is ready at a moment's notice to defend our nation. We will continue to work closely with the Department of Energy and our National Laboratories, to ensure Navy is forward leaning with modernization and sustainment as we continue to invest in the future deterrent through programs like *Columbia* and TACAMO.

Community Partnerships

Across the United States and around the world, Navy and Marines Corps installations partner with the local communities that host us to pursue joint opportunities, collaborate on shared challenges and develop regional plans that enable military readiness while supporting community priorities.

Installation commanding officers are successfully using Intergovernmental Support Agreements to partner with a state or local governments to obtain installation support services, often at a considerable cost savings. Initiatives like the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot program provide construction funds to states and communities to address deficiencies in community infrastructure that support military installations. And under the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, the DON is partnering with local governments and organizations and combining resources to enhance and preserve mission readiness and achieve mutually beneficial, sustainable communities near our installations and ranges.

Industry Partnerships

From the skilled shipwrights who transformed live southern oak into *USS Constitution's* “iron sides”, to the over 2,000 suppliers and contractors contributing to the *Ford* class today, our industrial base has fueled the strength of our Navy and Marine Corps. The innovative platforms and technologies that are so essential to the Joint Warfighting Concept would not exist without the private sector’s involvement.

Working alongside our vital industry partners, we are aligning our efforts to produce the right platforms and capabilities for the warfighter, and ensure maximum availability and throughput from design to production to maintenance. A robust, resilient, and nimble industrial base and supply chain is critical to the long term strength of our Navy and Marine Corps. Funding predictability and long term planning are key elements in ensuring the efficiency of our acquisitions and maintenance processes in partnership with a supply chain calibrated to deliver maximum value to the taxpayer and warfighter.

In order to ensure a strong and stable industrial base to meet our national security requirements, we must be clear and transparent as to our future needs and resource constraints, and fight requirements creep whenever possible. In turn, our partners must be transparent with us as well, managing costs, strengthening the workforce, and delivering platforms on-time and on-budget. Together, we must be good stewards of the taxpayer's money.

PB23 will strengthen our industrial base through targeted investments in supplier development, shipbuilder infrastructure, strategic outsourcing, and workforce development. This budget adds \$543 million for submarine industrial base investment and funds for a predictable build plan of two SSNs and two DDGs per year. It maintains a public shipyard workforce at 37,000 full time equivalent workers, and funds 45 private ship maintenance availabilities.

I have held multiple town hall meetings with industry partners to hear about their challenges when doing business with the DON, and seeking greater transparency and cooperation to pursue greater efficiency, innovation and teamwork. I have also made it clear that I expect DON suppliers and contractors to meet their small business commitments, and expand diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in their hiring and subcontracting, in order to expand the innovative private sector universe available to the DON to benefit the taxpayer and the warfighter.

Allies and Partners

As strategic competitors pursue confrontation and coercion, we respond with alliances and partnerships, standing alongside a global community of nations in defense of our common values. I have witnessed the bonds between our Sailors and Marines working alongside their

counterparts in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and elsewhere throughout the Indo-Pacific. I also saw the power of allied cooperation on recent trips to Europe, as I spoke with Marines preparing for Exercise COLD RESPONSE in Norway, and Sailors aboard *USS Harry S. Truman* carrying out tri-carrier maritime and air policing operations in the Mediterranean and North Aegean Sea alongside the Italian carrier *Cavour* and the French carrier *Charles DeGaulle*.

These activities demonstrate the strength of our integrated deterrence, and the agility of our combined forces. Last year, *USS Sullivans* transited the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Philippine Sea as part of the *HMS Queen Elizabeth* Carrier Strike Group, providing air defense and integrated operations alongside Royal Navy and Dutch destroyers, while also working with many allies and partners including Australia, France, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and more.

HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group also featured United States Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211 operating aboard the Royal Navy's flagship carrier. For seven months, the "Wake Island Avengers" operated ten F-35B Lightnings alongside eight Royal Air Force F-35Bs from the decks of *HMS Queen Elizabeth*. Our Marine aviators have also operated the F-35B from the decks of Italy's *Cavour* and Japan's *Izumo*, proving the capability of this aircraft for true allied deck hopping, when paired with United States amphibious ships for aircraft maintenance and sustainment.

PB23 will strengthen global alliances and partnerships with funding for joint operations and exercises around the world, including CARAT, MALABAR, and BALIKITAN in the Indo-

Pacific, NATO operations in the Mediterranean, and exercises in our own hemisphere like UNITAS. We will continue to strengthen military-to-military relationships with existing allies, leverage specialized allied experience in regional operations, and expand and deepen our partnerships with like-minded nations around the world.

We will continue to 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 with our allies and partners through shared warfighting concepts, continually campaigning forward to deter adversaries and protect the rules based international order.

Our Sailors, Marines and civilian personnel are warrior-diplomats for our nation. Their professionalism and dedication promotes the connections that strengthen our collective security and cultivate shared ideals that send the message that the United States is a friend worth having.

Conclusion

The most important partnership for our Navy and Marine Corps Team is with the American people. They entrust us with their hard earned tax dollars, as well as the lives and wellbeing of their sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, husbands and wives who serve in our ranks. We will not fail in our sacred responsibility to the American people, and all who serve in the cloth of our Nation.

On behalf of each of the brave Sailors, Marines, Civilians, and the families that serve at their side, I once again thank the leadership and membership of this Committee for your oversight, interest, and ongoing commitment to the defense of the United States of America. It is an honor to work with each of you, and I look forward to your questions.