

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

STATEMENT OF

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ON THE READINESS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT
MARCH 4, 2026

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Introduction

Chairman Sullivan, Ranking Member Hirono, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, thank you for the opportunity to testify about the readiness of the United States Navy. On behalf of our Sailors, civilians, and families around the world, thank you for your continued leadership, support, and ensuring our Navy-Marine Corps team remains ready for prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea as well as for recognizing in law our Navy's role in the peacetime promotion of our national security interests and prosperity. Your commitment guarantees our Navy is ready to assure homeland defense from the sea, deliver global stability and deterrence, create national prosperity, and maintain peace through strength.

The Navy's Value to the Nation

The Navy defends the homeland from the sea. Along thousands of miles of coastline and millions of square miles of our exclusive economic zone, the Navy assures our lawful sovereignty over national resources, defends the maritime approaches to the homeland against adversary encroachment, and enables defense in depth against all domain threats.

In addition to homeland defense, our Navy also provides global stability and deterrence. The Navy's Carrier Strike Groups and Amphibious Readiness Groups provide deterrence and crisis response every day. Our ballistic missile submarine force provides the most survivable leg of our nuclear deterrent.

The Navy enables national prosperity. Roughly 40% of our international trade by value and 70% by volume moves by sea. The food in our grocery stores, the cell phones in our pockets, and the cars in our garages would not be possible without American sea power.

In peacetime, the wealth and welfare of the American people and American industry rest on the free and open maritime system preserved by the Navy. We provide the hard backstop that underpins American diplomatic and economic power. In war, defending our sea lanes becomes existential to the survival of our economy and national interests.

The Geopolitical Landscape and Recent Operational Successes

Over the past year, the Navy has continued to serve on the maritime front lines. We deploy combat ready forces to deter America's adversaries around the world, and we are prepared to fight and win America's wars if called upon.

Combat Operations. The Navy conducted combat operations in multiple theaters of operations, supporting the Joint Force and achieving national objectives. In Operation ROUGH RIDER, the Navy defended freedom of navigation through a multi-month offensive campaign of strikes into Yemen to destroy the Houthi's ability to deny commercial and military vessels' passage through the Red Sea. A submarine launched cruise missiles targeting Iranian nuclear facilities in Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER. The Navy conducted strikes into Nigeria against Islamic State affiliated terrorists. And in Venezuela, Sailors and Marines operating from the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group and the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group played a central role in Operation ABSOLUTE RESOLVE.

Defend the U.S. Homeland. While deployed in the U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Northern Command areas of responsibility in support of Operation SOUTHERN SPEAR and Joint Task Force SOUTHERN GUARD, Navy forces with embarked Coast Guard detachments advanced regional security by interdicting or destroying drug-smuggling small craft and prevented 510,000 pounds of cocaine from entering the United States. Additionally, forward deployed naval forces in the U.S. European Command and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command provided early warning and domain awareness of threats to the homeland such as adversary ships, submarines, and ballistic missiles, enabling critical national command authority decision space.

Deter China in the Indo-Pacific Through Strength. The Navy is committed to maintaining peace in the Indo-Pacific but is ready for conflict if necessary. This includes deterring China and contributing to a denial defense along the First Island Chain.

Over the last twenty years, China has undergone an unprecedented military buildup, modernized capabilities, and improved proficiencies across all warfare domains. The evolving

joint capabilities and concepts of the People's Liberation Army continue to strengthen China's ability to revolutionize its maritime capability to rival and contest our own.

Recent People's Liberation Army Navy invasion rehearsals and live-fire exercises near Taiwan and around the region, joint exercises with Russia off the coast of Alaska, and snap live-fire drills during the circumnavigation of Australia illustrate the need for combat ready naval forces in the Indo-Pacific. The Navy remains committed to partnering and burden-sharing with allies and partners around the world to deter and, if necessary, defeat this threat.

Unbroken Strategic Deterrent. The Navy's fleet of Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines and E-6B aircraft facilitated uninterrupted strategic deterrence patrols around the world. As the most survivable leg of the nuclear triad, these submarines deploy 70% of the nation's nuclear warheads, protecting our security and providing an assured second-strike capability against adversaries who threaten our homeland. The Navy acknowledges the operational availability challenges with the E-6B, which has faithfully served our nation for nearly 30 years, and we remain fully committed to sustaining its readiness as we recapitalize the TACAMO mission with the EC-130J. These persistent operations of our Sea Based Strategic Deterrence forces underwrite national security and provide the strength, flexibility, and breadth of options that national leadership requires.

The U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions and the Navy Campaign Plan

The Chief of Naval Operations' vision, captured in the recently released *U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions*, outlines a strategy to organize, train, and equip a Navy to meet the nation's needs today and tomorrow. These instructions are built on four foundations: Sailors First, Foundry, Fleet, and Fight. Skilled, prepared, combat-ready Sailors are the lifeblood of the Navy. The Foundry is the engine that transforms raw inputs and forges them into lethal outputs: ready warfighters, platforms, and sustained readiness necessary to win. The Fleet is our most decisive instrument of national power; it is comprised of people, platforms, and payloads which bring the Joint Force expeditionary reach, mobility, and persistent presence that promotes our vital interests.

The *Navy Campaign Plan* further details how the Navy will accomplish the strategy in the *Fighting Instructions*. It organizes these efforts into four Campaign Areas: Battle Ready Sailors, Battle Ready Force, Battle Force of Today and Tomorrow, and Global Battle Integration. In my testimony, I will focus on the first three areas.

Battle Ready Sailors

Recruiting. The Navy continues to successfully attract top talent. In FY25, we surpassed our recruiting goal of 40,600 by enlisting 44,096 new Sailors, exceeding our goal by 3,496 recruits, a success driven by ruthlessly overhauling and revitalizing our recruiting processes and improving our employment of data analytics and targeted digital campaigns. We increased the FY26 recruiting goal to 45,000, and we are currently on track to meet this target.

Retention. Retention remains a cornerstone of our end-strength strategy, and we met or exceeded our benchmarks across all zones in FY25. Policy changes were instrumental to this success. For example, the High Year Tenure (HYT) Plus Pilot program suspended HYT gates for enlisted Sailors. The program processed nearly 7,000 requests and retained 2,174 Sailors. Additionally, the Full Power Navy initiative, launched in February 2025, retained 2,789 Sailors who were considering separating at the end of their obligated service but ultimately elected to continue serving our Nation. These efforts, combined with other policy changes, resulted in a net gain of 10,830 enlisted Sailors over the past year.

While officer retention remains a challenge in specific career fields, we continue to offer competitive compensation and targeted monetary incentives for critical officer fields to position the Navy as an employer of choice. We appreciate the continued support from Congress in enabling our monetary retention incentives in areas such as Aviation, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Surface Warfare, Submarine Warfare, Naval Special Warfare, and medical professions.

Reducing Gaps at Sea. Ship manning is imperative to operational readiness, the ability to conduct surge deployments, and retain top talent. Since May 2025, recruiting successes and strategically targeted personnel distribution reduced gaps at sea by more than 300 per month. We began FY25 with a shortfall of approximately 23,000 Sailors and have driven down gaps at sea

to 18,000 as of February 2026. We are on track to reduce gaps at sea to 13,000 by the end of FY26.

Quality of Service. The well-being of our Sailors and their families is paramount, and a Sailor who is prioritized and supported can stay focused on the mission. We are enhancing Sailor housing through strategic infrastructure and process modernization. Core service standards are being elevated by providing permanent, shore-based housing via the "No Sailor Lives Afloat" initiative coupled with investments to restore and modernize housing facilities.

We are expanding unaccompanied housing public-private venture to provide quality housing to our Sailors. For example, we are expanding the number of privatized unaccompanied beds in San Diego, California by over 5,091 and in Hampton Roads, Virginia by 8,097. Sailors will experience an improved quality of life through the increased modernization of our facilities, which includes both renovations and new construction. The Navy is also improving the quality of life of its Sailors and their families through updated policies, increased oversight, and rigorous inspections of privatized family housing. Additionally, major renovation and new construction projects of government owned and leased family housing will provide an improved quality of life for Sailors and their families by improving their living conditions at numerous locations around the country.

To enhance program quality and school readiness, the Navy Child and Youth Program is implementing the "Early Learning Matters" curriculum across all installations, a process scheduled for completion in FY26. This commitment to quality is matched by a capital investment strategy to provide safe and modern facilities. Funded projects are already underway to add capacity in high-demand locations such as Naval Base Kitsap and Naval Base Point Loma, directly addressing waitlists and ensuring our facilities meet the highest standards for our youngest family members.

To address the modern information demands on the 21st-century Sailor, the Navy has expanded free and subsidized Wi-Fi access to over 87% of unaccompanied housing, with 100% coverage expected in FY27. Additionally, the Navy implemented Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Virtual Single Sailor Program enterprise-wide, offering online events to combat isolation and keeping Sailors engaged with their peers.

Primary Navy MWR fitness centers have transitioned to 24/7 operations, providing greater flexibility and access for all eligible patrons. In FY25 alone, this initiative saw over 290,000 patrons utilizing fitness centers after hours that were previously unavailable.

The Navy is launching two pilot programs to transform our food service and galleys. These efforts will focus on providing healthy, flexible, and modern nutritional choices. The initiative also includes enhanced culinary education for Culinary Specialists at the beginning of their careers. The overarching goal of these initiatives is to build a ready and capable force by prioritizing the physical and mental health of Sailors.

Training and Warfighter Competency. To develop the most competent warfighters, the Navy has transitioned from episodic training to a lifelong learning model called the Career Training Continuum (CTC). This data-driven framework uses Fleet requirements to create a deliberate, career-long journey of technical mastery for every Sailor. The CTC ensures our Sailors possess the advanced skills needed to operate and maintain our most complex systems, guaranteeing a more capable, confident, and battle-ready Fleet prepared to win in any contested environment.

At our “A” and “C” schools, we are leveraging additive manufacturing to create 3D-printed training aids, which provide Sailors with critical, hands-on training on modern assemblies at a fraction of the cost of using decommissioned hardware or acquiring new replicas. We have invested in electronic classrooms and Multipurpose Reconfigurable Training Systems which provide high-fidelity, simulated training environments across various ratings. Additionally, Artificial Intelligence and deep reinforcement learning are being implemented within our schoolhouses to analyze complex combat scenarios and enhance training.

Battle Ready Force

Combat Surge Readiness. Combat Surge Readiness (CSR) is a designation for air, surface, and submarine platforms to execute combat operations. CSR-certified units meet minimum requirements for material condition, training, manning, and armament in order to provide emergent forces to Combatant Commanders if needed. Attaining CSR status readiness levels is achieved on the way to, but not in substitution for, completing the Navy’s Optimized

Fleet Response Plan force generation process to meet the Global Force Management demand signal.

Achieving and maintaining the Navy's goal of 80% CSR will result in an elevated state of Fleet readiness, but it is a high bar which we will not achieve without cultural and organizational changes. To improve CSR, we are reducing the number of platforms in depot maintenance through improved business and maintenance practices, as well as certifying crews and their platforms earlier in the force-generation cycle. Type Commanders have been designated as single accountable officers to ensure their respective forces identify, address, and overcome barriers to achieve 80% CSR.

Surface Ship Readiness. The Surface Force is 70% CSR for cruisers and destroyers and 45% CSR for amphibious ships, making overall Surface CSR 66%. The Navy plans to continue to improve overall Surface CSR through improvements in maintenance performance. The Navy continues to improve depot level maintenance, decreasing Days of Maintenance Delay (DoMD) FY19 from 7094 to 3266 in FY25, a 54% reduction. The current projection for FY26 is 62% on time completion (OTC) and 2344 DoMD. Performance has already improved, with Q1 FY26 exceeding expectations in both reducing DoMD and increasing OTC. Furthermore, the Navy was able to extend the service life for 17 destroyers and four cruisers based on improved material condition, maintenance processes, and Life Cycle Health Assessments.

Amphibious Ship Readiness. The Navy is committed to maintaining no less than a 31-ship amphibious force structure and we are executing a comprehensive plan to improve amphibious ship readiness. We acknowledge underperformance in amphibious ship maintenance. We are taking action to improve execution and meet operational requirements.

To provide an increased focus, the Navy and Marine Corps jointly established the Amphibious Force Readiness Board (AFRB) co-chaired by myself and Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. Our charter is to address challenges for force generation, readiness, and maintenance and modernization of the amphibious force. The AFRB will provide quarterly reports to SECNAV, CNO, and CMC on actions and improvements.

We have set clear goals including executing on time deployments and on time maintenance completion, specifically: reducing unplanned maintenance to 10% to reduce cost

and schedule impact, reducing DoMD, procuring 97% of long lead time material greater than one month prior to maintenance period commencement, and awarding contracts one year prior for maintenance planning and workforce stability.

Thus far, several corrective actions have been completed or are ongoing. On USS America, 69 tanks were inspected prior to the maintenance period to better define the maintenance availability package. Flag level approval is required to exceed 10% unplanned work. Each LHD and LHA has been assigned two Port Engineers to improve availability planning and maintenance management of these complex platforms. An original equipment manufacturer contract for boiler maintenance has been implemented on IWO JIMA as a pilot with intention to expand to all LHDs in the future. Diesel maintenance is conducted outside depot level maintenance periods in order to increase executability of our CNO availabilities. Material forecasting models have been improved to expedite the ordering and receipt of long lead time material before commencing availabilities. To further improve material availability, a Project Manager Pilot has been established to track material delivery in support of ship depot availabilities. Additionally, a \$15M contract incentive for on-time maintenance completion has been incorporated into contracts which is yielding early favorable results.

Going forward, the Navy will award the USS Boxer maintenance contract six months prior to its repair period, conduct a 150-day focused availability on USS Fort Lauderdale, and award the contracts for USS John P. Murtha and USS Makin Island eight months prior to the availability. And finally, the Navy is establishing maintenance commands in Norfolk and San Diego staffed primarily by Sailors to conduct intermediate-level maintenance.

Aviation Readiness. Naval Aviation is 68% CSR. Our 11 aircraft carriers and associated carrier airwings are some of the most in-demand assets in our nation's arsenal and balancing their availability for tasking against maintenance needs is challenging. The most critical path to improving aviation CSR lies in the readiness of our aircraft carriers. By improving command and control relationships, executing maintenance early, leveraging the private sector, and implementing disciplined controls to limit growth work, we are reducing carrier availability lengths and increasing shipyard throughput. To improve aircraft readiness, we are leveraging real-time supply parts data visualization to enable proactive leadership engagement when shortfalls arise. We have developed the ability to track aircraft part reliability down to the

serialized component level. We are working to implement predictive modeling to inform and augment aviation parts support to forward-deployed air wings, reducing the need for off-ship requisitions. These efforts have reduced non-mission capable aircraft due to parts supply by 7% since August 2025.

Submarine Readiness. The Submarine Force is 62% CSR for attack submarines. Reducing the number of attack submarines in shipyard maintenance down to ten will drive submarine combat surge readiness to 80%. To reduce production and maintenance delays, we embraced industry's best practices; outsourcing specific tasks, increasing material inventory before work begins, and pushing project management authorities directly to the lowest levels of our shipyards.

Through initiatives in workforce development, supplier development, shipbuilder infrastructure, strategic outsourcing, and manufacturing technology, we are improving submarine industrial base throughput. We have seen benefits from reducing work package sizes and advanced planning. Virginia Class submarine materiel availability improvements have reduced the number of cannibalizations from over 1500 in 2021 to less than 800 in 2025. These efforts yield shorter repair periods and, ultimately, more submarines are available for tasking.

Our four public shipyards: Norfolk, Portsmouth, Puget Sound, and Pearl Harbor, are vital to achieving an 80% CSR for our attack submarines. I have visited each shipyard and witnessed the work of the 37,500 engineers, tradespeople, and support personnel repairing our Fleet. This workforce remains committed to improving the readiness of these critical assets, and the Navy needs to continue supporting their efforts through improved compensation and work environments. We will continue to invest in shipyard infrastructure, support expansion of the submarine industrial base, increase productivity, and shorten maintenance timelines to continue to improve readiness.

Munitions. Ongoing combat operations across the globe combined with finite industrial base capacity have impacted ammunition inventories. To address munitions expenditures and prepare for future conflicts, we are executing a comprehensive strategy focused on replenishing existing stockpiles, expanding industrial capacity through new partnerships, and fostering innovation in weapons development. Continued support from Congress such as the FY26

National Defense Authorization Act providing multi-year procurement authorities for munitions is paramount to success and appreciated. The Navy is revitalizing its Organic Industrial Base to address critical production and sustainment bottlenecks. We are making key investments in modernizing energetics production facilities at Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head, Allegany Ballistics Laboratory, and China Lake.

Battle Force Today and Tomorrow

Golden Fleet. To date, the Navy has procured a balance of traditional ships from just seven vendors as funding has allowed us to maintain our Navy. However, this approach must evolve if we are to procure and man, train and equip a Navy required to meet our national interests. In order to execute our Title 10 responsibilities and the National Defense Strategy, we must grow the Fleet. The future Fleet includes a mix of unmanned and low-cost platforms to affordably expand mission capability and lethality at scale while making investments in platforms needed to execute high-end warfare and project tailored lethality across multiple theaters. This includes continued production of today's platforms and the development of new programs.

The modern battleship which will bring a new, survivable, and offensive forward command and control capability. The battleship will deliver significant offensive effects with capabilities such as Conventional Prompt Strike, railgun, and nuclear capable cruise missiles.

Golden Fleet also includes the Frigate, FF(X), which will support a wide range of missions where a large, multi-mission warship isn't required. The focus with the FF(X) program is accelerating delivery, allowing us to get this capability to the fleet faster.

Industrial Workforce. Investing in our long-neglected industrial base is critical to improving Navy readiness. Most critically, this includes reestablishing a domestic workforce who can perform the complex engineering work required to build and repair our platforms. The Navy cannot win without the welders, electricians, pipefitters, steamfitters, engineers, planners, and skilled tradesmen of our nation's shipbuilding industrial base. Shipbuilders and suppliers must hire 250,000 new workers over the next decade to meet growing demand for shipbuilding and sustainment.

Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan. The Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan (SIOP) is an essential investment to improve conditions in the Navy's four public shipyards which will directly reduce maintenance durations for the Navy's nuclear fleet. SIOP has completed 52 projects across our four public shipyards. These projects maintained dry dock certification, improved facilities and optimized workflows. An additional 40 projects are under contract, including six dry docks. Three new dry docks are under construction, and three dry docks are being modernized. A total of 315 pieces of industrial plan equipment worth \$710M have been delivered, directly increasing the effectiveness of our shipyards.

Fleet Readiness Centers Infrastructure Optimization Program. The Fleet Readiness Centers Infrastructure Optimization Program (FIOP) is executing a transformational facilities and infrastructure modernization effort across its three aging aviation depots in Jacksonville, Florida, San Diego, California and Cherry Point, North Carolina. FIOP is finalizing a 25-year infrastructure and equipment recapitalization and modernization plan with an expected completion date May 2026.

FIOP has completed construction projects at Aircraft Paint Complex and CMV-22B Depot Maintenance Facility at Naval Base Coronado, Fleet Readiness Southwest, and the Target and Surveillance Systems Facility at Naval Air Station Jacksonville Fleet Readiness Center Southeast. Additionally, FIOP has procured more than 432 industrial support equipment assets since 2019 to replace aging equipment and to modernize the organic industrial base.

FIOP is introducing and scaling multiple advanced manufacturing initiatives across all the aviation depots to include robotics, machine health monitoring, laser paint stripping, radio-frequency identification tracking, and additive manufacturing to lower both maintenance times and costs.

Condition-Based Maintenance. The Navy is committed to expanding and operationalizing predictive maintenance. We are moving beyond a reactive posture and embracing a data-driven, proactive approach to sustaining the fleet. We are scaling our Condition-Based Maintenance initiatives via Enterprise Remote Monitoring (eRM). This critical enabler provides real-time health monitoring of our ships' vital systems, allowing us to preemptively address material

condition issues and conduct repairs with surgical efficiency. The direct results are a marked reduction in platform downtime, an increase in the operational availability of our warships, and a more resilient force capable of surging to meet combatant commander demands. The system has detected problems prior to failure and enabled timely repair in critical systems such as air compressors, refrigeration plants, and main engines. This has informed future maintenance planning, which directly improves readiness.

We have demonstrated the success and scalability of this strategy. In Fiscal Year 2025, we expanded this capability across the non-nuclear surface fleet from 24 to 34 platforms. There are 10 installations planned for FY26. This deliberate growth not only brings more of the fleet under this protective watch but also enriches our data ecosystem, allowing our analytics to become ever more precise. This investment is fundamental to maximizing the return on every maintenance dollar and, most importantly, ensuring our naval assets are ready for the fight, anytime and anywhere.

Advanced Manufacturing. The Navy is committed to using additive manufacturing to bridge supply part shortfalls. Since 2024, we have installed over 80 metal additively manufactured parts and 2300 polymer additively manufactured parts across submarines, surface ships, and aircraft carriers. We will continue to expand use of additive manufacturing to support maintenance availabilities and new construction to include delivery of our first metal additive manufacturing parts rated as SUBSAFE, the vital certification for submarine parts which ensure crew safety while a submarine is submerged.

The Navy is also leveraging other advanced and commercially available technologies to improve shipbuilding and sustainment outcomes. In July 2025, the Navy, in partnership with Pennsylvania State University Applied Research Laboratory, successfully performed the first shipboard cold spray repair of a SUBSAFE component. Cold spray is a solid-state 3D printing process that builds high-strength metal parts.

Update on Navy's Audit

The Navy remains committed to achieving a clean audit opinion in 2028 with a goal of achieving a Fiscal Year 2026 Working Capital Fund (WCF) unmodified opinion and a FY 2028

General Fund unmodified opinion. The WCF goal for this year is aggressive and requires focused effort by Navy Supply Systems Command and support from Defense Logistics Agency to account for all inventory. Across the Navy in 2025, we saw audit-driven progress in Information Technology systems, physical asset posture, and cost savings. The Navy is driving a culture of accountability for our fiscal and physical assets.

As part of a recent trip to the Pacific Northwest, I spent time with our independent public auditor, Ernst & Young, who is conducting existence and completeness testing at Naval Magazine Indian Island which is one of several sites where we store and transfer ordnance for our Navy. This engagement provided me with a better understanding of our task as well as a clear messaging opportunity to all echelons regarding my expectations to the Navy for consistent leadership commitment.

Conclusion

The Navy remains ready to defend the homeland from the sea, deliver global stability and deterrence, create national prosperity, and maintain peace through strength. To continue to overmatch our adversaries in a rapidly changing threat environment, we are thinking, acting, and operating differently. Through the Secretary of the Navy's and Chief of Naval Operation's vision, we are delivering a Navy suitable to the demands of today's and tomorrow's Combatant Commanders. We are delivering Battle Ready Sailors with a focus on recruitment, retention, and training. We are delivering a Battle Ready Force which will achieve higher readiness, as we invest in resources to man, train, and equip our Fleet for combat. Finally, through Battle Force Today and Tomorrow, we are delivering a Navy with maximum lethality, resilience, and adaptability. We do all this with urgency and accountability.

The Navy appreciates Congress's continued support securing the legislative authorities that enable operational speed. In particular, expanded flexible multi-year procurement authorities for critical munitions and platform sustainment; guaranteed purchase commitments that justify industry capital investment; and predictable funding streams that allow maritime industrial partners to expand production capacity, modernize facilities, and strengthen supply chain resilience help the Navy deliver enduring readiness and maritime dominance. On behalf of our

Sailors, civilians, and families, I am grateful to this subcommittee for your support and commitment to our Navy.