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UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

ON THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY PB-22 READINESS HEARING

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Chairman Garamendi, Ranking Member Lamborn, and distinguished members of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the readiness posture of your Navy. On behalf of the Sailors, Navy civilians, and their families serving around the globe, we appreciate your support and continued partnership in driving strong Navy readiness outcomes. When I appeared before this committee in March, I highlighted our nation's need for a Navy that is both lethal and ready to deploy globally in defense of U.S. national interests. Last year, while the world focused on dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Navy continued to deploy to hot spots around the globe where U.S. interests are challenged, executing eight major Carrier and Expeditionary Strike Group deployments, including deployments extended multiple times to support high priority tasking, while amassing close to 700,000 flight hours and over 23,000 total steaming days. This performance builds on two decades of Navy forces deploying at our highest operational tempo since World War II, in a conflict that has lasted five times longer.

### **The Imperative to Continuously Improve Force Readiness**

Our strategic and competitive environment has evolved, driven today by the pacing threat of China and broader threats from state and non-state actors. Navy deployments today reflect CNO Gilday's statement that, "*to sustain America's advantage at sea, we must deliver combat-ready forces to deter aggression and keep the seas free and open.*" We are focused on being ready to respond in this competitive environment, to deter coercive behavior, and, if deterrence fails, to win decisively by controlling the seas and projecting power ashore.

This context has challenged us to look deeply into how to continuously improve on status quo performance in developing, generating, and employing our force.

### **Building Momentum – Strengthening Our Competitive Advantage**

Since 2018, the Navy has been on a strong voyage of learning with new approaches that underpin improved execution of force generation processes. We are seeing strong improvement in key areas of aircraft mission capable rates, shipyard days of maintenance delay, and vendor spares delivery/component repair turnaround times.

In 2018 and the preceding decade, the number of F/A-18 mission capable aircraft was flat at 250 aircraft, below the required number of 341. In FY19, using our complementary transformation engines of “Get Real” – the Perform to Plan process – and “Get Better” – the Naval Sustainment System process – we applied new methods to drive the number of mission capable Super Hornets to the target of 341 and an 80% mission capable rate in our fleet squadrons. As impressively, this readiness level has been sustained in 2020 and 2021 during the COVID pandemic. With higher numbers of aircraft available, our aircrew are more ready to fly and fight than at any point over the last decade. Commander Naval Air Forces has leveraged this success and learning to broadly improve readiness across naval aviation. Our current readiness update shows multiple type, model, series aircraft at or above 80% readiness. An important element of sustaining this momentum in the President’s budget (PB-22) is consistent funding for our aviation depots and an increase in flight hour funding to translate gains in aircraft readiness into improved aircrew proficiency.

The “Get Real, Get Better” transformation approach and learning have also been scaled to improve private and public shipyard depot maintenance performance. In the private shipyards, improvement elements spanned contracting strategies, improved planning, more accurate maintenance durations, and aligning workload with shipyard capacity. Key as well has been leveraging the three year “Other Procurement, Navy” pilot program authorized by Congress to increase flexibility and stabilize demand for shipyard workforces. This has led to reductions in maintenance delays at ship repair facilities around the country.

Despite our gains, our performance in both the private and public shipyards was impacted by COVID-19. In the private shipyards, we responded by accelerating awards of contract options to improve industrial base resiliency, and the public shipyards mobilized 1,300 skilled Navy Reserve Sailors, increased overtime usage, and rebalanced future workload. These efforts stemmed the disruption of COVID-19 and will minimize work spilling into FY-22.

PB22 sustains the public shipyards workforce at 37,000 end strength and provides funding for private-sector submarine maintenance inductions of the USS Boise and USS Hartford overhauls in FY22. It also provides targeted investments in the Nation’s strategic infrastructure, spanning both public shipyards and aviation depots. The Shipyard Infrastructure and Optimization Program (SIOP) provides a strong roadmap for investments in dry-docks, capital equipment, and layout optimization of these vital national assets. The PB22 budget requests \$830M for SIOP projects in FY22 alone. Likewise, with the Naval Aviation Fleet Infrastructure Optimization Plan (FIOP) we are developing a 10-year Master Plan that provides our aviation depots the capacity to sustain and modernize aircraft, engines, components, and

support equipment. PB22 includes investment of \$133M into FIOP facilities and equipment infrastructure critical to maintaining capability at our Fleet Readiness Centers.

Foundational as well to accelerating this momentum in generating ready and lethal naval power is keeping our premier Carrier Air Wing and SEAL training center – the Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) – fully relevant to the requirements of today’s fight and our most capable weapons. Today, our Sailors cannot sufficiently train with our most capable aircraft and longer-range weapons or practice the tactics and techniques they will need to employ against a high-end threat. These constraints were seen most recently by Carrier Air Wing Two (CVW-2), which just completed a Fallon training period prior to being the first to deploy with the F-35C later this year. We look forward to continuing to work together with Congress, tribal leadership, local communities, and key stakeholders to modernize the FRTC and ensure our people have the infrastructure needed to train to win in combat.

Today’s readiness is also closely aligned to emerging insights on how we will fight tomorrow. In 2021, we are executing multiple fleet battle problems, wargames and exercises to refine concepts and capabilities. Both our major unmanned systems exercises in April and our Large Scale Exercise to be conducted this summer will inform how we evolve and train to new warfighting concepts such as Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO) and Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE). These exercises also inform how we will continually improve force generation as we bring new technology and warfighting concepts into the fleet.

A key element of the readiness and training needed to win in combat, today and tomorrow, is the development, training, and fielding of our surface force. In my March

testimony, I reported that we have fully implemented all 111 Comprehensive Review and Strategic Readiness Review recommendations resulting from the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain mishaps. Through the Surface Training Advanced Virtual Environment (STAVE) initiative, over 1,700 junior officers have graduated from our new Junior Officer of the Deck course with training aligned to International Maritime Organization standards. PB-22 STAVE investments further improve surface training by continuing the modernization of 70% of the 850 Surface Warfare courses of instruction. Additionally, the construction of two Mariner Skills Training Centers and the modernization of our integrated navigation seamanship and ship handling trainers will allow our surface force to leverage virtual reality training to improve mariner skills.

### **Leaders Driving Outcomes**

The learning and improved readiness outcomes highlighted above have been enabled by explicitly spotlighting key leadership behaviors including clearly accountable supported commanders. These commanders are strongly outcome vice activity focused, being radically transparent beyond organizational lifelines, and building cross-organization and cross-echelon collaboration skills to drive complex cross-functional outcomes at speed.

### **The Foundation of Navy Readiness – Sailors**

The foundation of Navy readiness remains our Sailors (active and reserve) and civilians who provide our asymmetric advantage. Our ability to recruit, develop, and retain a seasoned team of naval warriors who outfight and outthink any adversary is core to our future force. We value the strength gained from a diverse force and the power of different perspectives, and are

actively pursuing combat-minded Sailors with varied backgrounds and experiences to build our readiness and toughness.

In FY-20, we met our accession goal of 39,600 new active duty Sailors with the objective of further improving afloat manning—we are grateful to Congress for the pay raises and personnel reforms underpinning this progress. We have increased the number of billets authorized on ships, and while current Fit/Fill statistics are lower due to this change and COVID-19-related friction in accession and training pipelines, the physical number of sailors serving at sea now is the highest since 2014. We are also making continued progress in transforming the MyNavyHR infrastructure to better, more rapidly and more efficiently deliver services to Sailors and families, including with DOD-leading mobile applications that ease the challenge of military moves and finding childcare/housing, and with MyNavy Career Centers, which provided vital functionality during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The intellectual investments we make in each Sailor provide a key advantage as well over our rivals. We are aligning the curriculum and research of the Navy's education enterprise, including the Naval Community College, to deliver warfighting advantage in our operations at sea and in how we design, deliver, and generate our forces. To ensure we are competent in key warfighting and readiness sustaining skills, we also continue to implement Ready Relevant Learning (RRL) and Live, Virtual, Constructive (LVC) training. RRL replaces "one-and-done" classroom training events with career-long learning continuums through a mix of in-classroom instruction and modern training methods. The PB22 request supports delivering modernized accession-level training for nine ratings in FY22. LVC technology is also key to high



performing Sailors, combining the intensity of underway operations with high-fidelity synthetic training, enabling our Sailors to master high-end tactics in secure and controllable conditions. PB22 funds integration of live platforms, simulators and ranges in a common strike group-training environment that replicates complex operational environments so that our Sailors can best train for the high-end fight.

Underpinning this strong momentum in building professional competence is a broad base of work and resources focused on developing the personal character of each member of the force. We are accelerating the momentum of our Culture of Excellence campaign across the fleet, building resilience and strengthening standards of competence and character. Over the past year, the Culture of Excellence campaign focused on the key behaviors that reinforce our values and prevent destructive behaviors such as sexual harassment or discrimination. We remain laser focused on moving the needle in preventing sexual assault in the Navy and are providing more training, more tools, and more accessible resources to our Sailors and Leaders to support this focus.

We are also actively building a workforce that represents the full diversity of America and the strength that brings. Last year, Task Force One Navy (TF1N) formed to analyze and evaluate issues in our military that detract from Navy unity of effort and readiness. In January 2021, the task force released a report highlighting 56 recommendations that facilitate increased diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes throughout the fleet. We are committed to implementing TF1N recommendations to reduce discrimination, sexism, and other forms of bias,

and will track the recommendations, metrics and outcomes via our NAVPLAN Implementation Framework.

The vast majority of Sailors in the U.S. Navy serve every day with honor, character, and integrity. Yet, while counter to our standards and core values, we are not under any illusion that extremist behaviors do not exist in our Navy. As directed by the Secretary of Defense, each command across the fleet has conducted a stand-down to address extremism within our ranks. This stand down was a starting point. The work is an ongoing focus, and we are committed to eliminating extremist behavior and its corrosive effects from our fighting force.

## **Conclusion**

The intensified nature of the military competitive environment is driving the Navy to aggressively improve practices and behaviors in order to remain the most ready and lethal Navy in the world. The changes that we are achieving and will accelerate serve to ensure we deliver the naval power America needs. This path forward requires a long-term commitment of the Navy, industry and Congress. I look forward to continued partnership with this committee to improve naval readiness and lethality, and to ensure our Navy is properly and predictably resourced, manned, trained and equipped to answer the nation's call.