YOUR NAVY IS READY

"Not only is your Navy ready, but most of it is underway today, ready to answer all bells."

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... As you might guess, I'm a big fan of change — as long as it produces better warfighters, and as long as we are spending our time and money creating change that is worthy of the investment. I'll talk more about that in a minute.

... Our Navy's partnership with industry has delivered the best and most capable Navy in the world. We should all be proud of our exceptionally capable ships and aircraft, with the world's most advanced systems, including GPS and satellite communications, the F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet, cooperative engagement capability, precision guided munitions, and the best C4I networks in the world. Given the tremendous pace of technology advancements today, it is a partnership more important than ever for supporting our Sailors and Marines in combat.

As good as that partnership has been, I think we can do better — because the reality is that advances in technology are outpacing our military's ability to choose, develop, and field those technologies. If it makes sense from the fleet's operational perspective, and makes sense from the standpoint of being fiscally responsible, whenever possible we should accelerate delivery of new capabilities to the fleet — which must be ready to go to war today, next week, and next month, not just in the outyears of the FYDP [Future Years Defense Program].

... I want to talk a bit about some of the changes in our Navy that have set us on a course to be transformed, to be better prepared in today's world of distributed threats. I'd like to address this in three ways: first, how the Navy has transformed organizationally; second, how the Navy has transformed operationally; and third, I want to talk about, perhaps, the most concrete and impressive near-term product of our Navy's transformation — the "surgeability" of our Fleet Forces today — how we have streamlined and accelerated the process of getting more Sea-Power deployed forward faster.

Organizational Transformation

Shortly after taking over as CNO, Adm. Vern Clark laid out a vision for our Navy that was truly transformational, well before that term was in vogue. In addition to his emphasis on leadership and retention of our great Sailors, he restored the Navy's focus on the fleet. He recognized that in order to improve and sustain current readiness, as well as develop the Navy that the next generation of Sailors will inherit, we needed to restructure and streamline our chains of command so that we all had a clearer fleet focus.

Adm. Natter addresses Sailors assigned to Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15, based at NAS Corpus Christi. The admiral spoke with Sailors and answered their questions about operational issues and quality of life initiatives. U.S. Navy Photo by PH1(AW) Whorton.

The first step was the establishment of the Fleet Type Commanders. Initiated in 2000, the benefits gained were immediate and included: organizational alignment and streamlining of the Type Commanders; eliminating differences and redundancies between coasts; and having commanders speak with one voice when addressing requirements and investment priorities.

These are organizational changes that have placed greater emphasis on the fleet's responsibility to identify requirements, influence resourcing decisions, and be involved directly with experimentation. As a result, our Navy's future capabilities will have a firmer basis in operational realities in how the fleet intends to fight — using promising technology and systems that the acquisition community and industry are developing. In support of this effort, Commander Fleet Forces Command (CFFC) was designated as lead agent for Sea Trial. We develop and formalize experimentation in the fleet and transition successful experiments to fleet capabilities. Furthermore, we aligned Naval Warfare Development Center (NWDC) under CFFC to clearly delineate responsibility for developing doctrine — and to integrate that doctrine into our experimentation. Finally we established Naval Network Warfare Command with a three-star admiral [Vice Adm. Richard W. Mayo] working for CFFC and the fleet, to act as executor for information technology, information operations and space warfare.

Operational Transformation

Given the CNO's organizational charter, CFFC's new operational responsibility included the requirement to more clearly define the Navy's warfighting vision, to develop the supporting concepts of operations, and finally, to leverage and inject new technology into the process when appropriate. Fiscal reality and plain smart business sense make it imperative that we determine early on which changes, technologies, and improvements are worth investing in and which ones are not. Because trying to champion all potential concepts results in actually championing none.

The first step in any approach to operational transformation ought to be focused on the end product — the concept of operations

At sea with USS Florida (SSBN 728) Jan. 16, 2003 — USS Florida launches a Tomahawk cruise missile during Giant Shadow in the waters off the coast of the Bahamas. Giant Shadow is a Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA)/Naval Submarine Forces experiment to test the capabilities of the Navy's future guided missile submarines. Florida is one of four Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) being converted to guided missile submarines (SSGN).

Giant Shadow is the first experiment under the "Sea Trial" initiative of the Chief of Naval Operations' Sea Power 21 vision and the first in a series of experiments before converting and overhauling the four SSBNs to SSGNs. The SSGNs will have the capability to support and launch up to 154 Tomahawk missiles, a significant increase in capacity as compared to other platforms. U.S. Navy photo.

that helps us answer a couple of fundamental questions: *Where do we need to take a specific warfare mission, and what technologies can we field to help us get there?*

Last year's Mine Warfare Study, [See CHIPS Winter 2003 at www.chips.navy.mil] prepared by CFFC with input from the fleet and NWDC, is an example. It serves as the foundation for our way ahead in combating the mine threat in the near-, mid- and long-term, including more extensive use of unmanned vehicles, and experimentation with alternatives to Inchon, the old Mine Countermeasures Support Ship. For example, this past fall USS Kearsarge very successfully joined mine countermeasures assets as the command and control ship during a ten-day squadron exercise in the Gulf of Mexico. We also to need to field the right technologies to improve our current capabilities in this important mission area.

The Atlantic Fleet's Training Resource Strategy (TRS) is another example of keeping an operational focus in developing fleet requirements. It is a training strategy that accounts for today's threats and weapons, and takes advantage of new opportunities available to us through emerging technologies. We are working closely with the Air Force and communities supporting DoD ranges throughout the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico in this endeavor.

The TRS will support more effective training in precision munitions, increasingly the weapon of choice in combat operations; it will allow us better utilization of existing CONUS ranges, reducing the transit and TAD costs associated with training out of CONUS; and will provide greater flexibility to our training venues through more extensive use of at-sea ranges and simulation, such as what is being done with precision scoring systems like the Virtual At-Sea Trainer (VAST).

Most importantly, we are evaluating and choosing the technologies and combat capabilities that best support our concept of operations — rather than the other way around. For example, in December 2002 we gathered over 40 representatives from throughout the fleet, the Marine Corps and the R&D community to consider the way ahead for the fleet's use of High Speed Vessels. Taking the experiences gained to date with HSV-X1, we developed a clear set of operational objectives and technologies for the follow-on HSV-X2 that will be tested over the months ahead. Many of the capabilities that we are looking at for HSV, especially in the areas of Mine Warfare, Special Operations, and command and control, will help us better define the requirements appropriate for the Littoral Combat Ship.

Another example is our first fully developed Sea Trial experiment, Exercise Giant Shadow, conducted this month [January 2003]. The USS Florida and a number of other sea- and land-based assets will help us investigate some of the great warfighting potential that we are planning for our new SSGNs. The SSGN program of record will deliver a ship capable of launching 154 Tomahawks and conducting campaign-level Navy Special Operations missions. It is a ship that will bring an awesome capability to the fight, and we've only begun to scratch the surface of its many potential capabilities.

Surge Capability

All of what we do and attempt to do boils down to one thing — combat capability. Is the fleet ready today, and will it be ready tomorrow — ready to deploy to sea and answer the nation's call against any and all threats to this great country of ours? The answer had better be YES! Today, our nation's vitality — our economy, the security of our citizens — is challenged directly and indirectly with the threat of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and North Korea, ... terrorist violence in Indonesia, Bosnia, Somalia, and the scourge of terrorism on our own shores.

To answer these threats your Navy is ready — really ready. We have seven Carrier Battle Groups, six Amphibious Ready Groups, over 100,000 Sailors and Marines either forward deployed and ready for combat, or able to rapidly surge to support combat operations ... our best combat readiness in years.

It is great to be part of the Navy in 2003. Our ships and our aircraft are ready ... well-maintained, well-manned, and well-stocked with weapons. Our people are ready. We have the best retention in more than a decade and the most motivated force I have ever seen. Morale is high, and we have great Sailors and Marines, prepared to do the job for which they are trained.

On September 20, 2001, in a speech by the President to the nation, our Commander in Chief gave his military leaders very clear direction: *"Be ready."* I am proud to report on behalf of all our Navy's men and women: Not only is your Navy ready, but most of it is underway today, ready to answer all bells.

Edited from Adm. Natter's remarks at AFCEA West, Jan. 15, 2003.