CNO: Programs Must Advance the Navy's Core Missions

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday, center, renders a salute to Sailors as he embarks the Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15) in Florida in March. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Austin Collins*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's top officer emphasized the need to focus on the Navy's reasons for being to avoid tangents that ultimately detract from its role in the defense of the nation.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday, speaking in a webinar of the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank, said the Navy missions of sea control and power projection are so obvious as to be trite to emphasize, but needed constant attention to perform.

"There have been cases in the past of where you lose sight of those ends – what your main thing is – you can get off track and put precious resources against big programs that don't

advance the Navy or any service with respect of those ends," Gilday said.

"The things that we're going to spend money on are going to make us more lethal and more effective with respect to sea control and power projection, and that goes hand-in-glove with the Distributed Maritime Operations concept and how that fits into the broader Joint Warfighting Concept that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs is working with his staff that I expect the secretary of defense to ultimately endorse."

Gilday emphasized that recent studies of the force structure said the nation needed a larger, more capable Navy.

"Over the past two decades, we have tended not to put strategic investments behind the fleet than we probably should have, so we put ourselves in a situation where we're falling behind," he said, noting that while the size of the fleet matters, it was "easy to get seduced by numbers. What we really need to be focused on is capabilities, particularly what capabilities the Navy can close for the joint force."

The CNO said the Navy's shipbuilding plan, which was based on the Naval Force Structure Study, "was really focused on operationally relevant metrics – things like lethality, survivability, operational reach – things that are going to allow the Navy to synergistically be much more effective within the joint force."

The admiral also said factors that can't be ignored include "total ownership cost, maintenance cost, technical risk of new programs versus operational risk of in the transition of sun-downing legacy programs, industrial base capacity and what the art of the possible is or is not with respect to certain platforms.

"In the end, what we become more focused on with respect to the analysis that we've done is the composition of the fleet with respect to capabilities that then translates into

platforms," Gilday said.

The CNO said the force structure studies show more emphasis on undersea capabilities and smaller ships that are more distributed than on larger ships, and more emphasis on offensive hypersonics, directed energy weapons and logistics ships.

"That analysis is sound," he said. "My take on discussions inside the Pentagon with OSD [the Office of the Secretary of Defense] as we close on the [fiscal 2022] budget, we are grounding decisions on that analysis that was done last year under [Defense] Secretary [Mark] Esper. "That analysis is not static. We have ongoing experiments, fleet battle problems, exercises, war games and analysis."

Gilday said in a few weeks, the Navy will conduct an exercise off California that will "further inform our understanding of where we need to go with unmanned capabilities, and then the numbers."

Chinese, Russian Naval Build-ups Keep U.S Navy 'Elbowing' for Advantage, Navy's Intel Director Says

U.S. Sailors prepare for flight operations on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) April 6, 2021, in the South China Sea. The Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group is on a scheduled deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. As the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet routinely operates and interacts with 35 maritime nations while conducting missions to preserve and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific Region. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Alexander B. Williams*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The naval build-ups and more frequent activity of the Chinese and Russian navies in recent years is keeping the U.S. Navy's intelligence activities busily engaged in collection and analysis.

"Business is good; there's lots of opportunity out there," said Vice Adm. Jeffrey Trussler, deputy chief of naval operations for Information Warfare and director of Naval Intelligence, speaking April 6 at a Navy League Special Topic Breakfast sponsored by General Dynamics, commenting on the need for increased attention to the near-peer competitors.

“Day to day, talk about information overload!” Trussler said. “The daily questions that might come out of ‘What if?’ [are] non-stop. In this 21st century, information is available. We want to develop capabilities that best position us, best give us advantage in the competitive space. We want to develop capabilities that might cause adversaries pause and say, ‘Not today.’”

Trussler said the Navy’s job is to be ready.

“We don’t want a kinetic event,” he said. “We would love to prevent it, showing that strength, understanding what their vulnerabilities are, what their capabilities are, how we might counter [them], how we might demonstrate that we’re ready, we know where you are, and what you [doing]. That’s the cat and mouse that goes on right now.”

The admiral said the Navy needs to be ready from day one if deterrence fails.

“Day one doesn’t happen because of what we do day minus one,” he said. “That is what Navy intel, in alignment and in conjunction with the larger intelligence community, is looking for: those opportunities and vulnerabilities at day minus one, or day minus two … before weapons fly.

“In the 21st century, before weapons fly, there is a lot that is going to be happening in the domains that are hard to get your arms around of at sea,” he said. “That’s the elbowing that goes on right now for information advantage, a little different than what was going on in the Cold War, a little more human-oriented advantage for information that’s taking place day after day in the cyber world.”

Trussler said that the intelligence community is trying to stretch the timeline of warning as much as possible.

“We’d like it to be of days,” he said. “If not, we’d like it to be in hours, but it may be only minutes or seconds, so

that’s why we’ve got to develop the systems and the processes that can take advantage of that at the speed that commanders need to make decisions and hold that advantage.”

Fleet Forces Re-Designation to Atlantic Fleet On Hold, CNO Says

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday, right, during a February visit to San Diego. Gilday says the plan to bring back the name U.S. Atlantic Fleet is on hold pending the ongoing Global Force Posture Review. *U.S. NAVY / Theresa McKenrick*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy’s plan to bring back the name “U.S. Atlantic Fleet” is on hold, the Navy’s top officer said.

“Right now, implementation is on hold, based on the findings of the ongoing Global [Force] Posture Review,” said Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Michael Gilday, speaking April 5 to the Defense Writer’s Group, answering a question about the planned re-designation of U.S. Fleet Forces Command to U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

The Global Force Posture Review was announced by Feb. 4 by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

“At the direction of the president, the [Defense] Department will therefore conduct a global force posture review of U.S. military footprint, resources, strategy and missions,” Austin said. “It will inform my advice to the commander-in-chief about how we best allocate military forces in pursuit of national interests. The review will be led by the acting under secretary of defense for policy, in close consultation with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.”

Gilday said on Jan. 11 in a webinar of the Surface Navy Association convention that then-President Donald Trump signed off on the proposal of then-Navy Secretary Kenneth Braithwaite to re-designate U.S. Fleet Forces Command as the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. No timetable for the change was announced, but Fleet Forces Commander Adm. Chris Grady then was engaged in the planning for the CNO’s review.

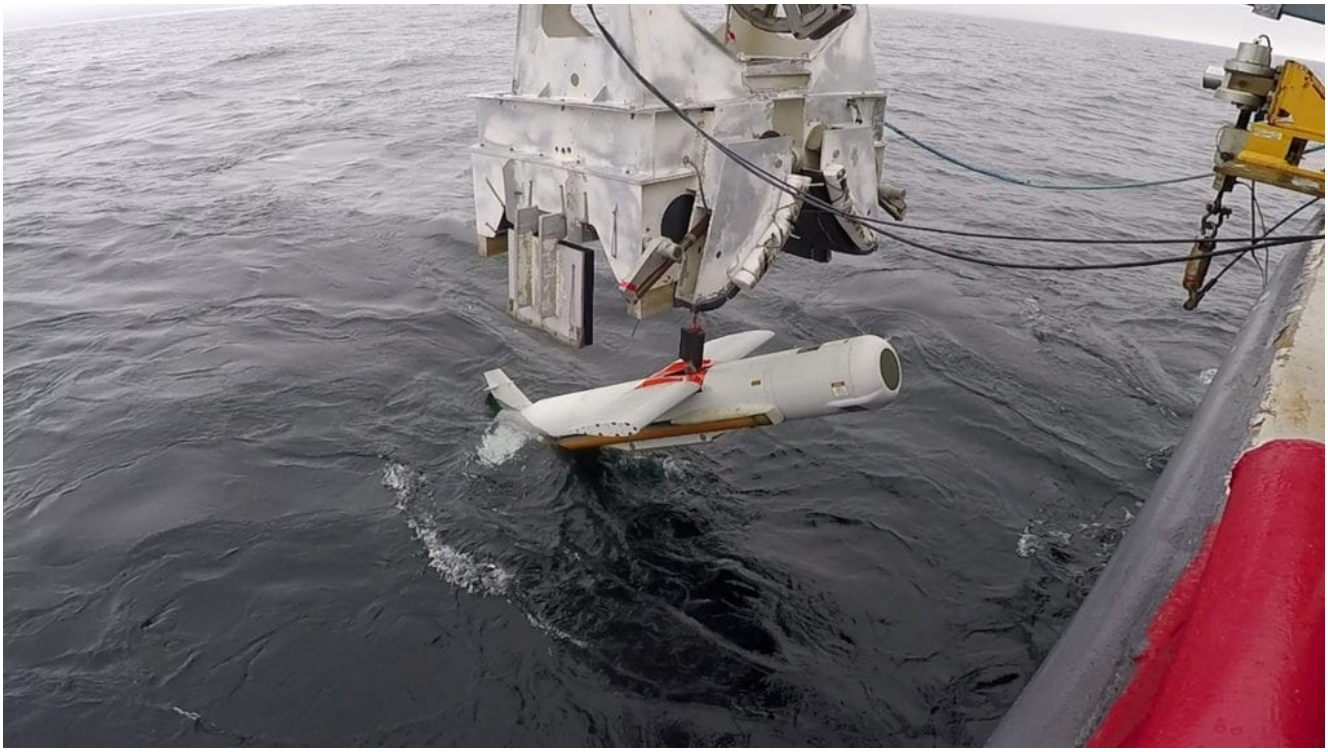
The move to the return of the Atlantic Fleet moniker was deliberate. Braithwaite announced the re-designation plan Dec. 2 during testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee’s Readiness and Management Support sub-committee, noting the changing world requires the Navy to evolve to meet the threat.

“Our existing structure operates on the premise that we still live in a post-9/11 state, where NATO’s flanks are secure, the Russian fleet is tied to the pier and terrorism is our biggest problem,” Braithwaite said. “That is not the world of today.

As the world changes, we must be bold, evolved and change with it. Instead of perpetuating a structure designed to support Joint Forces Command, we are aligning to today's threat.

"To meet the maritime challenges of the Atlantic theater, we will rename Fleet Forces Command as the U.S. Atlantic Fleet and will refocus our naval forces in this important region on their original mission, to controlling the maritime approaches to the United States and those of our allies. The Atlantic Fleet will confront the re-assertive Russian navy, which has been deploying closer and closer to our East Coast with a tailored maritime presence, capability and lethality," Braithwaite said.

Navy Awards Raytheon Contract for AQS-20C Mine-Hunting Sonars



The AN/AQS-20C Towed Mine-hunting Sonar is streamed into Gulf of Mexico waters of the Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division (NSWC PCD) Gulf test range. Developmental Testing was completed on Feb. 12, 2019. The testing marks completion of incorporating the 'Charlie' variant sonar sensor modernization. *U.S. NAVY / Eddie Green*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded Raytheon Technologies a contract to upgrade some AQS-20A towed sonars to the AQS-20C configuration.

The Naval Sea Systems Command awarded Raytheon a $66.5 million firm fixed-price contract for engineering, design, development, production, integration and testing to physically upgrade 10 legacy AQS-20A mine hunting sonars to the AN/AQS-20C configuration.

The AQS-20 is a variable-depth, underwater mine-detection sonar designed to give a strike group an organic capability to detect, classify and localize bottom, close-tethered and volume mines. The AQS-20A also is fitted with an electro-optical sensor to identify underwater objects.

The sonar is deployed while the helicopter is in a hover and then towed undersea to scan the water in front and to the

sides of the aircraft, as well as the sea bottom for anti-shipping mines. The sonar and EO sensor provide high-resolution images of mines and mine-like objects as well as high-precision location information. The AQS-20A is a component of the Remote Multi-Mission Vehicle and the Airborne Mine-Neutralization System in the mine warfare mission package of the LCS. It entered LRIP in 2005; 25 units were delivered.

The AQS-20C features four imaging sonars – including a synthetic aperture sonar that provides the highest possible resolution for acoustic identification – and an imaging laser system that hunt for mines in the entire water column over a large area in a single pass. The system detects, classifies, localizes and identifies mines on the seabed, near-bottom moored mines, volume mines and near-surface mines. Classification is accomplished within the body of the system using advanced algorithms and signal processing. With the Barracuda mine neutralizer, an AQS-20C can complete the search to engage in a single pass.

The AQS-20C is being integrated on the MCM Unmanned Surface Vehicle for mine hunting from an LCS. Delivery of 10 units began in summer 2018. Developmental test began in late 2018. IOC was achieved in late 2018. Developmental test with the LCS was completed in 2019. Raytheon Co. had delivered 10 AQS-20Cs to the Navy by January 2020.

Navy Orders Unmanned Influence Sweep System from

Textron

A developmental, early variant of the Common Unmanned Surface Vehicle (CUSV) autonomously conducts maneuvers on the Elizabeth River during its demonstration during Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2020 at Naval Station Norfolk. A development of the vehicle, the Mine Countermeasures USV, is part of the Unmanned Influence Sweep System. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Grant G. Grady*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has ordered another Unmanned Influence Sweep System (UISS) unmanned surface vehicle (USV) from Textron, the Defense Department announced.

The Naval Sea Systems Command awarded Textron Systems a $12.9 million contract for one low-rate initial production (LRIP) UISS, the Navy's first USV program of record. The UISS was approved for LRIP in February 2020, after which the Navy placed an order for three systems. This latest award brings the LRIP lot to four systems.

The UISS is a stand-off, semi-autonomous system designed with

the capability to counter acoustic and/or magnetic mines. It includes a magnetic cable that tows a modified Mk104 sound source towed by a Mine Countermeasures USV (MCM USV). The Mk104 uses cavitation to create sound while the cable establishes a magnetic field to detonate mines. Developmental test and operational assessment was completed in November 2019. The UISS is to be deployed in the mine countermeasures package for LCSs and also on vessels of opportunity.

The MCM USV is a development of Textron's Common USV (CUSV), a multi-mission vehicle capable of carrying multiple payloads including side-scan sonar, mine neutralization, non-lethal weapons, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance sensors.

Navy Orders 11 P-8A Aircraft for $1.6 Billion

The U.S. Navy has awarded a $1.6 billion contract to Boeing for 11 P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol reconnaissance aircraft. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded a $1.6 billion production contract to Boeing for 11 P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol reconnaissance aircraft, nine for the U.S. Navy and two for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

The Naval Air Systems Command contract modification was announced March 31 by the Defense Department.

The contract brings the total number of U.S. Navy P-8A aircraft under contract to 128 and the RAAF total to 14. Australia has been a cooperative partner in the P-8A joint program since 2009.

Other nations have ordered Poseidons through Foreign Military Sales. The United Kingdom is procuring nine; Norway, five; New Zealand, four; and South Korea, six.

Through direct commercial sales, India has received or has ordered a total of 12 P-8I versions, which it calls Neptunes.

“The P-8A continues to be an invaluable asset and these additional aircraft will help deliver expanded maritime patrol and reconnaissance capabilities to the fleet,” said Capt. Eric Gardner, program manager for the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Program Office, quoted in a March 31 Boeing release.

“We continue to hear feedback from deployed Navy squadrons who tell us the P-8A is exceeding expectations,” Stu Voboril, vice president and program manager for Boeing’s P-8A program, said in the release. “Our focus is on delivering the world’s best maritime patrol aircraft. That only happens when teams truly collaborate, listen and focus on customer priorities.”

Navy Orders One E-2D Aircraft Inside Major Support Contract

An E-2D Advanced Hawkeye assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 20 lands aboard USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) flight deck. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Sean Elliott*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded Northrop Grumman a contract modification to support the service's fleet of E-2D Advanced Hawkeye battle management aircraft and to build one additional E-2D.

Northrop Grumman Systems Corp. Aerospace Systems, Melbourne, Florida, was awarded a $195 million contract modification from the Naval Air Systems Command to exercise options "to provide support services to include non-recurring engineering, software support activity and product support in support of E-2D Advanced Hawkeye Lot 9 full-rate production aircraft, according to a March 31 Defense Department contract announcement. In addition, the action includes the procurement of one additional E-2D.

The Navy's program of record plans to procure a total of 86

E-2Ds. The Japanese Air Self-Defense Force is purchasing 13 E-2Ds.

The Navy is more than halfway through transition of its nine fleet airborne command and control (VAW) squadrons from the E-2C Hawkeye to the E-2D.

Austal Launches Future LCS Canberra for U.S. Navy

The future USS Canberra (LCS 30), launched into the Mobile River, Alabama, on March 30 by Austal USA. *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA launched the future USS Canberra (LCS 30) into Alabama's Mobile River on March 30, the company said in an April 1 release.

The Canberra, an Independence-class littoral combat ship, is the first ship to be launched by Austal USA in 2021 and the first to be launched from the company's recently acquired dry dock. The Canberra is one of 19 Independence-class LCSs being built by Austal for the U.S. Navy. Austal USA so far has delivered 11 of the class to the Navy.

The next steps for the Canberra are sea trials and then delivery to the Navy.

LCS 30 is named in honor of the HMAS Canberra, a Royal Australian Navy heavy cruiser that fought in the Battle of Savo Island in the Solomon Islands in August 1942 during World War II and was sunk along with three U.S. Navy heavy cruisers by imperial Japanese navy forces. Later in the war, the U.S. Navy commissioned a heavy cruiser, USS Canberra (CA 70), in honor of the Australian ship and crew. The Canberra later was modified into a guided-missile heavy cruiser that served during the Vietnam War.

Light Carrier Concept 'Not Compelling,' Navy's Air Warfare Director Says

Then- Pre-Commissioning Unit Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) at Naval Station Norfolk in 2017. Some pundits and observers are calling for light carriers to augment or replace large nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kristopher Ruiz*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy's director of Air Warfare does not see a compelling case for the service to build and deploy light aircraft carriers to augment or replace the service's large, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers (CVNs).

"I believe the L-class ships [amphibious assault ships] operating with the F-35B would fit that bill," said Rear Adm. Gregory Harris, the Navy's director for Air Warfare, speaking this week at a Navy League Special Topic Breakfast webinar, sponsored by General Dynamics. "Others would disagree."

Harris noted that some pundits and other observers advocate light carriers because of the high cost of building, maintaining and operating the fleet of 11 CVNs, which some see as vulnerable to high-end threats such as submarines and

hypersonic weapons. The capabilities of the F-35B Lightning II strike fighter have given the light carrier proponents support for their case that such a carrier armed with an air wing of F-35Bs would be highly valuable in most likely combat scenarios.

The Navy has in the past filled amphibious assault ship flight decks with Marine Corps AV-8B Harrier II jets for combat operations from the Persian Gulf, and recently conducted an experiment on the new USS America with a load of F-35Bs.

Defenders of CVNs note that the ship's size enables it to carry a larger air wing, including E-2 battle management aircraft that are vital to the carrier's over-the-horizon search and air defense capabilities. Often, they point to the 1982 Falklands War, where the U.K. Royal Navy suffered for lack of an ability to detect low-flying Argentinian attack aircraft soon enough to intercept them.

Harris said that the Navy is "committed to executing an analysis of alternatives to look at a light carrier or a follow-on carrier to the Ford class might look like."

He referred to an earlier study that looked at 70 potential hull forms for aircraft carriers before settling on the Ford class.

"I would say that the majority of that study is still very valid," he said. "Some of the mission sets may have changed slightly so we will look at those in light of the current threat out there in the world is valid and not unnecessary. It will be good for us to do that. I'm confident that over the long run we'll find that there's not a compelling return on investment to make a smaller carrier just [because of] speed, station-keeping, the air wing that you would put on top of that carrier, and the ability to have the fuel for the air wing and for the carrier to have for the surface combatants.

"So, we will execute that," the admiral said. "We're going to

start a little bit of pre-AOA [analysis of alternatives] activities this summer and then we will look to kick that AOA off probably in the [2022] time frame to go ahead and formally revisit that."

Navy Grapples with Slow Strike Fighter Training Output, Admiral Says

A T-45C Goshawk attached to Training Air Wing (TW) 1 lands on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) during commander, Naval Air Training Command carrier qualifications, March 14, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jackson Adkins*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy is struggling with supplying

the fleet with enough strike fighter pilots to fill its squadrons, but is seeing some progress after resolving some training aircraft issues.

The strike fighter training pipeline is “too darn long,” said Rear Adm. Gregory Harris, the Navy’s director for Air Warfare, speaking this week in a Navy League Special Topic Breakfast webinar, sponsored by General Dynamics. “We have had significant delays over a number of years inside that program. Flat out early, we underloaded the program because we were having difficulties, so we did not pull in enough aviators, which led to some of our strike fighter pilot shortfall that we have right now.”

Harris also said the Navy has had “a number of different issues associated with different aircraft inside the series,” referring to the daunting problems with the T-45 strike training jet’s oxygen system, which resulted in a pause in training pending corrective actions.

“We made our way through that and started pushing up production in the T-45 line,” he said, “But we [also] went through some hiccups with our T-6. We switched vendors for the supply side of the T-6 and that caused perturbations down in the primary training. We have managed to make our way widely through the T-6 piece very successfully, pushing students through aggressively into the helicopter syllabus and now we’re getting all cylinders cooking in the strike fighter syllabus.”

The admiral noted that training delays also occurred in the strike fighter fleet replacement squadron (FRS) on the West Coast (Strike Fighter Squadron 122) with the low aircraft mission capable rates a few years ago that now have risen to 80% or greater.

“That helped to alleviate the pressure on the FRS there in [Naval Air Station] Lemoore, California,” he said. “We have

that FRS now moving at full speed. So, for beginning to end for a strike fighter pilot, it should be roughly 2 ½ years. It's taking three years and sometimes a little bit more to get those students through."

Harris said his own son was awarded his aviator wings last week after a time "much longer than I would have liked" in the pipeline, but he noted that another aviator winged during the same ceremony completed the syllabus in 9.5 months, the design duration, evidence that progress is being made in shortening the time in training.