

CNO Visits Iceland, Discusses Maritime Security and Partnership



An Icelandic Coast Guard rescue helicopter Airbus lands to transfer simulated evacuees to Keflavik Air Base during exercise Northern Viking 22 on April 10. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cameron C. Edy*

REYKJAVIK, Iceland – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday travelled to Iceland June 13-15 as part of a week-long trip to Iceland and Germany, the CNO's Public Affairs Office said June 15.

Gilday visited Reykjavik and Keflavik Air Base, where he spoke with U.S. Sailors flying the P-8A Poseidon multi-mission maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft and Italian air force service members deployed supporting the NATO air policing mission with their F-35A aircraft.

At Reykjavik, Gilday met with Ministry for Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Martin Eyjólfsson; Director General of Icelandic Coast Guard, Rear Adm. Georg Kristinn Lárusson; and

other senior Icelandic officials. Discussions focused on the U.S. defense relationship with Iceland and items of shared national security interests, to include Arctic security.

“Iceland is the geostrategic linchpin for NATO in the Arctic region and I am grateful for their partnership and collaboration,” said Gilday. “The Arctic is an opportunity to work collaboratively with Allies and partners to keep this a secure and stable region, and we are committed to working together to address challenges and strengthen our collective deterrent against strategic challenges.”

Gilday also toured the Icelandic Coast Guard Headquarters and Joint Rescue Coordination Center.

“It’s a confident feeling to be aware of a great ally with large-scale resources available to back up and assist the Icelandic Coast Guard when and if the scope of its challenges exceeds the capability of the organization and the Icelandic safety system on the ocean around Iceland,” said Lárusson. “It is also very beneficial to receive training, education, and development assistance in fields in which the Iceland Coast Guard is not fully developed.”

While visiting Keflavik, Gilday expressed appreciation for Iceland’s leadership role in enhancing regional cooperation, including maritime search and rescue activities.

At Keflavik Air Base, he spoke with U.S. Navy Sailors from Patrol Squadron (VP) 9 and Patrol Squadron 46 and discussed the importance of their mission in the northern European theater. According to Gilday, the rotational Poseidon aircraft is an integral part of the NATO partnership between the U.S. and Iceland.

“The Navy’s role has never been more consequential or more expansive, and we need a combat-credible naval force that can protect our interests in peace and can prevail in combat, while supporting our Allies and partners,” said Gilday. “The

Sailors here in Iceland are just that, they remain postured, and ready, with a credible force to assure, deter, and defend in an increasingly complex security environment, which is possible because of the support and partnership we have with Iceland.”

The U.S. Navy and Iceland conducted Exercise Northern Viking 2022 in April. Exercises like Northern Viking strengthen interoperability and readiness between the U.S., Iceland and Allied nations, and enable execution of multi-domain command and control of joint and coalition forces in the defense of Iceland and the Sea Lines of Communication in the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom Gap.

After this visit, Gilday will travel to Europe to visit a ship participating in BALTOPS 22 and meet with other heads of navies, as well as government leaders.