

Department of the Navy Establishes Direct Reporting Portfolio Manager for Robotic and Autonomous Systems



KEY WEST, Fla. (April 26, 2026) – A Tsunami unmanned surface vehicle (USV) goes underway during the annual Fleet Experimentation (FLEX) 2026 event in Key West, Fla., April 26, 2026. Hosted by U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet April 24-30, the exercise integrates commercially developed unmanned systems and artificial intelligence with traditional manned naval platforms. FLEX 2026 features comprehensive collaboration across the Department of War and industry to demonstrate a sophisticated kill chain that successfully found, tracked and engaged captured drug boats. The campaign focuses on operationalizing advanced robotic and autonomous systems to combat transnational organized crime and patrol vast maritime regions. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass

Communications Specialist Carlos M. Vazquez II)

WASHINGTON – Acting Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao today announced the establishment of the Direct Reporting Portfolio Manager for Robotic and Autonomous Systems (DRPM RAS), a strategic restructuring to tightly integrate the development, requirements and acquisition of RAS capabilities across the Department of the Navy.

DRPM RAS leverages the successful and proven DRPM model first established for submarines. This marks a decisive step toward correcting years of fragmented requirements, resourcing, and acquisition practices that dispersed accountability, complicated industry engagement, and slowed delivery to the warfighter. The organization is designed to operate in concert with the Department of War's DRPM for unmanned offensive and defensive systems (UxS).

Christopher Miller will serve as the acting DRPM RAS, reporting directly to William Toti, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy. Miller will concurrently serve as acting Portfolio Acquisition Executive RAS, mirroring the DRPM Submarine model.

"We are at an inflection point in naval warfare, and the Department has been approaching robotic and autonomous systems through arcane processes that do not deliver capabilities at the speed our Sailors and Marines need," said Toti. "Secretary Cao has directed us to replace that model with clear accountability, faster decisions, and a relentless focus on the warfighter."

The DON is also reviewing the potential relocation of DRPM RAS staff out of Washington, D.C. and closer to Fleet warfighters. The review is assessing whether such a relocation would strengthen collaboration with operational forces and ensure Fleet feedback remains closely connected to capability development and fielding.

“To remain the most lethal and technologically advanced maritime force in the world, we must both improve and accelerate how we partner with industry to develop and deliver the next generation of warfighting capabilities,” said Miller. “Success depends on ensuring operational requirements drive rapid development so we’re delivering the right solutions to the warfighter.”

The establishment of DRPM RAS marks a significant step in the DON’s effort to modernize acquisition governance and strengthen maritime deterrence.