Navy Budget Should be Driven by Strategy, Not the Reverse, Del Toro Says



In his speech Del Toro reiterated his support for Adm. Mike Gilday's vision for distributed maritime operations. *LISA NIPP*

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The U.S. Navy budget "should be driven by strategy and not the strategy driven by the budget itself," said Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro at the April 5 luncheon keynote at Sea-Air-Space 2022. "That's why we've put together a clear strategy to deliver the lethal, resilient, sustainable, survivable, agile and responsive course called for in the 2022 National Defense Strategy."

The budget faces likely headwinds in Congress, where some

lawmakers say it doesn't do enough, but Del Toro emphasized the importance of maintaining the trust and support of American taxpayers so each dollar reaches the American warfighter in the most efficient and effective way, while also ensuring the warfighter is equipped with the most effective platforms and equipment.

Del Toro said the Navy Department's strategy is rooted in three guiding principles.

The first, he said, is to maintain and strengthen the nation's maritime dominance, so forces can deter potential adversaries and fight and win if necessary. The second deals with empowering U.S. Sailors and Marines by fostering a culture of warfighting excellence founded on treating each other with dignity and respect. Del Toro said the third principle is to strengthen strategic partnerships across the Joint Force with industry and with international partners around the globe.

"It's clear, it's direct, it's concise," Del Toro said. "In order to maintain our maritime dominance, we have to be serious about building and maintaining the right capabilities to win tomorrow's wars. The National Defense Strategy for integrated deterrence requires us to campaign forward from the South China Sea to the Arctic to the Mediterranean and to the Gulf. And that is indeed what we are doing."

Del Toro said right now the Navy has 74 ships deployed around the globe, including four aircraft carriers and two assault ships. Furthermore, he said, every one of these ships operates as part of a fully networked, agile and survivable fleet capable of delivering coordinated, long-range fires and unmatched lethality from many points at once.

"That's the power of distributed maritime operations," said Del Toro. "I strongly support, let me be clear, I strongly support Adm. [Michael] Gilday's vision for distributed maritime operations and all aspects of the Navy's navigation

plan.”

He said the Navy plans to continue progress on new programs such as the Columbia-class submarine and Constellation-class frigate, and “we will also invest in our amphibious fleet, fully funding an additional LHA and an additional LPD [landing platform/dock] this year,” Del Toro said. “These warships are vital for the organic mobility and persistence of our Marine Corps. Always in high demand as a Swiss Army knife to meet the needs of the Joint Force, the modern amphibious ready group and marine expeditionary unit are indeed the ‘911 call’ for combatant commanders in the most dynamic and volatile situations, humanitarian disasters and combat.”

Del Toro said he is intent on maintaining as much fiscal transparency as possible – something he said is informed by “an abiding respect for the American taxpayer of today and tomorrow.

“We must build and prepare the most powerful and agile force that we can in the most efficient way possible while preserving options for future leaders to adjust to a changing security environment,” Del Toro explained. “We have not always done that in our past. I don’t want tomorrow’s secretary of the Navy to have to choose between building the right capabilities or maintaining high-cost legacy platforms that don’t meet our needs today.”