SECNAV Attends 2024 USNI Defense Forum Washington Conference

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WASHINGTON (Dec. 11, 2024) – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro gave remarks at the 2024 U.S. Naval Institute (USNI) Defense Forum, Dec. 11, 2024.

The forum consisted of Senior military officials, members of Congress, industry leaders, and defense analysts who discussed the current state of shipbuilding as well as examined issues such as static fleet size, maintenance challenges, operational availability, and the difficulties shipyards face with labor, training, budgeting, and requirements.

Secretary Del Toro opened his remarks by discussing the future of building and sustaining the naval force structure for the nation's needs.

"For the first time since World War II, we face a comprehensive maritime power," said Secretary Del toro. "Our Navy and Marine Corps Team serves as a proud and powerful testament of our Nation's commitment to our allies and partners in Europe, the Middle East, and Indo-Pacific regions."

Secretary Del Toro also discussed strengthening maritime dominance and why it is important to build a culture of warfighting excellence.

"To fight and decisively win our Nation's wars, we cannot rely on merely maintaining our sea power—we must strengthen our maritime dominance," said Secretary Del Toro. "Our people are

the foundational strength of this Department, and they provide us competitive warfighting advantage over our adversaries."

"Our priority of building a culture of warfighting excellence is founded on strong leadership that is rooted in treating each other with dignity and respect," said Secretary Del Toro.

Secretary Del Toro continued by highlighting the importance of enhancing strategic partnerships.

"Our greatest asymmetric strength lies in our network of partnerships with our Defense Industrial Base," said Secretary Del Toro, "As we look to the future, we must continue to make informed decisions about shipbuilding, maintenance, repair, and the future of the fleet which will impact and shape the Navy for decades to come."

Secretary Del Toro concluded his remarks with sharing his pride in the U.S. Navy.

"I am extremely proud of everything our department has accomplished over the last three years, and I am excited for our Navy-Marine Corps team as we chart a course for the future—a future that will require us to respond and adapt to whatever geopolitical challenges our Nation may face," said Secretary Del Toro.