

# Secretary of the Navy Del Toro Meets with Leaders of HD Hyundai and Hanwha in the Republic of Korea; Tours Shipyards



Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro met with top shipbuilding industry executives in the Republic of Korea (ROK) and toured some of the world's most technologically advanced and prolific shipyards. Discussions were very productive and centered on attracting Korean investment in integrated commercial and naval shipbuilding facilities in the United States.

Shortly after arriving in Seoul on Sunday, February 25,

Secretary Del Toro engaged separately with Hanwha Vice Chairman and CEO Dong Kwan Kim and HD Hyundai Vice Chairman and CEO Kisun Chung. The morning of Tuesday, February 27, Mr. Chung personally gave Secretary Del Toro a tour of Hyundai's shipyard in Ulsan. Later that afternoon, the Secretary traveled to Geoje Island, where Hanwha Ocean CEO Hyek-woong Kwon led a tour of his company's shipyard there.

Secretary Del Toro reflected, "In each of these engagements, I brought to the table a simple, yet profound opportunity: invest in America. I was enormously gratified by the strong interest expressed by the leaders of each of these world-class shipbuilders in establishing U.S. subsidiaries and investing in shipyards in the United States."

As China continues to aggressively pursue worldwide shipbuilding dominance, Secretary Del Toro expressed his heartfelt appreciation that the Republic of Korea, one of America's closest allies, continues to hold its own in the international shipbuilding industry. The importance of Korean shipbuilding as an asset to the U.S.-ROK alliance and to the network of global maritime democracies cannot be overstated.

As part of his call for a new Maritime Statecraft in his speech to the Harvard Kennedy School on September 26, 2023, Secretary Del Toro had observed that the U.S. maritime industry "is ripe with opportunity to partner with a greater number of shipbuilders here in the U.S. and with our closest allies overseas, including Japan and South Korea." In the same speech, he announced his objective to "attract the most advanced shipbuilders in the world to open U.S.-owned subsidiaries and invest in commercial shipyards here in the U.S., modernizing and expanding our shipbuilding industrial capacity and creating a healthier, more competitive shipbuilding workforce."

Secretary Del Toro said his engagements over the past several days affirmed and advanced that vision. "As I saw firsthand

during my shipyard visits in Korea this week, Hanwha and Hyundai set the global industry standard. I could not be more excited at the prospect of these companies bringing their expertise, their technology, and their cutting-edge best practices to American shores. As world class leaders in the global shipbuilding business, they are poised to energize the U.S. shipbuilding marketplace with fresh competition, renowned innovation and unrivaled industrial capacity.”

The Secretary’s current trip to the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Palau, a key step in his Maritime Statecraft efforts to reinvigorate America’s comprehensive maritime power, aligns closely with the Pentagon’s National Defense Industrial Strategy, which calls for venture capital and new ideas to revive the U.S. industrial base.

Secretary Del Toro noted that “in addition to our currently active shipyards, there are numerous former shipyard sites around the country which are largely intact and dormant. These are ripe for redevelopment as dual-use construction facilities for both warships, like AEGIS destroyers, as well as high value chain commercial vessels, such as the ammonia gas carriers that will enable the global transition from fossil fuels to green energy sources like hydrogen.”

The Secretary emphasized the economic value of revitalizing U.S. shipbuilding: “Investment in dual-use shipyards in the United States will create good paying, blue collar and new-collar American jobs building the advanced ships that will protect and power the economy of tomorrow.”

As he departed Korea, Secretary Del Toro underscored that his engagements with Hyundai and Hanwha’s leaders this week marked only the beginning, adding, “I look forward to hosting Mr. Chung and Mr. Kim at my office in the Pentagon to continue our discussions in the coming weeks.”