Secretary Phelan Welcomes Under Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao

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Today, Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan announced a wide-ranging cross departmental portfolio for the Under Secretary of the Navy (UNSECNAV) that unifies the Department's most consequential levers for rebuilding warrior ethos and quality of service.

Secretary Phelan also congratulated Under Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao on his swearing-in by Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and warmly welcomed him back to the Department of the Navy.

"It is my pleasure to welcome Hung Cao to my Navy team; I look forward to having this experienced patriot lead on the highest priorities of the Secretary of War." Secretary Phelan added, "I want to recognize with sincere gratitude, Dr. Brett Seidle, who over the past year has served as Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and

Acquisition and has performed the duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy. His steady leadership in these roles has been vital to our Navy and our nation. Dr. Seidle has informed me of his intention to retire after twenty-five years of federal service following a smooth transition to Under Secretary Cao. The Department thanks him for his distinguished service and extends its best wishes for his future endeavors."

As Secretary of War Hegseth told Flag and General Officers at Marine Corps Base Quantico earlier this week: "…at the War Department first and foremost we must restore a ruthless, dispassionate and common sense application of standards…Standards must be uniform, gender neutral and high. If not, they're not standards. They're just suggestions, suggestions that get our sons and daughters killed."

"That is why I am putting my Under Secretary on the field to tackle the issues that affect the daily lives of Sailors and Marines," said Secretary Phelan. "From his years in uniform and his record of leadership, he will cut through bureaucracy, drive real solutions and keep our people first."

"Readiness starts at home and shows up on target," Secretary Phelan said. "The Under Secretary's new remit puts one quarterback and one playbook on the field to execute my gameplan for upgrading how we recruit, train, equip and take care of our people, so the Fleet stays the world's premier, most lethal maritime force."

"This is about speed, standards and service," Phelan added. "When Sailors and Marines know their families are supported, housing is right, chow is quality and systems work the first time, morale rises, performance sharpens and the force delivers."

Under the Secretary's direction and consistent with governing statutes and the Department of the Navy priorities, the

UNSECNAV will lead and synchronize the following lines of effort across the Department of the Navy:

Quality of Service: The UNSECNAV will drive rapid inspections and upgrades of family housing, recreational, healthcare and educational facilities on Navy and Marine Corps installations; tighten oversight of public-private ventures and modernize nutrition both ashore and afloat to align fueling the force with warfighter readiness.

Digital and Business Systems: As Chief Management Officer, the UNSECNAV will partner with the Department of the Navy Chief Information Officer to modernize unclassified Information Technology systems and critical Defense Business Systems. Cut downtime. Simplify processes. Get Sailors, Marines, civilians and families the tools they need fast.

Audit: The UNSECNAV will supervise the Auditor General and accelerate the Navy and Marine Corps to clean audit opinions, strengthening trust, transparency, speed of resourcing and accountability across the enterprise.

Recruiting: The UNSECNAV will visit, assess and raise Navy and Marine Corps recruiting standards, management and organization to meet and exceed end-strength. He will capitalize on the surge of Americans motivated to serve by President Trump’s call to revitalize strength and pride in our armed forces. In line with Secretary Hegseth’s charge, standards will be high, uniform and non-negotiable. They will not be suggestions. They will be the foundation of combat power.

Reserve Reform: The UNSECNAV coordinating with Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Chief of Naval Reserve and Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, will implement my plan for reserve reform that is already underway and produce actionable changes that integrate Reserve components as ready, lethal teammates with the active force maximizing the skills of Sailors and Marines

and ensuring that reform translates into real capability.

Wellness & Suicide Prevention: The UNSECNAV will spearhead efforts across the Department to reduce mental health incidents and strengthen the performance of our force, serving as the primary representative to interagency and Department of War bodies on prevention, response and personnel readiness.

PCS, Families and Education Options: The UNSECNAV will represent the Department on the Permanent Change of Station Joint Task Force to streamline PCS orders, review on-base education and support homeschooling options so families can choose what works best for them.

Personnel Policy: The UNSECNAV will coordinate implementation of policies for service members impacted by the rescinded COVID-19 vaccine mandate and update

physical fitness standards, with a particular focus on combat units, so standards are clear, fair and combat-credible.

Guam as a Power-Projection Platform: As the Senior Defense Official for Guam, the UNSECNAV will review and assess island infrastructure and clear barriers, including energy and material challenges, so Guam delivers as a frontline power-projection platform for Indo-Pacific operations.

Standards and Warfighter Ethos: The UNSECNAV will implement Departmental direction on the elimination of divisive concepts and eradication of DEI initiatives within the Department of the Navy to keep time, talent and dollars on warfighting outcomes.

The UNSECNAV portfolio ties quality of service to combat power by design so we turn everyday friction points into force multipliers that show up on time and on target. We will fix faster, cut red tape and deliver better outcomes for families and commands. Minutes saved are minutes gained in the fight.”

“Our mission to defend the American homeland and put America first, starts in the homes of Sailors and Marines who stand the watch every day,” he continued. “When the basics work the first time, ships sail more, aircraft fly further, crews rearm and recover faster, lethality rises, risk falls and American sea power wins.”

“One Team, One Mission, One Vision is the way we operate, the way we win, the way we lead,” Secretary Phelan said. “With this move I am giving my Under Secretary the responsibility and the tools to fix what slows us down and to fuel what makes us unbeatable.”