

Spencer: Navy's Readiness Relies on Industrial Base, New Approach to Risk



Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer said he's looking to "a more cost-imposing, survivable and affordable future force." Chuck Fazio

NATIONAL HARBOR,

Md. – The Navy Department is showing progress in its drive to increase

readiness and prepare its forces to "fight tonight and win," Navy Secretary

Richard V. Spencer said May 8. But in a luncheon speech at the Navy League's

annual Sea-Air-Space exposition, Spencer spoke directly to the defense industry

representatives in the audience, telling them: "We cannot do this alone."

"We need the

support. We welcome the support of industry if we are going to increase readiness

and meet the operational demands of today and tomorrow," he said. "Our goal is

true partnership," based on the concept that "shared risk produces shared

rewards." He offered industry "a clear line of sight to our needs and resources,

and industry understands that our security, stability and prosperity rely on

ready and combat-capable forces that are capable of projecting naval power. ...

We must work together to provide solutions to our challenges."

The secretary noted the message he has presented in congressional hearings that the department's budget "we truly believe is prioritized on a strategy-driven, balanced approach, building on prior investments, while sustaining the industrial base and maintaining our competitive advantage as we transition to a more cost-imposing, survivable and affordable future force."

The process is showing results, he said, noting that when he took office the readiness rate of the Navy and Marine Corps F/A-18 Hornets was "abysmal. "Today, the Navy is tipping at 70% mission-capable rates, and the Marine Corps is in the high 70s," he said. He also mentioned a major program that has been accelerated two years ahead of its original schedule, but he did not name the program.

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Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer

"We are getting after these issues and readiness is increasing daily," he said. The goal now is "to increase our velocity."

As part of its reform of the acquisition processes, Spencer said, "we're migrating from a culture of risk eradication to understanding and managing risk," while

conceding that completely eliminating risk is “unaffordable.” And referring to the results of the investigations into the two fatal at-sea collisions of Navy destroyers last year, he said the fleet was moving from a culture of “normalization of deviation” from standards to increased focus on performance and safety.

At the end, Spencer said, “Our vision is for a more agile, sustainable and superior force. ... We want to be able to dominate future conflicts from the seafloor to space, in blue waters, littorals, mountains and desert, and also throughout the information domain.”