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Sept. 23, 2008

Delivering Irregular Warfare Capability to the Warfighter

"Today's battles against terrorists and insurgents demand that the Navy be more agile and responsive. We must rapidly adapt our capabilities to provide the warfighter with the unconventional and indirect means necessary to conduct Irregular Warfare."

– Rear Adm. Mark Kenny, Director, Navy Irregular Warfare Office

U.S. dominance in conventional warfare has given adversaries strong motivation to adopt non-traditional methods to counter our advantages. Accordingly, to be successful against terrorists, insurgents and state actors who employ these methods, the U.S. military must develop a level of mastery of Irregular Warfare. From Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept, IW is "a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will."

Integral to the Maritime Strategy

- The Navy's concept for IW uses the core strengths of seapower and synchronizes efforts with joint forces, other government agencies and host nation security forces to defeat terrorists and insurgents and win the support and trust of the local population. In executing IW, U.S. naval forces:
 - Exploit maritime approaches and gain sustained access to a region.
 - Work collectively with joint, international and interagency partners to provide security and stability
 - Contribute in a network of pervasive and persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
 - Deploy and support expeditionary and special operations forces in the littorals and over land
 - Bring together and disseminate information to isolate and localize fleeting targets
 - Conduct information operations that shape adversary actions and response
 - When called upon, swiftly strike from over the horizon with precision and limited collateral damage
- Ships and submarines have rapidly adapted to meet urgent IW needs. Recent integration of joint intelligence and naval strike capabilities with regional forces have supported time-critical targeting and have utilized existing U.S. naval ship capabilities, like Tomahawk and Naval Gun Fire Support.

Expediting IW Capabilities to the Warfighter

- In order to optimize Navy contributions to current and future operations, the CNO established the Navy Irregular Warfare Office in July 2008. The office is headed by a Flag Officer, and its mission is to:
 - Synchronize Navy capabilities with U.S. Special Operations Command, other Combatant Commanders, and interagency and international partners to support IW needs.
 - Facilitate the rapid identification, development and deployment of Navy IW capabilities.
 - Institutionalize IW in the Navy's planning, investment and capability development.

Key Messages

- Irregular Warfare uses the core strengths of seapower in innovative ways to add to the collective knowledge and increase security for our forces and international partners.
- The Navy is rapidly adapting capabilities to better meet the IW needs of Combatant Commanders and interagency and international partners.
- The Navy IW Office is charged with expediting IW capability changes through the Navy enterprise to the Fleet.

Facts and Figures

- Sea Stalker Unmanned Underwater Vehicles, Buster Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Unmanned Surface Vehicles will deploy with surface ships and submarines to conduct Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance in support of Joint Counter-terrorism Task Forces.
- MH-60S and HH-60H helicopters are being assessed for use in increasing operational support and training readiness of Naval Special Warfare.
- Selected Strike Groups will deploy with an enhanced surface ship Information Operations capability in support of IW.