

Remarks as delivered by Adm. Gary Roughead

CNO Message to the Fleet

Oct. 4, 2007

The opportunity to continue to serve and to lead our Navy is the highest honor for any naval officer. Assuming the leadership of our Navy from Adm. Mike Mullen is a great privilege. His vision, drive, and commitment to those who serve have positioned us well today and for tomorrow. I know all of you join me in wishing him and Deborah every success as he takes up his new responsibilities as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I am of the fleet. It is where I began and where, for the past four years, in the Atlantic and Pacific, I have had the privilege of leading our operational forces, Navy and joint. I have watched our Sailors perform magnificently from the high end of warfare to the most extensive humanitarian operation ever undertaken by our military. I am inspired by our individual augmentees and others on the ground. They are a new dimension of our navy and one in which we can all take pride. We are truly a ready, agile, and global Navy.

My priorities have been and will remain, maintaining our current readiness, building a Navy for tomorrow, and that which underpins all we do, our people; our Sailors, our civilians and our very special families, whose hallmarks are sacrifice and self-reliance.

Current readiness.

Maintaining our warfighting readiness will ensure we are an agile, capable, and ready force. We are continually generating forces for the current fight and are deploying and employing our navy much differently than in years past. We are simultaneously providing ready naval forces and personnel for joint force commanders, sustaining forward presence, fulfilling commitments to allies, and responding to increasing demands in regions where we have not routinely operated, specifically South America and Africa. Our global blue-water Navy, centered around carrier strike groups, expeditionary strike groups, and submarines is unmatched, and will continue to be our cornerstone. Our Fleet Response Plan will increase our operational availability and allow us to operate with more flexibility.

A Navy for tomorrow.

The means and methods of conflict and the security environment undergo constant change. Technology and new approaches are advancing rapidly. Our ships, submarines, aircraft, weapons, and networks must outpace potential adversaries. The cost of future systems and the ability of our overall acquisition processes to pace the speed of technological innovation will challenge our ability to deliver a balanced force. Accordingly, we must be exacting in developing requirements, mindful of the factors that increase cost, and disciplined in our process to be effective, efficient, and timely in delivering future capability.

People.

Our people are the foundation for all we do. All we acquire is of little worth without the people who give it value. Our policies and practices must enable us to attract, recruit, retain and fulfill the men and women of America, and our Navy must reflect the diversity of our nation. The demographics, attitudes, and expectations of our population are changing and we must understand that dynamic. Our policies must advantage us and address the many rewards of service, and we must be unwavering in our obligation to take care of those who serve in our navy and the families who support them. This is particularly important today for those serving in individual augmentation assignments.

Those are my priorities, but there is another dimension to our future. We have a unique historical, organizational, and operational relationship with the U.S. Marine Corps. Our forces train, deploy, and fight together. Our capabilities, programs and personnel issues are inextricably linked. I am committed to the Navy and Marine Corps partnership and to making it even stronger and more relevant for the future. We can do much for our country as a Navy-Marine Corps team.

Although we are at war, I see more opportunity than challenge and more in our future than in our past. I look forward to leading our Navy. I am eager to meet all that is before us, and to serving with you as we face the future and seize the opportunities ahead.