

Remarks by  
Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy  
Chief of Naval Operations Assumption of Office Ceremony  
Washington Navy Yard  
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Admiral Roughhead, General Conway, Admiral Gay, ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased to be here today to welcome Admiral Gary Roughead as Chief of Naval Operations.

Admiral Roughead assumes this responsibility during a time of war, taking over from Admiral Mike Mullen, who has been called to serve in a new capacity, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

For the past two years, Admiral Mullen served with distinction as the CNO and a lead partner of the Navy-Marine Corps team.

He brings with him to the job of Chairman a tremendous wealth of experience, strategic thinking, and a level of dedication that is simply inspirational.

I would like to thank him for his service, his guidance, and his friendship.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Deborah for her tireless efforts on behalf of Sailors and Marines and their families wherever they are found.

I wish them well, and I look forward to working with both of them in their new roles.

As Admiral Mullen moves forward, Admiral Roughead is faced with the daunting challenges of taking the helm of the Navy at a challenging time in our nation's history.

Those who serve in uniform never forget that we are at war with a ruthless enemy that makes no secret of his goals.

Our Navy is today supporting military operations against terrorists at sea, and conducting operations against the same enemy on land—in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and on other fronts around the world.

With more than 25,000 Sailors in the Central Command Area of Responsibility, the Navy today is directly engaged in the war effort on land and at sea in a manner and magnitude that is unprecedented.

From providing maritime security in the Northern Arabian Gulf, to deploying to

the Euphrates the first Riverine squadron since Vietnam, to conducting carrier operations off the coast, to working alongside Marines and Soldiers as corpsmen, Seabees, Electronic Warfare Officers, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal crews, our Sailors are executing missions that are indispensable to the war effort, and they are performing heroically in difficult conditions.

But make no mistake—this war is global in nature, affecting operations far beyond the CENTCOM AOR.

Intelligence gathering, interdiction, and other anti-terrorist missions are being carried out worldwide, and although they rarely make headlines, they are critical to our success in defeating this enemy.

But while the Navy is at war, we also must prepare for future challenges.

We must never lose sight of the singular importance of Naval power in deterring aggression and providing combat power when and where needed.

We do not have the gift of clairvoyance.

We cannot plan for a future along known paths.

We must be prepared for many future paths, many dangers, and many potential threats.

And that requires, above all, a long-term perspective and a long-term commitment to building a Navy capable of meeting 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

Given the uncertain future path of potential adversaries, the growing concern over nuclear and missile technology proliferation, and the increased focus on Naval power by many nations, we simply cannot afford to reduce our historical commitment to supremacy at sea.

Our new Chief of Naval Operations shares this point of view.

We both believe that America is a maritime nation with maritime interests that are growing in importance in this age of globalization.

We both believe that we must modernize our fleet, transform the way we acquire those assets, and remain committed to our ambitious shipbuilding plan.

We both believe that the Navy-Marine Corps team and our expeditionary capability represent a unique and invaluable component of our national defense.

And we both believe that our cooperative engagement policy is critical to our

future national security.

Admiral Roughead is a man with a long-term, strategic perspective, and a long track record as an exceptionally talented leader in challenging positions of responsibility in command at sea and on shore.

He is the right leader to assume command of the Navy during these challenging times, and he takes the helm of an organization of which America is justly proud.

A brilliant strategist, a visionary leader, and a skillful navigator of the ways of Washington, Admiral Roughead is superbly qualified to build on the legacy of his predecessor as the Navy faces the dual challenge of fighting today's war while also building the fleet of the future.

It is clear that Admiral Roughead's work as Commander, Pacific Fleet is having a real impact on that region.

His policy of active and deeper engagement with the nations in the Pacific Area of Responsibility, and his tireless efforts to broaden our cooperative security relations in maritime domain awareness, missile defense, and intelligence-sharing with partner nations, have improved America's position in this increasingly important area of the world.

He is a pragmatic internationalist who understands the necessity of working cooperatively with other nations, as partners, in support of common interests, in fighting terrorists, serving security interests, and promoting economic prosperity among peoples of every nation.

It is a perspective he brought to Fleet Forces Command as well, and one that he will apply to our ever-expanding engagement efforts.

In his new role as CNO, Admiral Roughead also brings a perspective that puts great emphasis on recruiting, developing, and supporting our people.

America is lucky to have young patriots willing to volunteer and serve their country in a time of war, at a time of low unemployment, and at a time when many other opportunities and paths beckon.

And yet they and their families serve.

Admiral Roughead leads a Navy that is comprised of a generation of young Sailors who continue a nearly 232 year old tradition of standing watch in defense of a

great nation.

It is impossible not to feel enormous pride in serving alongside them.

Admiral, congratulations on your new assignment.

I treasured the close relationship I enjoyed with your predecessor, and I trust that we will continue in the same spirit.

Finally, Linda and I would like to welcome Ellen onboard.

We are delighted to have you on the team, and we look forward to working with you both in the days and months ahead.

Thank you.