Admiral Richardson: Thank you very much for that kind introduction.

I’m here in Washington, DC, coming to you live from the Navy Yard. We’re just trying to soak up as much of the DC weather as we can before we have to go out to San Diego and see what you’ve got going out there.

I’m here in the Navy Yard. This is one of the oldest properties in the United States Navy, really going back to our roots. Behind me is the Latrobe Gate which was designed by the architect Benjamin Latrobe who also designed the Decatur House where Stephen Decatur lived, a great naval hero.

Since I’m kicking off the conference, and as Bob said, I’ll be back at the end to give you guys a quiz just to see whether you really learned what I’m about to tell you, so study hard.

There’s probably no better time than the beginning of the conference to make a motion that we change the name of the theme of the conference. As I understand it, the theme of the conference is “Are we ready to compete, deter and win globally?” While that is an appropriate question, I would say it’s also a bit of an academic question and it’s a bit of a detached question. As I think about the team there at AFCEA West and the folks in the room, it is this team that is not going to take a detached academic third person viewpoint in terms of getting ready to compete, deter and win, but this team is going to participate in actually improving our ability to do those things.

So I would make a motion, and we can come back at the end of my talk to see if anybody seconds the motion and we’ll put it to a vote that we change the theme of the conference to something a little bit more active and a little bit more participative in terms of moving forward.

A theme such as, “How can we improve our ability to deter, compete and win?” is going to be my recommended theme going forward. Okay?
We’ve been doing a lot of thinking about that in the Navy. In fact the last calendar quarter we’ve been putting together a lot of strategic guidance which has culminated in the issuing of a Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, Version 2. It talks about how we intend to get after this challenge to deter, compete and win in great power competition. So I’ll spend some time talking about that.

How about if we go to the next slide?

What a great quote for any naval person to spend some time appreciating. First of all, consistent with our founding here in the Navy Yard, we have one of our Founding Fathers, our first President, George Washington. And he said, “It follows as certain as night succeeds the day that without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it everything honorable and glorious.”

So my next couple of minutes we’re going to talk about what it might take to be a decisive naval force, and that is essentially a big part of what the Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority describes. So let’s go forward.
You should see now this focus on decisiveness. Okay? As we think about the elements of this, we’ve been operating under Version 1 of the Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority for some time. It was issued in January of 2016 and we listed at the time that it was Version 1, implying that at some point just because of the dynamic nature of the security environment we would have to update it. Sure enough, we did that update at the end of 2018 and issued it the first part of ’19.

I’ve got to also say that while it’s my privilege to sign out the design, it is by and large a very collaborative effort of Navy leadership. We all pitched in and had a contribution.

So the idea is that this will define our trajectory in the Navy for the next year or two until we may have to issue another version in response to the environment.

So what caused this to change? First of all we did get, as Bob alluded, a new Strategic Guidance. There’s a new National Security Strategy. There’s a new National Defense Strategy. Both of those documents talk about the return to great power competition. This in and of itself is strategic guidance. It’s a reason to go back and revisit what we have been describing to make sure that it remains consistent.

The other thing is that we’ve been busy on Version 1 of the design for two years now, and we’ve accomplished many of the objectives, many of the goals that we set for ourselves, so it was time to refresh from that standpoint, to find some new goals, goals that will keep us reaching for the stars all the time.

Third, particularly when things are changing so much, I think it’s always valid to go back and check your foundational assumptions. Do those still hold? It’s always good to go back and check that, to make sure that what we founded the document on are still valid.

I recently spoke at the Atlantic Council and at that event I made the point that I think for the next quarter century if not half a century the environment is going to bring tremendous responsibility to the maritime forces, the naval and maritime forces. It’s going to be a maritime century. There’s a lot of talk about the blue economy. So much of our good fortune is going to be dependent upon control of the sea. It’s why many are referring to this as the “Blue Century.”
People have been going to sea for about ten thousand years, starting in the South Pacific. But in the last 25 years, maritime traffic has picked up by a factor of four, which is an incredible jump in a quarter century given ten thousand years of history. That quadrupling of maritime traffic has roughly doubled, fueled the increase in the global GDP which has probably doubled.

But it’s not just the traditional maritime traffic, it’s the dynamic environment all the way around. One of the things that emerged from the last time we were in great power competition was this idea of the information age. Right? The internet wasn’t even a thing during the Cold War and now we can’t live without it. We can’t operate without it. We can’t fight without it. And much of that internet, 99 percent of that information internationally travels on cables that run along the bottom of the sea.

The Arctic ice cap is the smallest its ever been in our lifetimes. That gives rise to continental shelves and resources. We have trade routes and sea lanes that are open now for more parts of the year than they have been before.

Similarly, technology has given us the ability to go deeper and deeper in the ocean and access natural resources -- oil, natural gas. More and more of our food is coming from the ocean. This aquaculture idea is something that’s also expanding very, very quickly.

There are about 30 megacities in the world right now. There’s going to be more in the future. And most of those megacities are very, very near the coast. So all of this goes to support the hypothesis, the thesis, that it’s going to be a very, very important time to have firm control of our maritime domain.

Let’s go to the next slide and we’ll talk about how we see the security environment in the design.
One thing you’ll notice, the idea that it is a spectrum of competition, or a spectrum of rivalry. If you look at the far left of that spectrum, you see things that are day to day. Things like peaceful presence. Things like a show of force or something along those lines. Very traditional military types of activity at the low end of a competitive spectrum.

Then as you move to the right of that spectrum you can see that okay, now it gets sportier as you start to move right. You start to see a phase of escalation. With that escalation comes more kinetic types of activities. Things pick up.

Then on the far right you start to see the use of violence, the use of force, maybe by non-state actors and then state actors.

Then on the far right, total war type.

A couple of things about this. One, it is a continuous spectrum. There is no phasing associated with it. So as you think about our way moving forward, the traditional thinking of hey, are we in phase zero, phase one, phase two? That’s becoming less and less relevant as our competitors are moving up and down that spectrum with tremendous agility.

You can also see there’s that purple contribution to the spectrum. The advent of information warfare which changes everything, intentionally changing the character of warfare itself, and definitely speeding everything up. Whether it’s space, cyber, whether it’s in electromagnetic warfare, or whether it’s in targeting or counter targeting. Information warfare is a new dimension since the last time we were in great power competition.

Then there are two gray arrows that are in parts of the spectrum and this really starts to highlight our challenge. As we see things emerging at the low end of the spectrum, and this part of the spectrum has been referred to by a number of different names. Competition below the level of conflict. We’re really struggling to even describe activity at this part of the spectrum, so you can see that we outline a conceptual challenge for ourselves there. We’ve got to think more creatively in terms of competing effectively in that part of the spectrum.

Then on the right hand side we want to make sure that we can always have the capability to be superior, to be dominant at the
high end so that we can always deescalate on terms that are favorable to the United States and our allies and partners.

This is a very rough depiction of the security environment as we see it.

Let’s build on that slide. You should see a blue block down there that describes our response to that environment. Our response takes on three major muscle movements, if you will.

One is, we’ve got to restore agility to the way that we operate and we think about warfighting. This agility really has three components itself. First of all, as I said, there’s conceptual agility. So there are new tools, new technologies, new capabilities. These give rise to new concepts. There is that conceptual challenge in the gray zone or at the low end of the competitive spectrum, so we’ve got to be thinking with a lot more agility to meet the much more diverse challenges of this spectrum of competition.

The second aspect of agility is geographic agility. For the past twenty five years, we have become very, very good at getting naval force elements, strike groups, underway from Norfolk, underway from San Diego, and moving them as quickly as we can to the Gulf doing strike operations ashore for as long as we could, and then moving them back. If you can plot the tracks of our force elements, our strike groups back and forth, it would just be a repetitive process. We’ve optimized our system in that to the lowest possible cost. Maximum presence in the Gulf for the lowest possible cost, and the system really leaned out to do anything else but that. Okay?

This is not going to get us to where we need to go in in this new environment. So we started to do a few things like this
dynamic force control. As an example, we sent an area strike group north up to the Arctic, above the Arctic Circle. It was the first time we’ve done that since 1991. I’ll tell you what, while many of you think it’s changed since ‘91, it is still amazingly cold in November north of the Arctic Circle. Doing flight operations in that type of weather. For those of you who have been in the North Atlantic in the winter, you continue to pitch like crazy, so that presents operational and even a safety hazard.

The communications up there, the satellite footprints, all of that, were muscles that we had to regrow as we sent the strike group up there. In fact it even took very very close coordination to get things like food and mail up to this part of the world. We just hadn’t done that in so long. There’s the idea of geographic agility.

Finally, the dimension of technical agility. Technological agility. We simply must get capabilities, technologies, tools, weapon systems into the hands of Sailors. We’ve got to get agility with those three components back.

The other thing is, this is going to be a long competition. Decades. We’ve got to think about sustainable approaches where we cannot run our forces, our joint force at the red line and expect it to last. We must think in terms of sustainable approaches, infinite gain types of thinking so that we can get ahead and stay ahead for the long run. So this idea of sustainability is very important.

Finally, as I said, we have got to control the high end of that conflict. We always have to maintain the ability to seize the high end and deescalate the conflict on our terms, to move it as far left as possible. It’s very consistent with this idea of sustainability that we are able to deescalate to a lower level of kinetic operations. That will also be consistent with this long-term approach, this sustainable approach.

In rough terms, that’s our description of the security environment against our great power competitors, China and Russia.
On the next slide I’ll talk a little bit about the structure of the design itself.

You can see on that slide how we have got to be designing and building a Navy that is composed of high performing teams that can learn faster, are equipped better, and can operate more effectively than our adversaries. That’s at the top of that slide.

Then there are four lines of effort. Just as before, we coded them in color. The blue line of effort talks about operation and warfighting. Notably, we put diversity in the blue line of effort because as we go forward in this information age with artificial intelligence, with machine learning, bringing diversity and creativity to the human contribution of that is going to be decisive going forward. So that’s our blue line.

You move just a little it to the right you see a green line of effort which continues to talk about achieving results at high velocity.

So in Version 1 we talked about high velocity learning. Version 2 we focus more in high velocity outcomes. If you have a chance to read the document, we list a number of very specific outcomes in terms of delivering capabilities.

It also in the green line of effort talks about this idea of the Navy as a learning engine itself. Right? So the combination of our schools, our war games, our fleet exercises, our experiments, our analysis. All of that pitches together to help us learn as an entire Navy. So I look forward to also discussing more about that when I get out there.

You move forward now to the right, again, to our gold line of effort. This talks about our most treasured weapon -- our people. It describes how we are updating our entire approach to
recruiting, to training, to assigning, to paying, to retaining our people. So a very exciting line of effort. We are essentially going to be delivering almost everything a Sailor needs right to their smart device, and put more transparency and control of their destiny in their hands.

This is a really exciting part of our business and worth a lot of study during this conference.

Finally on the right hand side is our purple line of effort. This talks about the importance of our partnerships. Partnerships with certainly our sister services, particularly the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard, partnerships with the rest of the government -- the interagency, partnerships with industry -- so many of you in the audience, partnerships with academia, and then partnerships with our allies around the world. Our allies and partners.

The United States Navy really is only one node of several networks. We operate best and most effectively, we realize that and acknowledge this networked approach. So lots of emphasis on our partners.

Nations that have a lot of allies and partners sustain; the nations that try and take it on their own, don’t. It’s important that we foster, strengthen and expand our network of partners.

It’s also important at the bottom of the slide to realize that everything rests on a foundation of core attributes. I’ll tell you, a big part of success across all four of those lines of effort is dependent upon our value proposition. We are a force of honor, courage and commitment. As we think of our behaviors, our behaviors must exhibit those four core attributes -- initiative, accountability, toughness, and integrity.

That segues me to the last part of my talk here and then I’ll let the conference go on. In fact I’ve got to rush out of here to get on a plane to go out to California and finish the conference up as the last event.

Now you should be looking at the slide with George Washington and we are back to that quote which is so great. We spent a lot of time talking about a decisive naval force. What makes a naval force decisive.
We want to shift our emphasis now to this part of the quote that talks about honor and glory. I’m spending more and more of our time talking and fleshing out this concept of honor and glory. This goes right back to our Founding Fathers. What did the United States of America mean to the world? What is our value statement to the world? What do we stand for? You go back to those founding documents. We stand for the hope of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And if you think about the privilege of being in the naval service, the privilege of being our forward force. We are often the first point of contact for so many around the world with the United States of America.

Every one of our ships is sovereign U.S. territory. Every one of our Sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, is a diplomat contributing to not only the military element of power but also the diplomatic element of power. A quick scan of our history would show that so many of our most important treaties, conferences, summits have been held on Navy warships.

If you think about a warship making a port call in a foreign country, it’s almost a given that the U.S. Ambassador of that country will host a reception on a chunk of the United States of America -- the deck of that ship. We have a tremendous contribution to the diplomatic element of power.

Similarly, we’re out there just as we did in our early days, protecting our trade. We’re keeping sea lanes open. We’re keeping navigation moving. So our contribution, our intersection with the economic element of national power also is a very, very important part of being a Navy Sailor. So not only do you have the military dimension of power but also the diplomatic and also the economic.

Then of course there is no mariner on the seas that will pass any other mariner or person in distress. So we have this idea
that we will always lend assistance to a mariner in distress, always lend assistance to someone who needs help, a humanitarian crisis of any nature. Think about the value statement that we bring not only to the country but really to the world by virtue of being a part of the Navy team.

So I’m going to go back now to my motion that we shift the nature of the theme of this conference away from an academic and detached perspective -- hey, are we ready for great power competition? And much more to an active role where we use our time together at AFCEA West to team together and think about ways that we can actually improve our way to be more competitive in great power competition. We can be better at deterring, competing and winning.

So I make a motion that we shift the tone of the conference. Will anybody second that motion?

I have absolutely no way to see if anybody’s seconding the motion, so I’m going to assume that of course you did. And then I can hear you. So all in favor say aye.

Okay. All opposed say nay.

I did hear one nay. I’m going to have a talk with you when I come out on Friday.

But I think the ayes have it. I look forward to a really kinetic and participative conversation, and I look forward to closing it out on Friday.

Thank you all very much.

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