CNO: Thank you, Father, very much. I apologize for cutting in, but even I was falling asleep to that introduction -- [Laughter] -- and I wrote it.

What a thrill it is to be here, I think, because Father, whether you wear the cloth of the church or the cloth of the nation, I think we’re all inspired by Father Jenkins’ commitment. Commitment to the university, commitment to the results that he’s delivered, and I can’t think of two institutions that embody a set of shared values than the University of Notre Dame and the United States Navy. And also we share a deep focus on learning. And your commitment to a lifetime of learning that starts or is accelerated by the University of Notre Dame is something that we really treasure as well. We share that very much in common.

I’ve got to say, it’s a tribute both to the University of Notre Dame and everybody in this room that you could put together an agenda of just amazing speakers. Education, for many of us in this room our education started maybe with Sesame Street, right? There’s that great game in Sesame Street, one of these things is not like the other. Right? So you just have to look down that program. It’s like okay, presidential candidates, members of the cabinet, senators and a sailor. [Laughter]. You know, which of these things is not like the other?

So I’m really very honored to be here with you as your post-lunch entertainment and I hope to quickly give you a sense of the challenges that we’re facing today from a maritime perspective. And then I want to get through my remarks as quickly as possible to hear what’s on your mind and engage in a conversation with you and answer your questions.

I tell you, as much of an outlier as I might be on the schedule today, on your agenda, I feel that I am standing on very, very firm ground because the University of Notre Dame and the United States Navy really are existential in each other’s existence today. We were fundamental. I’ll just quote from Father Hesburgh, who said in an interview in 1992 that, “During World War II,” he said, “We were out of business. And the Navy came in and kept us afloat until the war was over.” That’s manifested in some of the most important things that we do
together, and Father Hesburgh committed that once he became Notre Dame’s President he promised to play Navy in football every year for as long as the Naval Academy wanted to do so, and that has been an important decision, a difficult decision sometimes -- [Laughter] -- but since that commitment we’ve played each other 92 years straight, and the rivalry, if you can call it that, between Navy and Notre Dame is really, it comes together and it as much as anything a game of honor. We honor one another by our two football teams playing on the field.

So let me get rolling here.

[Applause].

Thank you. Maybe I should just stop there and go to questions. [Laughter].

I’ll tell you, I’m beginning a lot of my talks these days with this slide and with this quote. And I like going back to our Founding Fathers always, but I think maybe particularly in these days, it’s important for us not to take anything for granted with respect to just resonating and spending some time describing those principles which were there at the founding of our nation, the proposition that we have that the United States makes to the world. So we spend a lot of time talking about quotes from the Declaration of Independence, quotes from the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, from famous speeches, and we just stop there so that our sailors, if I’m speaking to an internal audience or even those folks like yourselves, that we highlight and spend some time on this.

There’s a great article in Foreign Affairs by Harvard Professor Jill Lepore who says there are many nations who can leverage thousands of years of cultural history to define themselves as a people, but the United States is really a pickup team when compared to those. And we define ourselves by our narrative. This people, this mixing bowl. Melting pot, coming together under a set of shared values. And if we don’t spend time describing and building on that narrative of our shared values, the binding energy that keeps us all together starts to get weaker and weaker. I’ll say more about that later.

But I’ll tell you what, if you’re a Navy guy, you can’t get a better quote than this, right? So I spend a tremendous of my time talking about, conceptualizing, justifying what it takes to be a decisive naval force. So I thought I’d spend a little bit of time with you talking about that.
This idea goes right back to our very founding. The decisiveness of the Navy. The Navy was stood up with our nation to go forward to the Strait of Gibraltar and secure and defend our trade against what were then the Barbary Pirates near the Strait of Gibraltar.

If we go to this guy, President Jefferson was there. He was the President when we opened up the first Barbary Wars against these pirates in about 1801. And as you can see here, he linked together the very important concepts of industry, commerce and security. The links of that to the happiness and prosperity of our people.

We talk a lot about that same thing. We want to prosper as a nation. We want our people to live better lives. And in order to do that we need, particularly from a maritime perspective, we need to have a set of rules, an order that exists in the global commons we call the maritime, and then in order to have that we need security to secure those sea lanes.

The United States was and remains a maritime nation. We get about two-thirds of our economy is linked directly to the sea. So certainly two-thirds of the material that you see around any place -- your living room or whatever, comes to us from sea. But even more than that, two-thirds of our jobs, two-thirds of, as I said, the economy is linked.

Things are changing very fast all around us, and they are changing very, very fast at sea. You’ve got to say well this is a pretty traditional thing. You’d be on pretty safe grounds if you said that people have been going to sea for 8,000 years, right, and they left Southern China. They went across in basically these log rafts and made tremendous voyages across the Southern Pacific up in, they stopped and hit land at Tonga and they stopped there. They went north from there into the Marshal Islands and Hawaii. They went south of there into New Zealand. And interestingly, if you want to research it later, Australia kind of got lost in the shuffle. The tides and the current and the winds didn’t really take people to Australia, explorers, and so Australia a uniquely indigenous place down there.

I’ll tell you, even given those 8,000 years of maritime history, things have been changing very rapidly since we were in a peer competition. Since the end of the Cold War.
For instance, since that time although we’ve been, as I said, sailing for 8,000 years, the amount of maritime traffic in the last 25 years has quadrupled. So if you think about a line that builds up over 8,000 years to a particular point, and then in a quarter century, four times that, it looks like a spike. It’s remarkable.

I said two-thirds of our economy comes into us by sea, but on a global scale it’s more like 90 percent. Ninety percent of the world’s trade still flows over the ocean. There’s a lot of discussion of the South China Sea these days, if you read the papers. Why are we there in the South China Sea? For the exact same reasons we were there in the Strait of Gibraltar in 1800. It’s because 33 percent of the world’s trade flows through the South China Sea, and it’s extremely important that that body of water remain open and free for passage.

But it’s not just shipping. One thing that is absolutely brand new to business these days is this information age that is upon us. It’s not dawning any more, it’s here. If you think about internet traffic, 99 percent of internet traffic flow through undersea cables, about 300 cables that lie on the sea bed. So I think we can all maybe take it on as a resolution that we keep talking about this cloud, right? You want to look up, but no, it’s a sea. It’s a data sea. Please take that forward and let’s get everybody’s minds in the right place.

I’ll tell you what, it’s not just these sea bed cables but it’s everything else. Technology has given us access now to much, much deeper parts of the ocean and access to the resources that are there. Roughly doubling the amount of platforms that get after energy resources off shore.

With respect to our food, we’re getting more and more of our food from the sea. Aqua culture, both protein and carbohydrates. In the next 25 years we expect to see almost a tripling in that going forward. So much, much more important.

Our polar ice cap, particularly in the north. Climate change is here as well. The Arctic ice cap is as small as it’s ever been in our lifetime. As small as it’s been since we really started measuring it with precision instruments. That gives rise to sea lanes that save a lot of time off of moving goods around the world, particularly from Asia into the Western Hemisphere and also gives rise, again, to continental shelves and the resources that are on them.
The number of mega cities, those cities with a population of 10 million or more, there’s about 30 of them right now due to increase to 40-45 in the next 25 years. Almost all of them are on the sea. We were just recently in Jakarta, Indonesia. A remarkable city if you haven’t been there, and we were learning about Jakarta. Our body clocks were all messed up, so I was up at 2 in the morning looking out my hotel room and Jakarta was buzzing at 2 in the morning. We were thinking about the fact that the rush hour in Jakarta, in and out, the people that move from their homes to work in Jakarta equals the population of Norway. Right? Which gives you a sense of scale of these mega cities. And going forward, some of these cities will become the biggest cities in the world.

So there is this tremendous energy and rate of change in the ocean, this quadrupling of shipping which has been the fuel for the global economy, the global GDP during this period of time, the last 25 years, has roughly doubled. So the United States Navy, we feel this responsibility going forward, our responsibilities to secure the maritime, to make sure that we have access to all of those sea lanes, access to all of those markets, we have security of our nation. It’s going to be increasingly important.

Next week I get the distinct pleasure of testifying before Congress, the Senate and the House Armed Services Committees. What I’ll tell them is that the budget that we have delivered to them to appreciate and approve, that budget is strategically informed and delivers a decisive naval force. One that operates around the world to create the security that can guarantee that order that will lead to prosperity. That is our goal. It also leans very much into the future. It’s mindful of future technologies, some of which you may have touched on in this seminar, and we’ll talk a little bit about that. But we like to think of a strategy and a budget that describe a bigger Navy, a better Navy, and a more ready Navy.

And when we think about strategy we have to go to those folks who have been historically the key strategists in the world, and so we turn to Knute Rockne. We’re going to take a page from Coach Rockne’s book and talk about the best way that we can do that is by having a good offense.

So with respect to a bigger Navy, size does matter when it comes to navies. You’ve got to be there to present credible options to our decision-makers and that takes a certain amount of size, right? So we don’t want to think about a Navy that’s one Death
Star or something like that. We need a Navy that can be out and distributed so that we can be there in those important parts of the world. We can be there to advocate for U.S. interests and again, secure those trade routes and markets.

So we made a pretty good case for this. Really about two years ago was our big intellectual push on this. We did some studies ourselves, commissioned other studies. And it’s now the law of the land that the Navy will be comprised of no fewer than 355 ships. That’s, of course, subject to the important caveats of authorization and appropriation, so that’s an important detail. And our budget this year gets after that with about $24 billion for ship construction on a trajectory to reach that 355 ship number.

In that is the need to reconstitute the undersea leg of our strategic deterrent. So if you’re interested in that part of our defense I’m happy to talk about that in more detail during the questions. That’s the bigger part, the size part.

With respect to the getting better, we’re fielding state of the art capabilities and we’re modernizing all of the platforms we have now and certainly building this into the ships going forward. So that we can become more agile. We can become more networked. And more resilient. And overall, a more powerful, more lethal Navy at range. The Navy and Marine Corps, we are your away team. We want to make sure that we have home field advantage even when we play the away game. So that’s why we have to be out there. We’d much rather be defending our country from far forward than from our shores. That’s what the theory of the case is.

So we’ve done a lot of investing into some of the decisive technologies that are going to make sure that we stay out on the edge. We never want to send our sailors into a fair fight. We want them to be equipped with technologies and systems that will be dominant if ever, God forbid, have to close to a fight.

So we’ve been looking at investing a lot in autonomy, a lot in unmanned platforms, a lot in directed energy, high power lasers. Some of these things are going onto ships this year. Hypersonics -- projectiles that fly five, six, seven times the speed of sound. We’ve, to control a lot of the space that we need to control at sea, one of our fundamental fighting units right now is the carrier strike group, and going forward our budget includes a future that includes aircraft carriers. Buying two together, which gives you a sense of the economics.
So by virtue of contracting for two at the same time, everybody can buy material, can hire manpower, can do the scheduling and we save $4 billion on the deal. So this is how buying a Navy works.

In fact this new aircraft carrier is going to set every record. The USS Gerald R. Ford Class, it’s being finished up in the Newport News Shipbuilding down in Hampton Rhodes -- not bad for a Wolverine, I guess, right? [Laughter]. I just sort of say that here.

Then of course it’s all just potential power unless we get out, right? It’s great to have a good roster, it’s good to have a decent playbook, but unless you go out and you practice it’s all just potential power. So we have a significant part of our budget dedicated to getting the team out and practicing. More steaming days for ships, more flying hours for our pilots. Sufficient amounts of ammunition, spare parts, gas, all of those things that enable our Navy to be ready.

But we spent a lot of time, probably a great percentage of our time talking about that decisive part of this quote. And I have been coming back to spend some time on the other part of this quote which is the idea of honorable and glorious. This again gets back to what does America mean to the world in terms of a value proposition? The pursuit of life and liberty and happiness.

The Navy was there at the creation, as these words were being crafted, the Navy was there. If you read Thomas Paine’s Common Sense, I think we all maybe took a look at that in school, but if you read the whole thing about a third of it, an entire chapter, is dedicated to the Navy, the Continental Navy at the time. Pre-Continental Navy. So just the importance of a Navy in terms of securing everything that’s needed for the nation.

So when we talk about decisive Navy we talk a lot about the military power that the Navy brings to the nation. But you don’t have to be too much of a student of history to realize that navies have been absolutely intertwined with the diplomatic element of national power as well.

The Navy has shuttled diplomats to and from their destinations all across all seven seas. It was the paddlewheel steam frigate USS Mississippi that transported Commodore Perry to Japan in the 1850s. One can think of the Great White Fleet, and President Roosevelt, and moving that fleet around the world, introducing
so many nations to the United States for the first time. The USS Quincy, carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt to Malta in 1945 for that critical conference that defined the new world order in many ways after the end of World War II. Then of course the end of World War II, that war was ended in Tokyo Harbor by signing a treaty on the decks of the USS Missouri.

So there’s a tremendous contribution the diplomatic element of national power, and we make that very clear to our sailors, that they are all ambassadors. Oftentimes you’ll be the first manifestation of the concept of America that people see by virtue of us going overseas and pulling into foreign ports and doing exercises with foreign navies. So it’s really important that we understand the responsibilities that come with that and behave in a manner that’s consistent with a diplomat, and that espouses the values of the United States to the world.

Every time, almost every time a Navy ship pulls into a foreign port the U.S. Ambassador to that country will come down and host a reception on that warship because that warship is U.S. sovereign territory. He is in the United States when he hosts that reception. A very important diplomatic element.

Then of course I’ve highlighted the contribution of the Navy to the economic element of Navy power, by making sure that our 67 percent of our trade flows freely to and from the United States and really more than 90 percent for our allies and partners.

Then of course it’s in the DNA of every mariner that we would never sail by any other mariner in distress. So there’s this great humanitarian dimension to being in the Navy. And our history is replete with us flowing to a crisis to lend humanitarian assistance, whether that crisis was manmade or weather or whatever it might have been.

This value statement, particularly at the intersection of Notre Dame and the Navy, it’s been recognized for some time. When World War II broke out and all of the young men in the country flowed to the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, at the time, the universities were left very empty. More than two-thirds of the Notre Dame student body enlisted in World War II and the university’s finances were greatly strained. And by the fall of 1941, most of the upper classmen had gone forward to the war. The Navy was ramping up itself, right? All of the services had this tremendous task to be able to train this tremendous surge of new recruits, and frankly, we were looking for space to train those offices. It was Notre Dame’s President, Father O’Donnell,
reached out to Admiral Nimitz who’s depicted on this slide, inviting the Navy to use Notre Dame for that training. So a very important program called the V7 Program was born, and it trained some 12,000 officers between 1942 and 1946. About half a million dollars. The Navy paid for that. That not corrected for inflation, I don’t think so that would be like 500 billion dollars today or something, doing the quick math off the top of my head. And together, we helped each other. The Navy helping the university through some dire times financially, and the university helping the Navy have the facilities to train.

So after the war Admiral Nimitz was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Notre Dame, and you can see how much it meant to the Admiral and to the Navy to have Notre Dame as a great partner in executing this.

Again, you cannot rub up against Notre Dame, you can’t do business with Notre Dame, you can’t communicate with Notre Dame in any way without getting the sense of not only a world class university, but also the sense of the university’s fighting spirit and its deep spirituality. And here Admiral Nimitz comments on it, “it imparted that to everybody regardless of creed who came under its influence while training.”

And I’ll read another quote from Admiral Nimitz here, “Father O’Donnell you sent forth to me and to other naval commands on every ocean and continent men who had become imbued with more than the mechanical knowledge of warfare. Somehow in the crowded hours of their preparation for the grim business of war, they had absorbed not only Notre Dame’s traditional fighting spirit, but the spiritual strength too,” just as this slide says, “that the university imparts to all regardless of creed who comes under its influence.”

I’ve got to tell you, you don’t have to go back as far as Admiral Nimitz to see this. You have an alumni who is a four star admiral, the first four star admiral who was graduated from Notre Dame is Admiral Chris Grady, and you can see that he is a wonderful alum. A person which all of the university and its alumni should be proud. And he gets it as well. Right? The lasting relationship with the Navy have imparted upon him and all of the ROTC graduates, this complementarity between God, country, Notre Dame, and honor, courage and commitment.

So serving in the United States Navy doesn’t mean just putting together the world’s most decisive combat force, but also it
involves putting together a force that communicates our values, the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

So I’ll end my talk with, I think it’s really my job statement. This is my job description. Thomas Paine nailed it. It’s my job to put together a Navy that at the end of the day when it’s built is worth more than its cost.

I would like to ask you just before I close to do one thing for me. We’ve come together for this marvelous couple of days, and you’ve seen some terrific speakers, you’ve heard from some terrific speakers, and I think maybe one of the most valuable things is the opportunity to just come together amongst yourselves and reconnect. There’s as much or more that happens in the white space of these types of events than there is that happens during the formal agenda.

But at some point this session is going to come to a close and we’re all going to go back to our homes, and I’d just ask you, before you put your head down tonight, say a prayer for the University of Notre Dame, and for all of those sailors and soldiers, airmen, marine and coast guardsmen who are deployed around the world, in dangerous places, and make it possible for us to gather here today. Thank you very much. [Applause].

Thank you.

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