Thank you Alan [Kaplan], for the opportunity to be here, and for all that the Navy League does to support the men and women of our sea services and to educate the American people and our Congressional partners on the importance of our mission.

Last week I testified to the House and Senate Appropriations committees regarding our mission and posture, presenting a budget that prioritizes a strategy driven, balanced approach, building on prior investments, while sustaining the industrial base, and maintaining our competitive advantage as we transition to a more cost imposing, survivable and affordable future force.

The Department of the Navy’s strategy for restoring readiness, strengthening relationships and reforming our processes has been set, and we are building on that foundation with a disciplined focus on people, capabilities, and processes. The analogy used is that the weathervanes are all pointed in the correct direction. We might be frustrated with the velocity of the wind, but we are seeing it increase every day.

So that’s why we’re here today - to increase our velocity. For the past three days, the Sea Air Space Exposition has helped showcase our vision for a more agile, sustainable and superior force, capable of dominating future conflicts from the sea floor to space, the blue water to the littorals, the mountains to the desert, and throughout the information domain. And we must execute that vision with a sense of urgency.
We must continually think of how to improve at the speed of relevance, so that our Sailors and Marines are always prepared to fight tonight – and win. I cannot stress urgency enough - we have the money, but we cannot buy time. The National Defense Strategy describes our security environment as more complex and volatile than any we’ve experienced in recent memory.

We cannot answer this challenge under the banner of “business as usual”. We must be accountable for how and where we invest, and we must understand the readiness and lethality we gain from those investments. The Department of the Navy’s ongoing focus is on speed, value, results and partnerships. And some of our most important partnerships are represented right here in this room.

Our goal is a true partnership based upon the concept of shared risks producing shared rewards, where we provide industry with a clear line of sight to our needs and resources, and industry understands that our security, stability, and prosperity relies on ready and credible combat forces able to project American power, and reacts accordingly. We must work together to provide solutions to our challenges. From my time in the private sector, I learned that no organization can succeed in a vacuum – we cannot do this alone.

We need the support of industry if we’re going to increase readiness and meet the operational demand signal of today and tomorrow. That means expanding opportunities for our people to work alongside business and industry through research partnerships that generate actionable solutions in emerging areas like artificial intelligence, cyber security and hypersonics.
It means working together to identify faster and more efficient ways to increase our capabilities through additive manufacturing and off the shelf solutions. It means gleaning the best practices of the private sector to improve our processes, as we’re currently doing through the Navy Sustainment System to increase the efficiency and flow in all of our maintenance facilities.

At every level, the Navy Marine Corps team must be a continual learning organization, constantly challenging assumptions to find ways to increase our readiness and lethality. We’re migrating from a culture of risk eradication to one of understanding and managing risk, while dynamically changing the way we meet the demands of the force.

We’re implementing the findings of last year’s Strategic Readiness Review and the CNO’s Comprehensive Review to correct the many factors which lead to a “normalization of deviation” that degraded the readiness, safety and lethality of our force. Over the past year, the Readiness Reform and Oversight Council has examined 111 recommendations from the review process. 91 have been adjudicated and 83 have now been implemented.

Some these changes address immediate safety concerns, others advance our current readiness and lethality, and the rest are focused on the long term strength of our fleet. This is a fundamental change in the approach to how we manage education of our Sailors and marines, and subsequently how we train the fleet to deliver the fight.

We’ve also reviewed and are in the process of remediating our business processes following our first top-to-bottom audit.
The audit is now proving to be a tool where we find we can leverage lethality. We’re using this information to streamline operations and reimagine how support functions can be modernized. We recently introduced management and operational tools so that our business operations plan and performance to plan are already having a meaningful impact on the enterprise.

The American taxpayers provide us with their treasure, and trust us to protect them from a dangerous world. We owe it to them to ensure that every single dollar is invested in the most effective manner possible to deliver the readiness, the capacity, and the lethality needed to fulfill our sacred oath. And we owe it to them to ensure that when their loved ones step forward to serve, they are equipped, trained and commanded to the maximum of our capability, so they never have to endure a fair fight.

The Navy-Marine Corps Team will continue pressing forward with a sense of urgency to deliver on the vision of this important gathering. We will continue to become more agile, compete in ways that are more sustainable, and will control the high end of the conflict alongside the Joint Force and with our allies and partners. The challenges are great, but so is the opportunity. And with the continuing partnership of the Navy League and all of the great leaders in this room working together towards a common goal, I am confident we will deliver the readiness and lethality our personnel need to confront a changing world.

Thank you all for being here today, and for your dedication and support of the world’s finest Sailors and Marines.