

CNO Addresses Fleet on Afghan War

ARLINGTON, Va. – Chief of Naval Operations Michael M. Gilday released the following letter to the Fleet on Aug. 20:

Shipmates,

In 2001, we went to war to protect our nation and bring justice to those who committed cold-blooded attacks on our country. We went to war to defend our citizens, our friends and our allies. We went to war to protect freedom – a fragile ideal, but one worth defending.

As the events in Afghanistan unfolded this past week, some of you may question whether your contributions and sacrifice were worth it. I want to be very clear: Your service was not in vain, and it made a difference. For 20 years, you have deployed in support of the mission in Afghanistan. Whether on the ground, from the sea or from the air, Sailors fought tirelessly to keep our homeland safe, and to uphold principles which we hold dear.

As a sea service, we maintain an enduring presence around the world, steadfast in our resolve to defend our nation, our principles and our allies. While we must remain focused, at the same time I encourage each of you to reflect on your service, reach out to those who may be struggling, and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to a grateful nation. Your courage and commitment reflect our Navy's and our nation's best virtues. Of this, you should be proud. Please also know that I am deeply humbled to serve both you and our nation.

Sincerely,

M.M. Gilday

Admiral, U.S. Navy