

# From the Deck Plate of the Center for Maritime Strategy of the Navy League of the United States



U.S. Navy Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh (CG 67), U.S. Navy Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain (CG 57), U.S. Navy Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Milius (DDG 69), Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) Murasame-class destroyer JS Murasame (DD 101), and JMSDF Izumo-class helicopter destroyer JS Kaga (DDH 184) transit together in the South China Sea, Oct. 30, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Haydn N. Smith*

Last week I was pleased to christen the Navy League of the United States' new platform for naval thought and advocacy, the Center for Maritime Strategy. As first dean and plank owner, our voyage for sound maritime strategy begins with the commissioning crew and our institutional sea trials into 2022.

From the maritime logistics crisis to adversaries embracing Mahanian lessons forgotten by America, the urgency of a public embrace of sound maritime thought and is at a 30-year high. For that reason, Navy League National President David Reilly notes, "Policy development and advocacy are the main reasons for the Navy League's existence, and we are stepping up our activity in these areas to meet the requirements of 21<sup>st</sup> century maritime power."

Dave and I are shoulder-to-shoulder in the center's role reinvigorating the league's position as Theodore Roosevelt's own flagship for bringing critical maritime issues to the forefront. I am reminded of author Robert Kaplan's assertion

in his book, "Asia's Cauldron," that we are living in "a naval century." The term naval implies not merely a conventional Navy's importance, but sea power's far greater military and commercial measure the Navy enables and protects. For this reason, the Center for Maritime Strategy will serve as an advocate for the full scope of American sea power: the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Military Sealift Command, Merchant Marine, our shipping industry at sea and ashore, our shipbuilders, and the industrial base that produces and maintains our ships across the military and commercial spectrum.

As Mahan notes, sea power is as much a measure of "the number following the sea" as those upon it plying and protecting 90% of our trade. To that end, the center will be focused on policy research and advocacy efforts across a broad spectrum of issues that impact the United States' position as a maritime nation. Although not all encompassing, the long-term goals of the Center will be to **Listen, Learn, Educate** and **Lead** by:

- Cultivating understanding of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine as contributors to American security and prosperity. This effort will be led by the Center for Maritime Strategy's new cadre of full-time maritime policy experts and part-time adjuncts dedicated to policy research.
- Educating and engaging congressional and executive branch officials on the insights and recommendations derived from that research.
- Providing expert congressional testimony on relevant aspects of American maritime power. Actively participate in national security symposia, forums, and conversations.
- Creating and distributing general purpose summaries of research projects and other products for the education and support of Navy League members nationwide.

- Leveraging existing and emerging media channels to disseminate expertise and policy information in real-time, including expert commentary and advocacy on podcasts, television, radio, and the internet.

Our National Vice President and former CNO, Admiral John Richardson, hailed, "The Navy League's Center for Maritime Strategy will be the go-to place for maritime strategic thought, policy recommendations and informed advocacy. I'm excited about this initiative to boost the Navy League's citizen voice and help strengthen the United States as a maritime nation."

I welcome the Navy League's citizen voices to assist the center in navigating the way forward. We look forward to collaboration and partnership with other like-minded think tanks and institutions that support our national security objectives and maritime commerce. Recounting the words of John Paul Jones, I invite you:

*Sign on... and sail with me. The stature of our homeland is no more than the measure of ourselves. Our job is to keep her free. Our will is to keep the torch of freedom burning for all. To this solemn purpose we call on the young, the brave, the strong, and the free. Heed my call, Come to the sea. Come Sail with me.*

To those who are not yet members of the Navy League, this invitation extends as well. Members receive an insider's perspective on the Center for Maritime Strategy and up-to-the-moment information on our next Sea-Air-Space Exposition in April 2022. Last August's Sea-Air-Space brought over 170 speakers and a record 17,000 participants to National Harbor, Maryland, for three days of seminars and discussions with active-duty members of the sea services, retirees, and members of the industrial base.

Speakers, moderators and participants tackled the tough issues

we face in the maritime domain in order to identify problems, share information and find solutions. Next year's exposition will be even better and the Center for Maritime Strategy will be at the forefront of the discussions. I hope to see you on the stage or in the audience – and together, we can regain our sea legs for this “naval century.”