

2020 Edition

COMMANDER'S INTENT 3.0

U.S. Submarine Force and Supporting Organizations



From the Depths, We Strike!



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Undersea Forces are unique within the Navy in that the administrative chain of command under Type Commanders and Submarine Group Commanders retains operational control (OPCON) under either service authority or OPCON delegated to them by the Combatant Commander. As such, we lead our nation's Undersea Forces—the submarines, unmanned undersea vehicles, and fixed and mobile undersea systems—in all operational aspects from force generation to high-end combat. When the mission requires, we also tactically control and employ ships and aircraft in order to conduct full-spectrum, cross-domain operations. Together with space, cyber, special operations forces (SOF), and fifth-generation air forces, our undersea forces uniquely combine to provide a set of stealth options that expand the competitive battlespace and allow commanders to seize the initiative across the spectrum of conflict.

Commander's Intent 3.0 is guidance that enables Commander to Commander discussion and provides a clear and concise expression of the purpose of our operations and the desired end state.¹ Commanding Officers are the center of gravity for the Undersea Force. This document is organized to support mission command, provide staff focus, and help subordinate and supporting commanders achieve our desired results.

Our environment is dominated by the return to Great Power Competition (GPC) as it is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model and change the rules-based international order. In this environment, Undersea Forces are integral to projecting the maritime power of the United States by:

- Enhancing Strategic Deterrence with the most survivable leg of our strategic deterrent triad, and under New START carrying approximately 70% of the nation's accountable nuclear warheads.
- Integrating Combat Power with the Joint Force by providing improved lethality to deliver sustained high-end combat effectiveness.

¹ Commander's Intent 3.0 supersedes Commander's Intent for the United States Submarine Force and Supporting Organizations dated March 2018, as well as the EXORD for Preserving Undersea Superiority of April 2019, to ensure we maintain our asymmetric advantage in the undersea domain.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Enabling All-Domain Maneuver Warfare by amplifying Joint Force capabilities and effects. All-domain maneuver warfare empowers every joint warfighting function and our undersea forces play an integral role in achieving that critical objective as part of every kill chain across the spectrum of conflict.

To make the Force more lethal, persistent, and ready for high-end combat, we have developed ten classified campaign plans that direct operations, activities, and investments for the Force to execute over the next 18 months. These supporting campaign plans include:

1. Maintaining a Credible Strategic Deterrent Force
2. Rebalancing the Force for War
3. Restoring Expeditionary Maintenance/Logistics Capability
4. Instilling Mission Command
5. Developing the Undersea Force for Sustained Great Power Competition
6. Innovating in Doctrine and Tactics to Counter Our Great Power Competitors
7. Maintaining Mastery of the Undersea Domain
8. Enabling the Theater Undersea Warfare Commander (TUSWC) to Lead at the Operational Level of War
9. Expanding the Competitive Battlespace with Subsea-Seabed Warfare and Special Operations Force Capabilities Operating at Fleet Scale
10. Building Alliances and Partnerships

Our end state is an Undersea Force that is prepared to use its warfighting advantage to enhance strategic deterrence, integrate combat power with the Joint Force, and enable all-domain maneuver warfare. In support of these ends, we will field undersea forces capably led by our Commanding Officers, backed by Officers and enlisted Sailors who are masters of their specialties at the operational and tactical level of war, equipped with unmatched capabilities designed to enhance and multiply the Joint Force in competition and conflict.

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Introduction

Undersea Forces are unique within the Navy due to the unparalleled autonomy of the unit commander and the tight command and control (C2) structure that enables agile, responsive, and lethal force employment across the spectrum of highly-trained, combat-ready submarines to the combatant commander and the rapid deployment of the full Undersea Force in response to contingencies across the globe.

Commander's Intent 3.0 is designed to enable mission command for the Submarine Force by providing a clear and concise expression of the purpose of our operations and the desired end state. This document is also organized to provide staff focus and to coordinate subordinate and supporting commanders in achieving our desired results.

In addition to this unclassified front-matter, there are classified annexes containing ten campaign plans that provide near term direction to the Force over the next 18 months. Commander's Intent 3.0 and the associated campaign plans are the foundation of how we will ensure we are ready to "fight tonight" in the context of Great Power Competition.



Commander, Submarine
Force U.S. Pacific Fleet



Commander, Submarine Forces



Situation

“Naval power is critical to implementing the National Defense Strategy, but naval power is not just a function of fleet size, as the Secretary mentioned. It’s also a combination of the readiness, the lethality, and the capacity of that fleet. Our number one priority remains the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine and all it brings to our national deterrent.”

- CNO Mike Gilday
HASC Hearing March 4, 2020

Great Power Competition (GPC)

Great Power Competition has reemerged as the central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security. “It is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model-gaining veto authority over other nations' economic, diplomatic, and security decisions.”² We are in a heated competition with adversaries who do not share our values, do not respect national sovereignty, and are actively working to undermine the international rule of law that we have safeguarded since 1945.



Despite these challenges, conflict is not a foregone conclusion. As the 2017 National Security Strategy states, “Competition does not always mean hostility, nor does it inevitably lead to conflict... An America that successfully competes is the best way to prevent conflict. Just as American weakness invites challenge, American strength and confidence deters war and promotes peace.”³ The striking power and survivability of our ballistic missile submarine forces deter strategic attack against the United States and our allies and partners. Likewise, the stealth, lethality and persistent forward presence of our conventional Undersea Forces provides a powerful and asymmetric advantage to deter aggression and, if challenged, defeat an adversary in the maritime domain.

² Mattis, James, Secretary of Defense, Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge (19 Jan 2018) pg 1.

³ Trump, Donald J., President United States of America, 2017 National Security Strategy of the United States of America (December 2017) pg 3.

Our Competitors

China



The People's Republic of China (PRC) leverages its military, conducts influence operations, and flexes its economic strength to coerce neighboring countries and to change the global order to its advantage.⁴ The PRC has invested heavily in developing modern conventional armed forces to alter the balance of military power with the United States. At the same time, China is modernizing and expanding its already considerable nuclear forces.⁵



Rogue regimes in **North Korea** and **Iran** seek to achieve legitimacy and to stabilize their hold on power through the pursuit of nuclear weapons, advanced missile technology, and proxy-based operations.



Russia

Russia continues to modernize its force with a focus on its nuclear and undersea capabilities. With these forces, Russia “seeks to weaken or subvert Western security structures in Europe and the Middle East to advance Moscow’s strategic objectives at the expense of U.S. national interests, while avoiding direct confrontation with the United States.”⁶ As the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review states, “Even more troubling has been Russia’s adoption of military strategies and capabilities that rely on nuclear escalation for their success.”⁷



Violent Extremist Organizations operate globally and continue to threaten the U.S. homeland as demonstrated by several recent attacks on U.S. naval installations. While diminished in capability, they continue to destabilize, diverting military resources from the other priority challenges.⁸

⁴ Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, pg.2.

⁵ Mattis, James, Secretary of Defense, 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, pg. 1.

⁶ The Joint Staff, 2018 National Military Strategy, pg 4.

⁷ 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, pg.1.

⁸ National Military Strategy, pg. 4.

Undersea Force Mission

The Submarine Force and supporting organizations constitute the primary undersea arm of the Navy.

Undersea Forces will be ready to conduct prompt and persistent combat operations across all aspects of undersea warfare. This includes strategic deterrence, indications and warning (I&W), anti-submarine warfare (ASW), surface warfare (SUW), precision strike, mining, subsea and seabed warfare (SSW), and enabling Special Operations Forces (SOF). We leverage our asymmetric advantages to deter war and, if deterrence fails, to gain decisive military advantage. The Joint Force depends on us to be ready, agile, and the embodiment of our warfighting ethos.

FROM THE DEPTHS, WE STRIKE!



Undersea Force Ethos

We are ready and agile. A dominant global undersea force ready to defend freedom and bring the fight to the enemy. Readiness at this level requires efficient and effective time phasing of precious resources to our prioritized missions and tasks.

We are bold and lethal undersea warriors. Our unrelenting commitment to excellence as ardent, adaptable, and analytical mariners enables us to deliver unquestionable combat power that will deter our potential adversaries or swiftly defeat them, should deterrence fail.

We are committed professionals. We are accountable to each other and selflessly embrace the responsibility to defend our Nation and our allies and partners. We are proud to be elite members of the profession of arms.

We are a team. Every Sailor is a vital part of a crew, team, or staff that supports our mission, without exception. Our strength comes from trust—trust in our leaders, trust in our shipmates and team, and trust in our own expertise, judgment, and skill.

We are uncompromising in our values and mindful of our heritage. We uphold the Navy core values of honor, courage, and commitment through the integrity of our actions. We execute those values with grit, tenacity, and innovation.



Concept of Operations



To accomplish our mission, we will use the following concept of operations to inform how we intend to fight as a Submarine Force.



Enhance Strategic Deterrence. We will continue to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent through our SSBN force, which provides the most survivable leg of our strategic deterrent triad and carries about 70% of the nation's accountable nuclear warheads. Strategic deterrence, however, includes far more than nuclear deterrence. During periods of tension, we will utilize the unique capabilities of the Submarine Force, including precision strike, seabed warfare, and SOF delivery to provide flexible deterrent options to the Combatant Commander.



Integrate Combat Power with the Joint Force. Major combat operations against a peer competitor will be a Joint fight. Unlike during WWII, when submarines often conducted autonomous operations, we will expect our forces to closely coordinate operations and integrate with Navy and Joint partners, which might include space, cyber, SOF, and air forces. In many cases, we will use the unique capabilities of the undersea force to enable other Joint Forces. Examples include delivering SOF ashore or destroying integrated air defense systems to enable air strikes. In other cases, we will catalyze and multiply Joint capabilities to enable effects uniquely delivered by the undersea force.



Enable All-Domain Maneuver Warfare. We expect major combat operations to be an away game where we will have to maneuver the Joint Force through a battlespace to achieve effects. Our adversaries understand this and are investing in weapons and platforms to deny us access and to inhibit our ability to maneuver in that battlespace. We expect the submarine force, with its unique combination of stealth and endurance, to operate inside of the adversary's defensive perimeter and to deliver effects—including precision strike, ASW, SUW, seabed warfare, mining, and SOF delivery—that will counter the adversary's anti-access operations and enable all-domain maneuver warfare required by the Joint Force to achieve a winning strategy.

The Campaign Plans

To make the Force more lethal, persistent, and ready for high-end combat, we have developed ten classified campaign plans that direct operations, activities, and investments for the Force to execute over the next 18 months. These campaign plans are summarized below:

1. Maintain a Credible Strategic Deterrent Force. Our SSBN Force is approaching a period of transition as we begin construction and introduction of COLUMBIA while sustaining the OHIO class SSBNs to continue operating over 42 years. While this transition is in progress, we must continue to recapitalize our nuclear command, control, and communication capabilities to ensure our deterrent is resilient and credible.

2. Rebalance the Force for War. We must change our force structure and our focus in response to Great Power Competition. This rebalancing of the Force will impact the submarines we build, the capabilities we field, and how we organize, train, equip and command those forces.

3. Restore Expeditionary Maintenance/Logistics Capability. Our competitors' efforts to deny access to U.S. forces have upended the maintenance and logistics model that we have leveraged for decades and have forced us to reinvigorate capabilities that we minimized during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Our ability to rearm, resupply, and repair our Forces abroad is essential to our sustained operations during combat.

4. Instill Mission Command. This plan continues our emphasis on building effective leadership models, experience, and judgment to develop combat-ready leaders centered on the concept of mission command by leveraging decision science and understanding cognitive biases.

5. Develop the Undersea Force for sustained Great Power Competition. This effort is focused on training, developing, and retaining our highly capable Sailors and civilian workforce.

6. Innovate in Doctrine and Tactics to Counter Our Great Power Competitors.

This plan aligns efforts to develop new doctrine and innovative tactics that address the challenges of near-peer competitor submarines and the range of missions we expect to encounter in major combat operations.

7. Maintain Mastery of the Undersea Domain. We must drive the acquisition process to meet Fleet needs by setting requirements that maintain our competitive edge by developing integrated acquisition programs in conjunction with the acquisition community that provide “whole” and sustainable capabilities within a competitive fiscal environment for scarce resources.

8. Enable the Theater Undersea Warfare Commander (TUSWC) to Lead at the Operational Level of War.

Due to the range of missions and the early phasing of critical undersea operations in major combat, Undersea Forces are best command and controlled at the theater level by a TUSWC with the authorities and assets to be effective. To mature this concept, we will work with the Fleet Commanders to establish robust TUSWC doctrine and procedures that support the Navy and Joint maritime fight.

9. Expand the Competitive Battlespace with Subsea & Seabed Warfare/Special Operations Force Capabilities Operating at Fleet Scale.

Undersea Forces are maturing new Subsea & Seabed Warfare (SSW) concepts and capabilities. This warfare area employs submarines, an undersea constellation of fixed and mobile sensors, communications nodes and power connections, unmanned undersea vehicles (UUV), and an enduring relationship with Special Operations Forces (SOF) to expand our undersea dominance.

10. Building Alliances and Partnerships.

Our Undersea Force relies on alliances and partnerships. This effort is focused on growing and maturing these partnerships and improving the capabilities of our partners in order to multiply our combined lethality across the spectrum of conflict. Our allies and partners also provide our Forces access that will enable and empower our expeditionary maintenance and logistical efforts forward.

Desired End State

“What success looks like . . .”

Undersea Forces use their warfighting advantages to enhance strategic deterrence, integrate combat power with the Joint Force, and enable all-domain maneuver warfare. We will field an Undersea Force with capabilities designed to integrate with and enhance the Joint Force, manned by experienced operators who are masters of their specialties and capably led by effective leaders at every level.





Commander's Guidance to Submarine Commanding Officers

Prepare Yourself and Your Officers for War

Prioritize preparing your wardroom for major combat operations. This encompasses the tactical development of you and your officers to fight your ship at sea today and the long-term development of your officers for command at sea. Relentlessly pursue a course of classroom and hands-on training and a schedule of realistic combat exercises to develop the foundational tactical skills to fight your ship and build the experience and sound judgment required to win. Foster a culture of warfighting leadership and excellence in your wardroom. Mentor your officers, challenge them with increasing levels of responsibility, and focus their efforts on readying the ship for combat. Instill a sense of pride to serve in the profession of arms.

Prepare Your Crew for War

Our ability to achieve success as an Undersea Force hinges on your ability to prepare your crew for the full spectrum of undersea operations up to and including major combat operations. Leverage your wardroom, Chief of the Boat, and CPO Quarters to develop and maintain the highest standards of individual mastery and team performance across the full-spectrum of submarine operations. Train and exercise your crew in the ability to fight the ship in intensive, realistic combat scenarios, and to repair the ship without external assistance when required. Combat will likely look far different from what we expect—so train your crew to adapt, responsively plan, and execute with confidence in dynamic and degraded conditions. Winning at combat operations is your primary objective, and you must take calculated risks and operate with a sense of urgency to be ready. Your crew must be tough.

Prepare Your Ship for War

We have the finest submarines in the world, but to compete and win against near-peer adversaries and in high-end combat operations today, and to ensure these submarines are combat capable throughout their design life, you must continuously pursue the highest standards of material readiness to ensure the highest level of reliability, redundancy, and full combat capability. Establish and maintain operative programs and rigorous assessment practices in material management, preventive maintenance, supply management and cleanliness, preservation and stowage to achieve these high standards. Finally, to develop a full understanding of your ship's combat capabilities, you are expected to regularly exercise the ship to the limits of the performance envelope.

As Commanding Officer, your primary responsibility is to win in combat. Your effectiveness will be judged through the lens of how well you prepare your submarine and your crew for combat, how well you develop your Officers and enlisted Sailors to become future submarine force leaders, and the manner in which you relentlessly achieve these objectives.

Wear Command Well

Make the allure of serving as Commanding Officer so great that all of your officers strive to achieve the pinnacle of command themselves. Your development and retention of great officers is a direct representation of your leadership and a key contributor to the future success of the Submarine Force. This is best accomplished through demonstrating your consistent professionalism, treating your crew with dignity and respect, advancing your own level of knowledge to the highest state of mastery, developing sound and effective decision-making processes, and enjoying your job with passion and flair.

Lead, Fight, and Win

When we enter battle, we will very likely not have a superior number of ships, and the quality of our adversaries' platforms and capabilities will be daunting. We will maintain our combat overmatch and prevail in battle through your leadership of our officers and the warfighting mastery and teamwork of our Sailors. Lead your ship well, innovate, adapt, and make command decisions that exercise the full extent of the authority vested in you. You're in command—so, command. Happy hunting, Skipper!

Commander's Guidance to Undersea Force Group and Squadron Commanders

Prepare Your Commanding Officers for War

As your staffs and teams prepare the ships and crews, you must personally support and mentor their respective Commanding Officers. Guide the Commanding Officers, provide them feedback based on your expertise and experience, and make your standards known. Respect their authority and responsibility. Holding your Commanding Officers accountable without undercutting them will be one of the most challenging aspects of your duty. That respect is the cornerstone of their ability—and that of the entire Undersea Force—to prevail in high-end conflict and challenging peacetime operations. It forms the basis of the trust we have in our decentralized, autonomous command at sea structure—a decisive edge we hold over our adversaries. Work with your Commanding Officers to develop and retain their top officers and Sailors, realizing that our crews' superior training, professionalism, and passion are primary factors ensuring our combat overmatch.

As Commanders of Undersea Force Groups or Squadrons, your primary responsibility is to develop your subordinate commanders, generate combat readiness, and ensure your ships win in combat. All of your operational, material, personnel, training, and administrative efforts should build toward supporting our Force in order to destroy the enemy.

Support the Warfighter

You are vitally important in preparing our teams for combat—arm them for the high-end fight with every ounce of your effort. You must support, challenge, and hold the standard as those crews prepare for war, remembering that you are the supporting command and they are the supported command. Know that their combat success is your success and their failure is your failure. Enable their preparations by reducing complexity and removing distractions—our teams are elite and rely heavily upon focused individual and team performance. Within our Force, only our various combat units can deliver lethal effects in support of the Joint Force; as the supporting commanders, you enable and empower that lethality. Therefore, where able, reduce cumbersome practices, eliminate inefficient policies, and shift administrative burdens to supporting commands.

Fight to Win

As a Group or Squadron Commander, you will not directly engage the enemy in battle. However, your indirect and preparatory efforts, successes, and shortcomings today will directly affect the outcome of those battles tomorrow. Put your commands on a wartime footing and do everything possible to prepare our Force for the high-end fight. Challenge your Commanding Officers, teach them how to fight, and constantly remind them of our rich warfighting heritage and culture of excellence.

Commander's Guidance to Theater Undersea Warfare Commanders (TUSWC)

Master Undersea Warfare (USW) - As a TUSWC, your Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC) or Fleet Commander has charged you with the responsibility to command an integrated, cross domain, full spectrum set of forces designed to operate in and through the undersea domain. In support of Combatant Commander objectives, you are to be ready to dominate the undersea domain by denying our adversaries freedom of maneuver, providing flexible deterrent options to expand the competitive battlespace, and, if deterrence fails, to deliver violence to our adversaries with lethal fires using the full suite of non-kinetic and kinetic capabilities at your disposal to decisively seize the initiative and win.

Prepare for War - Plan for conflict with the following factors in mind:

- Command and Control (C2) structures and methods must evolve as a conflict evolves
- Understand, contribute, and seamlessly integrate into maritime and Joint Fires processes
- Demand and utilize a reliable and persistent undersea Common Operational Picture (COP) that enables your decisions and improves situational awareness for all supporting/supported Commanders
- Posture and optimize your USW force laydown and flow that anticipates and flanks the expected adversary courses of action
- Require supporting intelligence collection plans and priorities to enhance your operational and tactical decision-making and battle rhythm events
- Protect and sustain your force through efficient and risk managed logistics plans
- Provide clear commander's intent designed to enable and leverage Mission Command
- Operational excellence requires practice:
 - o Conduct realistic mission rehearsals
 - o Demand reality and friction in exercises
 - o Validate sustainment and C3 assumptions
 - o Include allies and partners
 - o Assess USW doctrine and tactics and provide feedback

Ensure Peace - Reliably execute your day-to-day missions to ensure that there is no doubt in our adversaries' minds that we have the credibility, capability and capacity to dominate the undersea domain. Boldly employ your team and assigned forces to:

- Execute consistent, timely, and risk-informed USW operations
- Study adversary forces to understand their patterns of life, capabilities, and tactics
- Build synergy and proficiency between your team and supporting/ supported commanders to establish trust with relationships that can work effectively across seams in conflict
- Expand and improve interoperability with USW capable allies and partners



Advance the Art of USW - Wherever possible, seek opportunities to improve understanding of USW concepts across the Navy and the Joint Force. Advancing USW concepts will naturally generate competing priorities between immediate operational needs and more distant improvement goals. You must use your experience to choose the right times to take near term tactical risk in order to mitigate longer term operational or strategic risk. Focus on:

- Eliminate seams by leveraging and coordinating with peer Task Force/ Group Commanders
- Enhance capacity, expertise, and alignment of your Reserve Component
- Develop the capability, expertise, and organizational understanding to improve mining doctrine, tactics, and procedures with Naval and Joint partners
- Build concepts of operations and employment to utilize Unmanned Undersea Vehicles more effectively across the spectrum of conflict
- Plug into, exploit, and contribute to all systems and networks designed to provide the undersea COP
- Champion the TUSWC concept by leading the education and training of senior leaders in the Navy and Joint Force



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Commander, Submarine Forces
1430 Mitscher Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23551-2492
Website: <https://www.sublant.usff.navy.mil>
Phone: 757-836-1341