

Surface Navy Association TRANSCRIPT: “It’s All About the Ships” PART I

We've been grinding away at this [Maintenance & Modernisation] business, making incremental progress. We face many challenges. We commissioned a deep & comprehensive report on Ship Readiness & how surface ship Maintenance & Modernisation played in that.

We were tasked to go in & understand, start codifying, addressing the gaps & issues. Our ability to understand the business from end to end.

The one modification is that we started out w/ 5 main Blocks, but as we started to apply whatever heat & light we could to an organisation that includes about 6,000 civilians & Sailors, many more private sector Wrench-turners. There was a missing piece that we need to get at – Alignment & Oversight.

Alignment & Oversight is probably the single biggest challenge before us as we consider how many different organisations that have some effect on whether we plan, implement & stabilise it right as to requirements, flowing money into the process at the right time to do proper planning & execute to a schedule & plan that we all agree to at the beginning. We are challenged in that area.

We have mentioned that there is a lot of interest in that area, and NAVSEA is going to take that lead in getting that right.

A Quick update on the 6 Rocks: First, Assessment, Planning & Policy. We have a programme called “Total Ship Readiness Assessment.” This is a term pulled right out of the Submarine Playbook, which is fully resourced to the mandate of conducting assessments for every ship that is in the programme. It is not under-resourced by one minute or one dime for execution

The challenge is that we’re working w/ the commanders [RMC side] on this—to make sure it is aligned w/ the ship schedules & the “Ship Readiness Manual [SRM]” – some early learning ground for us.

The programme was challenged a little bit in FY13 when we slowed down funding on the Operations & Maintenance Side, putting some perturbations in to the full implementation, but, again, it is a Fully Resourced programme in 2014 and out.

We do not lack for resources or process to go out & do assessments, and as we know –assessments done right, and at the right time inform a work package that is very important.

Not as much progress on sustainment programme as we would like but maybe it just took as much time to become operational, to move this one a little further down the road.

This one is about grouping or aligning all the resources for life-cycle assessments of systems & equipment and how they perform in common platforms that looks across all surface ships, all systems and that we're doing the right life-cycle assessments & activities to fight our way through obsolescence & readiness system & how they are designed, and how we go & approve that.

Our intentions are to single it all up so when we talk diesels, for instance, it's not just amphibious diesels, that it's diesels across all surface ships. So that's the sustainment programme.

We have made great strides in engineering requirements for maintenance, to be able to deliver on an expected service life at the right time on the platform that we envisioned at the time we engineered it at the beginning so it gets 35-40-45 years.

Even if we change a platform, we now have the ability to go look hard with the right engineering rigor at exactly what it's going to take to get 5 more years out of the ship—these are bedrock requirements.

Nearly every ship in the Surface Navy is in the programme, but there are some exceptions—we're not making investments in FFGs & LCS leaves you with problems coming in on the left hand side, but by midway through 2014 , we are on a glide path to get every ship that can be in the programme in the programme.

Nearly 1/3 of those ships have completed their first engineering maintenance period, or planning for the process of having that availability. This is one where we just need to stay the course—the leadership is solid.

Again, much of the process is lifted right out of the Submarine Playbook & these requirements are flowing into the budget process. Every ship's requirement is treated equally & every requirement for engineering maintenance that we have asked for we have gotten the budget to go & execute that.

Another debate is what a year of execution looks like in the flow-down. We are succeeding in this area, meeting requirements & the budgets are moving right along with that so we can go & execute.

The challenge for us--we are working very aggressively on this—is taking what we know about the requirements & aligning that w/ modernization requirement that's coming together for the same availability & telling the fleet early on exactly how many days & weeks that is going to take to accomplish all that work.

Right now, we perform twice as much Maintenance --in dollar terms—as we did 10 years ago in a notional schedule that is not engineered. We have the know-how today to engineer the schedule & we are going to go ahead & do that.

We are climbing up the curve on capability & capacity issues on restoring the manning on the RMCs to oversee n increasing volume of work w/ increasing pressure for quality & Schedule. The initial buy 3 years ago was over 600 civilians & we want to grow capability within the RMCs by over 1,800 Sailors.

We may not have that number right on the civilian side, and we would just say that we want to get as many Sailors as we can into the IMAs so we can make progress in the availability of our Sailors to Maintain Ships at Sea.

The RMC capability & capacity thing is very real issue that needs to grow, and there is some budget there to support it. We may not have that number right and need to continue to grind on that.

Availability, execution & Work Certification is the Feedback Piece. At the end of the Avail, we certify the work we did to get the quality that we needed and make sure that we completed all the work that we said we were going to do at the beginning if something happened in the process—for one reason or another—that we need to catalog & Track.

This is bedrock activity, to Track all Service & Maintenance that was performed & to keep track of any backlog that we might be building, so that too, can build the budget for the next availability.

Lastly, the Alignment & Oversight piece, is the thing that looms most heavily right now on our business- to be able to perform that better. We have too much people, too many individuals who have the ability to make a decision or pull a lever, or to destabilize a solid budget requirement, either in the planning or execution that can put any availability over a cliff—and in some cases—before you ever start it.

There is a lot of heat & light on the subject of who is going to be in control & accountable for this process from end to end, when it comes to doing it right, tracking it from left to right & being able to take the face shot in the end if We failed.

Command is peppered with face shots, It's a sport, a fun sport, but the visual is that, when you succeed, how many people are going to be on the stage with you when you get the reward, and how many people are on the stage when you fail, when you get shot. There's a difference, a delta, in that game. We would be privileged to be the guys accountable, with all these organisations behind us, if we can get that aligned right.

For the alignment piece, today we have two different policies, one being maintenance, and the other Modernisation in this process involving 2 years of left side planning, before we even get to Day One of execution. It is not run very well. The Policies are not integrated, the Information Technology Applications that we use to screen, build & plan work packages, integrate work packages between maintenance & modernization, are not synchronized today.

We tend to have a divide between our leadership & work force on whether they are in the Maintenance Game or the Modernisation Game. What if we were both in the Maintenance Game & the Modernisation Game & we started thinking about it that way from the top down. That is critical thinking that has to play out.

We have policy today on how we are supposed to be planning. We don't do that. Most of it comes together in a stabilising work package that needs to be contracted for & put into execution. This is happening 3-4 months before we start the availability.

A lot of people are showing up saying, "Where did you come from?" and someone says, "I'm here to put this new thing on the ship." Responding: "No you're not."

Today we put the waiver in the package & fix it on the downswing. This is a big challenge & we need to pull this thing to the left. When the requirements for maintenance & modernization come up, we know what we want to do, across many programmes—what we need to do for a programme availability. We can understand & take advantage that every programme has a fielding profile.

We know what we need to do to get a budget requirement into a work package for availability. We can lock that down, plan it & not change it. We can perform in this business, we just have to decide & get the right people, the right authority to manage that requirement through this process w/ a great deal of stability. That's the game for the Future.

Going back to the Submarine packages, they know how to say no, they know when to say no, how to get to yes if you're doing it right & we need to reestablish authorities within NAVSEA on the behalf of the Fleet Commander. We know what we've got to do, we just need to have the right people overseeing the mission & discipline in the maintenance & modernization process so we can win this Game.

