



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1 000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
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This morning I accepted Secretary Modly's resignation. He resigned on his own accord, putting the Navy and the Sailors above self so that the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt, and the Navy as an institution, can move forward. His care for the Sailors was genuine. Secretary Modly served the nation for many years, both in and out of uniform. I have the deepest respect for anyone who serves our country, and who places the greater good above all else. Secretary Modly did that today, and I wish him all the best.

I briefed President Trump after my conversation with Secretary Modly. With the approval of the President, I am appointing current Army Undersecretary Jim McPherson as acting Secretary of the Navy. Jim is a retired Admiral with a distinguished 26 year naval career, serving ashore, afloat, and overseas during his time in uniform. I know Jim McPherson well. He is a smart, capable, and professional leader who will restore confidence and stability in the Navy during these challenging times. Jim will serve as acting Secretary of the Navy until a permanent Navy Secretary is confirmed.

I also met with the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Gilday, today. I was joined by Deputy Secretary of Defense Norquist, Secretary McPherson and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Milley. I gave guidance to Secretary McPherson and Admiral Gilday on the way ahead. As many of you know, the Chief of Naval Operations launched an investigation last week regarding the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt, which is presently underway. Any further action regarding the former commanding officer, Captain Crozier, will wait until that investigation is completed.

Finally, in my conversation with Secretary McPherson and Admiral Gilday, I emphasized my three priorities as the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt, the Navy, and the Department of Defense confront the challenges of our day: First, protect our people, which means putting the health, safety and welfare of the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt's crew first; Second, maintain the warfighting readiness of the US military, which means getting the Roosevelt back to sea, and on patrol, as soon as safely possible; and Third, fully supporting the whole of government/whole of nation response to the coronavirus to protect the American people. The Navy has been doing a great job for months now as part of that successful joint effort - a 50,000+ strong military campaign to support federal, state, and local efforts to stop the coronavirus. The Department has been all in on this effort from the beginning, and continues to lead the way.

We must now put the needs of the Navy, including the crew of the Teddy Roosevelt, first, and we must all move forward together.

