**Notes on This Speech**

(NOTE 1: this speech is written to incorporate two videos, which are optional. Independence Day celebrations normally occur outdoors, so the opportunity to play videos as part of your presentation may be limited. If you are speaking at a venue that has the capability to display video independent of your speech, you may consider providing the video files to the venue to play prior to your speech. Alternatively, for venues which have video capability independent of your speech, you may provide the venue with the file titled “Background Display”, which is a static display which may appear in the background as you speak. For questions on this, please contact Todd Martin, Navy Office of Community Outreach, 901.874.5805, [todd.martin@navy.mil](mailto:todd.martin@navy.mil) ).

(NOTE 2: the time of delivery is determined using a public speaking rate of 100 words per minute. Your actual time may vary).

**Time of Delivery:**

**With videos approximately 15 minutes.**

**Without videos approximately 10 minutes.**

**UNITED STATES NAVY INDEPENDENCE DAY**

Thank you (name of person who introduced you) for that very kind introduction. (Acknowledge VIPs, dignitaries, elected officials, and other noteworthy people).

It is truly an honor and a privilege to be here today, the day on which we as a nation celebrate the day we became a nation.

People throughout our great nation celebrate this wondrous holiday in different ways - fireworks, parades, barbecues, family get togethers, just to name a few. (Please refer to the localized notes at the end of this document. If you are speaking in any of the states highlighted in localized notes, please consider copying and pasting that text here in order to localize this speech).

(OPTIONAL VIDEO 1 INTRO: (if you are not using video, please skip to next paragraph). In addition to the things I just mentioned, what I like to do on Independence Day is reflect on our nation’s heritage and history, as well as the heritage and history of our Navy. I would like to share some of that heritage and history with you by showing you a video from USS Constitution, the world’s oldest commissioned warship afloat, and America’s Ship of State. Play video. Allow time for applause. Thank the audience for their applause).

I am here with you today because being here matters. It is important for me to be able to tell you a little bit about your United States Navy, and how the Navy protects America.

Right now, as we are celebrating and enjoying ourselves, your Navy is protecting and defending America on the world’s oceans. Navy ships, submarines, aircraft and, most importantly, tens of thousands of America’s finest young men and women are deployed around the world doing just that.

They are there now. They will be there when we are sleeping tonight. They will be there every Saturday, Sunday and every holiday this year, including this one. They are there around the clock, far from our shores, defending America at all times.

That they are there is critically important because being there matters.

- Being there matters in business. It is why American firms maintain a presence in their overseas markets.

- Being there matters in politics. It is why the State Department maintains a diplomatic force in nearly every other nation on earth.

- Being there matters to our national defense. It is why U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are stationed around the world.

70 percent of the planet we live on is covered by water. Being there means having the ability to act from the sea. The United States Navy is uniquely positioned to be there. The world’s oceans give the Navy the power to protect America’s interests anywhere, at any time. Being there matters.

When America’s national security is threatened by the existence of a weapons facility or a terrorist camp on the other side of the world, being there matters.

Where these threats exist, chances are high that Navy ships, submarines, aircraft and special forces are very close by, with the ability to destroy targets located hundreds of miles inland.

When the decision is made to act on one of these threats, the solution may involve launching Navy attack jets or unmanned Navy aircraft from Navy aircraft carriers, firing Navy cruise missiles from Navy ships or Navy submarines, or inserting a team of Navy SEALs to do what only Navy SEALs can do.

The United States Navy can do all of these things, and do all of these things from the sea, without needing to get another country’s permission to operate within its borders, because being there matters.

Following a humanitarian crisis, like the devastating tsunami that struck northern Japan in 2011, or the earthquake which ravaged Haiti in 2010, being there matters. Because the Navy is always deployed around the world, it can provide nearly immediate humanitarian relief in the wake of a disaster, transporting supplies, medicine and trained Navy medical personnel ashore from Navy ships via Navy helicopters and Navy landing craft.

When narcotics traffickers use speedboats and makeshift submarines to bring illegal drugs across the oceans and into America, being there matters. Navy ships and Navy submarines work the waters near Central and South America with law enforcement agencies, intercepting shipments of illegal narcotics before they reach our shores.

(OPTIONAL VIDEO 2 INTRO: (if you are not using video, please skip to next paragraph). I’ve talked about the United States Navy, but seeing is believing. Here is a video showing your Navy in action recently. (link to Navy Week in Review videos <http://www.navy.mil/viewVideo.asp?id=18522>. You may also download video from this site to your laptop in case internet is not available where you are speaking). Play video. Pause for applause. Thank the audience for their applause).

As the world’s geopolitical and economic climates continue to evolve, the case for America maintaining a strong Navy grows. Indeed, the President’s national security strategy calls for a renewed focus on enduring threats in the Middle East, as well as an increased American commitment in the Asia-Pacific region -- a vast, mostly ocean-covered area of the world ideally suited for operations from the sea and in which the Navy maintains a robust presence.

The truth is, being there has always mattered. By the late 18th century, more than 100 American merchant ships and more than 1,200 American sailors carried in excess of 20,000 tons of cargo to ports on the Mediterranean each year. America was taking its first steps toward becoming a global economic power.

But the merchants soon found themselves vulnerable -- isolated and without protection -- when the countries of the Barbary Coast, the northwest coast of Africa on the Mediterranean Sea, began demanding tribute from other nations in return for safe use of the sea by their ships. The Barbary Powers, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, declared war on nations that refused to sign treaties meeting their tribute demands, and they sent out ships to capture the seagoing commerce of their enemies and held their crews for ransom or enslaved them.

Initially, America was powerless to affect the growing and troubling situation half a world away. For following the American Revolution, the United States' Continental Navy had disbanded, leaving the new nation without a credible sea power to defend its interests abroad.

America’s leadership had a choice to make: acquiesce to the pirates’ demands and continue to pay the exorbitant tributes, or respond with forward presence. America chose the latter. America chose to be there.

Signed into law on March 27, 1794 by President George Washington, the Naval Armament Act called for the construction of six frigates, to be built at shipyards along the eastern seaboard. And thus a new Navy, capable of deploying forward to protect America’s interests, was born. The merchants who plied Mediterranean waters 200 years ago were protected by the U.S. Navy, guaranteed access to the world’s sea lanes. That mission continues today.

Yesterday, today, tomorrow, being there matters. And America’s Navy is already there.

Thank you so much for having me here today, and thank you for your kind attention. In closing:

Happy Birthday United States!

**LOCALIZED NOTES**

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

On the Capitol lawn in Washington, D.C., "A Capitol Fourth", a free concert, precedes the fireworks and attracts over half a million people annually.

GEORGIA

Since 1970, the annual 10 kilometer Peachtree Road Race is held in Atlanta, Georgia.

MAINE

In 1820 the first Fourth of July celebration was held in Eastport, Maine which remains the largest in the state.

MASSACHUSETS

John Adams had written to his wife Abigail:The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more. Adams's prediction was off by two days.

In a remarkable coincidence, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the only signers of the Declaration of Independence later to serve as Presidents of the United States, died on the same day: July 4, 1826, which was the 50th anniversary of the Declaration.

In 1781 the Massachusetts General Court became the first state legislature to recognize July 4 as a state celebration.

The Boston Pops Orchestra has hosted a music and fireworks show over the Charles River Esplanade called the "Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular" annually since 1973.[25] The event was broadcast nationally from 1987 until 2002 on the A&E Network, and has aired since 2003 on CBS.

MICHIGAN

During the annual Windsor-Detroit International Freedom Festival, Detroit, Michigan hosts one of the world's largest fireworks displays, over the Detroit River, to celebrate Independence Day in conjunction with Windsor, Ontario's celebration of Canada Day.

NEBRASKA

Since 1868, Seward, Nebraska has held a celebration on the same town square. In 1979 Seward was designated “America's Official Fourth of July City-Small Town USA” by resolution of Congress. Seward has also been proclaimed Nebraska's Official Fourth of July City” by Governor James Exon in proclamation. Seward is a town of 6,000 but swells to 40,000+ during the July 4 celebrations.

NEW YORK

In 2009, New York City had the largest fireworks display in the country, with over 22 tons of pyrotechnics exploded.

Since 1916, Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest in Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York City supposedly started as a way to settle a dispute among four immigrants as to who was the most patriotic.

The famous Macy's fireworks display usually held over the East River in New York City has been televised nationwide on NBC since 1976. In 2009, the fireworks display was returned to the Hudson River for the first time since 2000 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's exploration of that river.

NORTH CAROLINA

In 1783, Moravians (a Protestant denomination) in Salem, North Carolina, held a celebration of July 4 with a challenging music program assembled by Johann Friedrich Peter. This work was titled "The Psalm of Joy".

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia celebrated the first anniversary in a manner a modern American would find quite familiar: an official dinner for the Continental Congress, toasts, 13-gun salutes, speeches, prayers, music, parades, troop reviews, and fireworks. Ships were decked with red, white, and blue bunting.

RHODE ISLAND

In 1777, thirteen gunshots were fired in salute, once at morning and once again as evening fell, on July 4 in Bristol, Rhode Island.

Held since 1785, the Bristol Fourth of July Parade in Bristol, Rhode Island is the oldest continuous Independence Day celebration in the United States.

VERMONT

Calvin Coolidge, the 30th President, was born on July 4, 1872, and, so far, is the only President to have been born on Independence Day.

VIRGINIA

In a remarkable coincidence, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the only signers of the Declaration of Independence later to serve as Presidents of the United States, died on the same day: July 4, 1826, which was the 50th anniversary of the Declaration.

Although not a signer of the Declaration of Independence, but another Founding Father who became a President, James Monroe, died on July 4, 1831, thus becoming the third President in a row who died on this memorable day.

In 1778, General George Washington marked July 4 with a double ration of rum for his soldiers and an artillery salute.