



Message From the Under Secretary

July 24, 2009

If you're ever given the chance to stay overnight on a Navy aircraft carrier, as I did on the [USS Harry S. Truman](#) in June, you're in for a treat. Just landing on a carrier's brief strip of runway (decelerating from 173 mph to 0 mph in 3 seconds) is a rush of pure adrenaline.

"Top Gun" maneuvers aside, [my visit to the USS Truman](#) offered a firsthand look at how NOAA and the U.S. Navy are working together, and how we might strengthen our interactions.

NOAA's long-standing partnership with the U.S. Navy and the Department of Defense extends back to our agency's founding.

Although our roles may differ, NOAA and DOD share common goals: to ensure the national and environmental security of the nation; to better understand the oceans and the atmosphere that determine our weather and climate; and to be good stewards of the ocean and the planet.

The same scientific and technological assets NOAA brings to bear in closely monitoring our environment are also critical to military operations and national security.

The USS *Truman's* Meteorology and Oceanography division, for example, uses NOAA satellites, buoy networks, weather models, coastal forecasts and hurricane warnings to produce forecasts for the Navy's operations.

NOAA and the Navy actively collaborate on numerous projects, including **cooperative bathymetric surveys** that measure ocean depth and map the seafloor. Bathymetric data used by NOAA to ensure safe surface ship passage is also integral to Navy undersea operations, particularly in the Arctic.

The Navy and NOAA also collaborate on **studies that assess the impact of naval activities** on whales and other marine life and habitats with the goal of minimizing adverse impacts.

NOAA's and DOD's interests also converge to understand likely impacts of climate change and provide information to allow safe operations and safeguarding of national interests in a climate-changed world. By coordinating NOAA and DOD research assets, we can begin to bridge the gap between current weather forecast models and long-term climate predictions.

For example, NOAA and the Navy, with assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard, jointly operate the



Dr. Lubchenco and the joint delegation from NOAA, the Navy, OMB and CEQ pose for a group photo on the flight deck of the USS Harry S. Truman during a June visit.

[National Ice Center](#), which characterizes and forecasts changes in the polar ice shelf. The possibility of an ice-free Arctic in as few as 30 years is of particular import for naval defense activities and is a major focus of research for NOAA's predictive climate studies.

Similarly, NOAA, the Navy and the Air Force have launched the **National Unified Operational Prediction Capability** — a strategic initiative that will fundamentally advance the nation's computer weather prediction system and improve forecasting models used by National Weather Service, Air Force and Navy meteorologists.

An interagency group comprised of NOAA, DOD, and 15 other federal agencies and White House offices — in collaboration with 78 countries and the European Commission — is also helping to build the [Global Earth Observation System of Systems \(GEOSS\)](#). **GEOSS** is designed to foster prediction, preparedness and prevention in vital areas such as climate change, weather, water, energy, health and agriculture.

NOAA maintains a **close alliance with the Air Force**, which has long played a key role flying "[Hurricane Hunter](#)" reconnaissance and research-critical missions in tandem with NOAA pilots and scientists. Severe storm data collected by both agencies contribute to the safety of millions of Americans living along the vulnerable Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

NOAA and the Air Force have united to protect the nation's aircraft and aviation systems. Weather observation and forecast data supplied by both agencies will contribute to the [Next Generation Air Transportation System \(NextGen\)](#) — a multiagency initiative that will better anticipate weather impacts on commercial and military aviation, and could significantly reduce air traffic congestion and delays.

These are just a few of the important initiatives facilitated by NOAA's close partnership with DOD. I thank all the NOAA and DOD personnel who enable the cross-agency coordination necessary for our national and environmental security.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator

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