

America

SEALs make shift

From counterterror to 'global' threats

WASHINGTON, April 28, (AP): Ten years after they found and killed Osama bin Laden, U.S. Navy SEALs are undergoing a major transition to improve leadership and expand their commando capabilities to better battle threats from global powers like China and Russia.

The new plan cuts the number of SEAL platoons by as much as 30% and increases their size to make the teams more lethal and able to counter sophisticated maritime and undersea adversaries. And there will be a new, intensive screening process for the Navy's elite warriors, to get higher-quality leaders after scandals that rocked the force and involved charges of murder, sexual assault and drug use.

Rear Adm. Hugh Howard, top commander for the SEALs, laid out his plans in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press. He said the Navy's special operations forces have been focused on counterterrorism operations but now must begin to evolve beyond those missions. For the past two decades, many have been fighting in the deserts of Iraq and mountains of Afghanistan. Now they are focused on going back to sea.

That decision reflects the broader Pentagon strategy to prioritize China and Russia, which are rapidly growing their militaries and trying to expand their influence around the globe. U.S. defense leaders believe that two decades of war against militants and extremists have drained resources, causing America to lose ground against Moscow and Beijing.

The counterterrorism fight had its benefits, allowing the SEALs to sharpen their skills in developing intelligence networks and finding and hitting targets, said Howard, who heads Naval Special Warfare Command, which includes the SEALs and the special warfare combatant-craft crewmen. "Many of these things are transferable, but now we need to put pressure on ourselves to operate against peer threats."

Adding

As a result, Howard is adding personnel to the SEAL platoons to beef up capabilities in cyber and electronic warfare and unmanned systems, honing their skills to collect intelligence and deceive and defeat the enemy.

"We are putting pressure on ourselves to evolve and understand our gaps in capability and what our true survivability is against these threats" posed by global competitors, he said. Adm. Mike Gilday, the chief of naval operations, said the goal is to better integrate the SEALs into the Navy's missions at sea.

"As the Navy Special Warfare community returns more and more to its maritime roots, their increased integration across the Fleet - above, under, and on the sea - will unequivocally enhance our unique maritime capabilities to help us compete and win against any adversary," Gilday said in a statement to the AP.

Increasing the size of the SEAL platoons will add high-tech capabilities. And decreasing the number of units will allow Howard to rid the force of toxic leaders and be more selective in choosing commanders. That decision is a direct result of the erosion in character that Navy officials have seen within the force.

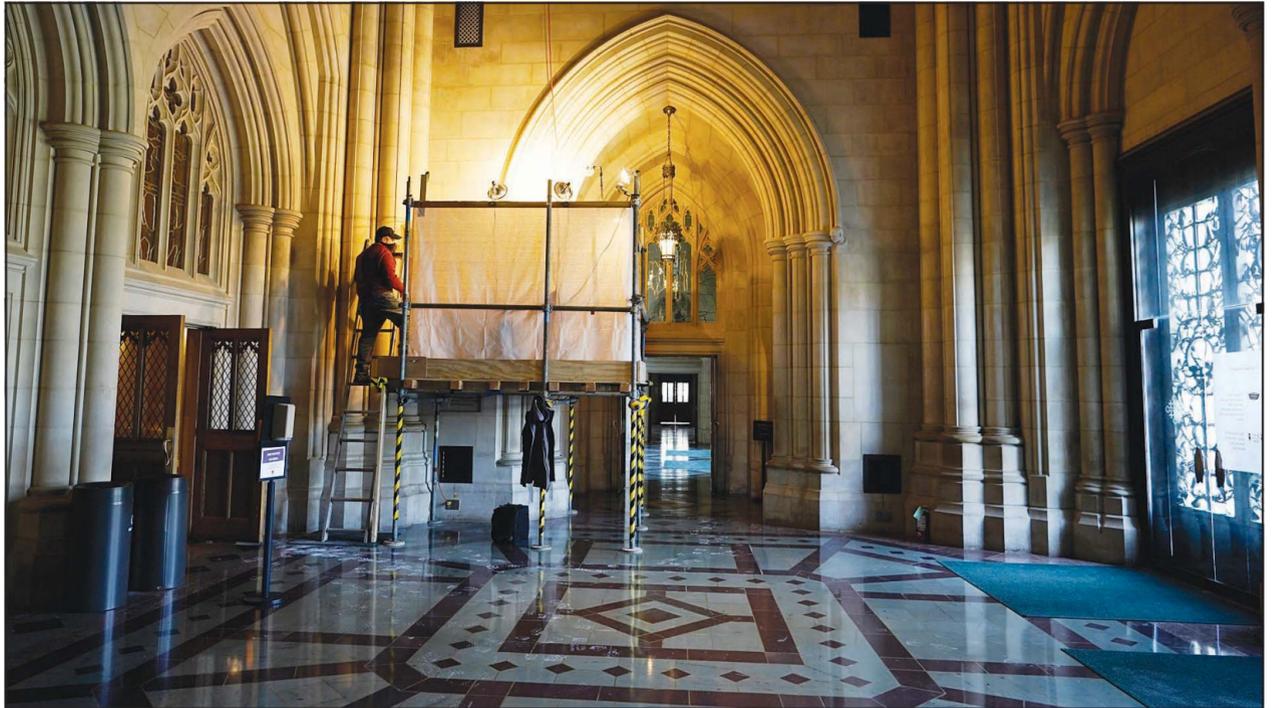
In recent years, SEALs have been involved in a number of high-profile scandals. One of the most well-known was the arrest of Navy Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher on war crimes charges that included murder of an Islamic State militant captive and attempted murder in the shootings of civilians during a 2017 deployment to Iraq.

Gallagher was acquitted of all charges except one, posing in photos with the dead captive. A jury recommended his rank be reduced, cutting his pension and benefits as he was about to retire. But President Donald Trump intervened and ordered that Gallagher be allowed to retire without losing his SEAL status.

More recently, a SEAL team platoon was pulled out of Iraq in 2019 amid allegations of sexual assault. Members of SEAL Team 10 were involved in cocaine use and tampering with drug tests. And Navy SEAL Adam Matthews was sentenced to a year in military prison for his role in the 2017 hazing-related death of an Army Green Beret in Africa. Navy leaders also chafed as Navy SEALs broke away from their "quiet professional" ethos, publicizing their participation in the raid into Pakistan that killed bin Laden, the al-Qaeda leader responsible for plotting the 9/11 attacks.



bin Laden



Stone carver Sean Callahan climbs a ladder to a scaffold to work on a sculpture of Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winning author Elie Wiesel in the Human Rights Porch at the Washington National Cathedral, Friday, March 19, 2021. (AP)



Rev. William Barber II speaks as the North Carolina NAACP and clergy urge state attorney general Josh Stein to take over the investigation into the police shooting death of Andrew Brown Jr during a press conference at the Mt Lebanon AME Zion Church, Tuesday, April 27, 2021, in Elizabeth City, N.C. The FBI launched a civil rights probe Tuesday into the death of Andrew Brown Jr, a Black man killed by deputies in North Carolina, as his family released an independent autopsy showing he was shot five times, including in the back of the head. (AP)

America

Jackson potential justice

Judicial nominees to face Senate

WASHINGTON, April 28, (AP): Ketanji Brown Jackson is heading to Capitol Hill for an audition of sorts. Lawmakers will be grilling her about her nomination to become a federal appeals court judge. But if the hearing goes well, the 50-year-old could someday get a callback for an even bigger role: Supreme Court justice.

Jackson is one of five judicial nominees who will appear before a Senate panel Wednesday, the opening act in President Joe Biden's effort to put his mark on the bench after four years in which President Donald Trump chose white men as judges at the highest rate in decades. None of the five people the committee will consider Wednesday for a judgeship is a white man.

Because Biden has promised to name a Black woman to the Supreme Court if a vacancy arises and because Jackson was a candidate for the court during President Barack Obama's administration, she is widely seen as a potential high court pick down the line. She is now a judge in the District of Columbia, and Biden wants her promoted to a seat on the city's federal appeals court that was left vacant by Merrick Garland when he became US

attorney general. Democrats, narrowly controlling the Senate for the first time in eight years, are eager to turn the page from the Trump era. Sen Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., a member of the Judiciary Committee, said Democrats will prioritize diversity "not only in race and ethnic backgrounds, but also in careers."

Qualified

Blumenthal said Biden is off to a good start on that front. "They are all highly qualified, and as important as their academic and professional credentials is, they look like America," he said.

Jackson, for her part, went before the committee in 2012 for her current job. Introducing her was Republican Rep. Paul Ryan, who later became House speaker and is related to her by marriage. "Now, our politics may differ, but my praise for Ketanji's intellect, for her character, for her integrity, it is unequivocal," Ryan said at the time.

As for whether there might be a Supreme Court opening in the near future, Justice Stephen Breyer, 82, the

court's oldest member, has been mum about any retirement plans. The last he had to say on the topic, in an interview published in December, was: "I mean, eventually I'll retire, sure I will. And it's hard to know exactly when."

Still, liberal groups have urged the court's most senior liberal justice to step down while Democrats have Vice President Kamala Harris to break the tie in a Senate split 50-50. And it's getting to be the time of year when justices often announce their retirements.

If Breyer were to retire this year or next and Biden were to select Jackson to replace him, it would be a quick potential promotion, but also not out of step with other members of the court. President George H.W. Bush nominated Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court in 1991, just a year after putting him on the DC Circuit. Last fall, President Donald Trump nominated Amy Coney Barrett to fill the Supreme Court seat left vacant by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. It was just three years after he put the Notre Dame law professor on an appeals court.

Jackson, of course, wouldn't be the only potential pick if Breyer announces his retirement.

America

**Bill to kill 90% wolves:** The Idaho House on Tuesday approved legislation allowing the state to hire private contractors and expand methods to kill wolves roaming Idaho - a measure that could cut the wolf population by 90%.

Lawmakers voted 58-11 to send the agriculture industry-backed bill to Republican Gov. Brad Little. The fast-tracked bill that allows the use of night-vision equipment to kill wolves as well as hunting from snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles, among other measures, passed the Senate last week.

Backers said changes to Idaho law could help reduce the wolf population from about 1,500 to 150, alleviating wolf attacks on cat-

tle, sheep and wildlife.

"We have areas of the state where the wolves are having a real detrimental impact on our wildlife," said House Majority Leader Mike Moyle, one of the bill's sponsors. "They are hurting the herds, elk and deer. This allows the Wolf (Depredation) Control Board and others to control them, also, which we have not done in the past." (AP)



Ducey



Little

**Governor inks abortion ban:** Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey on Tuesday signed a sweeping anti-abortion bill that bans the procedure if the woman is seeking it solely because a fetus has a genetic abnormality such as Down syndrome.

Doctors who perform an abortion solely because the child has a survivable genetic issue can face felony charges. The proposal also contains a raft of other provisions sought by abortion opponents. (AP)

Hyundai Motor partners with Healthy Seas to foster a sustainable future



Hyundai Motor is partnering with the ocean conservation organisation Healthy Seas to combat ocean pollution, nurture sustainable marine ecosystems, and support a circular economy.

In pursuit of the company's goal to establish sustainable leadership, Hyundai Motor has announced a pan-European partnership with the marine conservation organisation Healthy Seas

As the company leading the way in clean and future mobility solutions, cleaning up and preventing marine pollution aligns with Hyundai's global strategy. By re-establishing a healthy relationship with nature, Hyundai plans to improve human wellbeing, in line with its vision of "Progress for Humanity".

By collaborating with Healthy Seas, Hyundai will be not only providing a cleaner environment for generations to come but also shaping sustainable futures for the communities it works with.

"As a purpose-driven company, Hyundai understands that recycling and sustainability aren't trends, but rather a need for our society," says Michael Cole, President and CEO of Hyundai Motor Europe. "Through our progressive, inclusive, and responsible spirit, we are committed to the development of a sustainable society. This is why our

strategy tackles environmental problems head on and works with communities to safeguard a sustainable future."

Protecting the ocean with Healthy Seas

The world's seas and oceans play a major role in sustaining life on Earth, but they are constantly threatened. A joint report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme estimates that more than 580 million kilograms of fishing gear are discarded in the ocean annually, accounting for one-tenth of all marine litter. Hyundai has chosen to partner with Healthy Seas because the Dutch organisation strives to combat this issue.

Healthy Seas' activities are threefold. Firstly, they work with teams of volunteer divers from the charity organisation Ghost Diving to recover abandoned fishing nets, known as 'ghost nets', from coral reefs and shipwrecks. These fragile ecosystems

By partnering with Healthy Seas, Hyundai is furthering its commitment to "Progress for Humanity" with a particular focus on the seas and oceans

are underwater hotspots for marine biodiversity. By removing marine debris and ocean plastic, Healthy Seas ensures the survival of a healthy underwater ecosystem for a sustainable future.

Healthy Seas also organises educational programmes at local schools to teach children the importance of keeping the world's oceans clean. In hopes of preventing more ocean pollution, younger generations learn about the negative effects it can have on marine and human life.

Finally, Healthy Seas collaborates with fishermen, fish farms, and local communities to prevent fishing nets from ending up in landfills or the environment. Together, they work on solutions to dispose of the nets responsibly.

Working with a network of partners, Healthy Seas ensures plastic waste is recycled into new materials in a circular economy. Reclaimed fishing nets and other nylon waste can become ECONYL®, a regenerated nylon yarn that can, in turn, be used to make new products.

Working together to improve communities

This partnership with Hyundai will allow Healthy Seas to expand its programmes all over Europe. Initial partnership activities will begin April 2021 with clean-up efforts to be rolled out in Greece, followed by Norway, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and France, as well as in the North and Mediterranean Seas.

"We're excited to begin this cooperation with Hyundai on a pan-European level. It is clear that we share the same passion



Based in the Netherlands, Healthy Seas aims to free the oceans of abandoned fishing nets and other debris through education, prevention, and clean-up activities



for protecting the environment with Hyundai's leadership in developing sustainable mobility solutions and our experience protecting marine ecosystems," says Veronika Mikos, Director of Healthy Seas. "With Hyundai's support and our environmental expertise, we look forward to expanding our operations to clean up the oceans and seas on an even larger scale."

Hyundai's main role in the partnership is supporting Healthy Seas with funding, so complex clean-up activities can come to fruition. The first scheduled activity is planned to take place in early summer in Greece to help a local community by removing fishing nets and other debris lying on the seabed, floating on the surface, and strewn across the beaches.

This partnership between Hyundai Motor and Healthy Seas will initially be for one year with a possibility for extension.

Partnership activities will take place across Europe, starting in Greece