



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet**  
**Admiral Scott H. Swift**

*Statement to media on USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) collision  
Changi Naval Base, Singapore  
August 22, 2017  
As delivered*

Good evening. I'm Admiral Scott Swift, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet. I've got a brief statement to make and then I'll take your questions following that statement.

As most of you know, the guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain was involved in a collision with the merchant vessel Alnic MC while underway east of the straits of Malacca yesterday at 5:24 a.m. local time, Monday, August 21. McCain was transiting to a routine port visit in Singapore when the collision occurred.

Right now, we are still searching for our 10 missing Sailors. That remains our focus. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the families of those Sailors and the families of our Sailors who were injured.

Ships and aircraft from the Royal Malaysian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy joined search efforts yesterday and continue to provide assistance, along with aircraft from USS America.

The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps divers joined the search today, accessing sealed compartments in damaged parts of the ship.

The divers were able to locate some remains in those sealed compartments during their search today. Additionally, the Malaysian navy has reported that they have located potential remains. We are working to confirm and identify those remains. As more info comes in, we will make it available.

While the search and rescue efforts continue, I sincerely thank our Singapore partners, our Malaysian partners and everyone who has responded with urgency, compassion and tireless commitment.

Four of the five Sailors that were injured were medically evacuated by a Singapore navy helicopter to a hospital in Singapore for non-life threatening injuries. The fifth injured Sailor was transferred after John S. McCain arrived here at port. I visited with those Sailors earlier today and they are doing well.

John S. McCain and America arrived at Changi Naval Base yesterday afternoon. While both ships are in Singapore, America is providing messing and berthing services to John S. McCain crew members and supporting damage control efforts on board which are focused on dewatering the ship and restoring auxiliary systems.

Our priority here in Singapore is taking care of the crew and their families, ensuring they have all the resources they need and are updated on the status of their ship and their shipmates. I visited with the crew today. They are tough and they are resilient, and it is clear that their damage control efforts saved their ship and saved lives.

I ask all of you to keep the affected Sailors and their families in your thoughts and prayers, and respect their privacy. Families who are seeking information can call our crisis hotline and we are continuing to provide updated information as soon as we get it via social media accounts and the Seventh Fleet website.

From my visit in John S. McCain today I can tell you she has sustained significant damage to her port side aft. The flooding was halted, but the extent of damage is still being determined.

We will conduct a thorough and full investigation into this collision, what occurred and what happened.

As you know, this collision has happened within two months of another, the collision involving USS Fitzgerald, which caused the death of seven Sailors. And earlier this year, there were two other incidents involving surface ships in the Western Pacific.

One tragedy like this is one too many. And while each of these four events is unique, they cannot be viewed in isolation. I welcome the broad comprehensive review announced by our chief of naval operations. I talked this morning with Admiral Davidson on the phone this morning and I look forward to working with him, as the senior surface warfare officer in the navy, to find out whether there is a common cause at the root of these events and if so, how we solve that.

We will implement the operational pause that CNO announced across all fleets, and that will include all units in the Pacific and will be complete by August 28.

In addition, I have directed a second phase that will be focused on all surface ships deployed in the Pacific, including those forward deployed naval force in Yokosuka and Sasebo.

This second phase will be a deliberate re-set for our ships, focused on a number of areas, such as navigation, ship's mechanical systems and bridge resource management. It will involve training and assessment by a team of experts with each ship and their watchstanders, and it will be phased in order to cover ships in port and on station at sea. We will take what we learn through each phase and apply it as we progress.

Tomorrow I will be traveling to Yokosuka for discussions with Seventh Fleet leadership and engage with the families of USS John S. McCain there.

Make no mistake, our Sailors and these ships are doing critical work at sea and for more than 70 years, the U.S. Navy has helped guarantee the security and stability of the Western Pacific. All nations in this region and beyond have benefitted from the resulting prosperity that their service has enabled. This work by our Sailors is difficult, but it is incredibly important, and enduring.

We owe it to Sailors that man Seventh fleet and their families to answer the questions that flow from the uncertainty of what happened, how could it happen, and what can be done to prevent such occurrences in the future. We owe it to each and every one of them to pursue answers to these questions and others that may be on their mind. We are absolutely committed to doing just that.

Thank you, and with that I look forward to answering your questions.