

U.S. Navy to emphasize soft power

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Navy announced its first major strategic shift in more than 20 years, refocusing the fleet's role on humanitarian aid and other forms of soft power. The Navy, along with the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Coast Guard, unveiled the new strategy to embrace a broader shift at the Pentagon to bridge the "generational conflict" in its efforts to thwart extremists, the Christian Science Monitor reported Thursday. The move focuses on building international partnerships based on convergent interests. Congressional leaders objected, saying the new plan discounts emerging military threats posed by China and other nations. Republican presidential hopeful U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., said, "The Chinese government has the ability to quickly outstrip" the Navy fleet if measures don't focus on military capacity. U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in speech at Kansas State University in November the use of military operations other than war focuses on the fundamental issues regarding national security. The hospital ship USNS Comfort toured South America recently on a humanitarian mission to 12 ports aiding nearly 100,000 people. Naval vessels also thwarted a pirate attack against North Korea ships off the coast of Somalia.

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