



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Honolulu International Forum
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Good morning and aloha! I am glad to see everyone was able to make it. Thank you for the opportunity to engage you on a topic of great interest in these sobering political and financial times. Of course I am glad to be here considering the Government is shutdown. Despite the political issues in Washington, the rebalancing strategy that was introduced in January 2012 was relevant then and remains so today.

Before I get started, I would like to thank Brad Glosserman and Kerry Gershaneck for bringing us all together today and of course Ralph Cossa who could not be here himself.

It is an honor to address the Honolulu International Forum, and it is great to look out at so many familiar faces in the audience. I appreciate the Pacific Forum-Center for Strategic and International Studies for hosting this breakfast.

Since we all have busy schedules, let me proceed with the requested topic. The United States, though much of it is situated on a continent, is still very much a maritime Nation. Our economy can be impacted by any disruption to trade at sea. It was such a concern to our founding fathers, the framers of our Constitution mandated that our Congress shall have the power to provide and maintain a Navy. So clearly the framers understood that a strong, well-equipped Navy is critical to our security in the maritime domain.

Of course, I know here in Hawaii we can appreciate the importance of maritime security, perhaps even more acutely than our citizens on the mainland. We can look at historical reminders like the Arizona Memorial to appreciate the importance of that security. We can consider the importance of imports to our shores; everything from energy, food and commodities. We can imagine the impact to our economy, infrastructure, and the people here, if those imports are suddenly prevented from reaching our shores. Security matters in this area, in this region and throughout the world. It should be no surprise that the United States Navy is focused on maintaining security and stability in the maritime domain, to protect our interests at home and abroad, even amidst this uncertain fiscal environment.

On September 18th, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, spoke to the House Armed Services Committee at a hearing on sequestration. He spoke about the impact that sequestration would have on our Navy, and started the discussion by saying: "Presence remains the mandate for the Navy. We have to operate forward where it matters and we have got to be ready, when it matters." He went on to say: "Recent events have clearly demonstrated our ability to do that. This ability also reassures our allies and it ensures that United States interests around the world are properly served."

Of course he was talking about our preparations for contingencies in Syria. These days, you see Syria a lot in the news, as well as Iran, Egypt, Kenya and others. Lots of attention is appropriately focused on these hotspots, and the Navy is there, ready to respond. As we speak, I have forces that belong to the U.S. Pacific Fleet postured in that area of the world in support of our National objectives regarding Syria. In fact, the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group, that includes USS *Nimitz* and guided-missile destroyers *Shoup*, *William P. Lawrence* and *Stockdale*, are in the Red Sea conducting forward presence operations in support of Central Command. I might add they were on their way home and turned around to hang out in the Red Sea, awaiting orders.

In August, you may have seen the new MV-22 Osprey flying over the skies of Hawaii as the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group passed through on their way west. Those ships just finished an Amphibious Landing Exercise, called PHIBLEX, in the Philippines, and are currently en route to the Central Command area of responsibility in support of forward presence. Our Naval forces are ready to respond globally as needed and I can tell you they are more than capable.

Of course, our forces do not just pass through the Pacific, they deploy in the Pacific. The George Washington Carrier Strike Group has just finished Air Wing strike training operations off of Okinawa, Japan, and has just started a series of key engagement and forward presence operations that last through the end of the month. The frigate USS *Rentz*, operating to the south for Southern Command, recently transferred over one ton of confiscated cocaine, worth more than \$78 million, to the United States Coast Guard, while conducting counter-drug operations. There have been six submarines underway in the Pacific, the USS *Hampton*, *Houston*, *Santa Fe* and *Tucson*, and two Hawaii-based submarines, USS *Asheville* and *Charlotte*, have all been busy in support of theater and National objectives. We are looking forward to welcoming home *Charlotte* and her outstanding crew from deployment a little later in the week.

There are Hawaii-based surface ships underway in the Pacific as well: guided-missile destroyer USS *Hopper* wrapped up a port visit to Changi Naval Base, Singapore, and is continuing her transit to the Central Command area of responsibility in support of forward presence, and guided-missile destroyer USS *Chung-Hoon* has been deployed forward on a six-month Western Pacific deployment. I know that there are a lot of excited families here on the island today; *Chung-Hoon* is scheduled to pull into port in the next hour or so.

There is no doubt, that the United States Navy is present in the Pacific and we have been present for more than 150 years. Since the start of World War II, our Navy has maintained a continuous presence here. In fact, just a few months ago we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the 7th Fleet. They got their start in Brisbane, Australia, and are now based in Japan. Today, U.S. Seventh Fleet is the foundation for security and stability in the region.

So as you can see, we have already had a significant Navy focus on the Indo-Asia-Pacific region for quite some time. That is why this new rebalance strategy is not just about the military, It is a whole of government rebalance.

On June 1st, Secretary of Defense Hagel spoke at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, Shangri La Dialogue. There he said: “America is implementing a rebalance – which is primarily a diplomatic, economic and cultural strategy.” Regarding our military, he went on to say: “The

Department of Defense plays an important role in securing the President's vision of rebalance." He also clarified how we would prioritize the rebalance amidst fiscal uncertainty. He said: "New fiscal realities present an "opportunity" to conduct a thorough and much-needed review to ensure we are matching resources to the most important priorities." Since its first announcement, we have seen consistent support for the rebalance strategy from our political and Department of Defense leadership.

Now, as commander of the Pacific Fleet, let me focus more attention on how the rebalance looks from a Navy perspective. First, there will be a rebalance of our platforms and equipment to the area, and I am sure you are already seeing some of this. It was not too long ago when USS *Freedom*, the first Littoral Combat Ship, pulled into port here on her transit to the Western Pacific. Now on deployment, she is using Singapore as a place, not a base, to conduct operations.

I have had an opportunity to see the tremendous capability of the new electronic attack aircraft, EA-18 Growler, while visiting squadrons both in Whidbey Island and Japan last year.

I have even had an opportunity to fly in some of our new aircraft. Last year I got in the new P-8 maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, while it conducted an anti-submarine warfare mission during its swing through the Pacific, demonstrating significant capabilities. I expect its first deployment to be here in the Pacific, soon.

It is great to see the MV-22 Osprey operating out here too. I had the pleasure of Osprey flights, both in California and Okinawa. The Marines love this impressive and safe aircraft, and I know they are looking forward to getting them over at Kaneohe Bay in the future.

We also have MH-60 Romeos replacing the legacy aircraft at our Navy helicopter squadron at Kaneohe Bay. The new 60s provide a significant improvement to our capabilities in anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare.

Of course, I am also excited about the development of the unmanned systems and the capabilities they will be bringing to the Pacific, including some of our research and development projects. When we say unmanned systems, most people think of unmanned aerial vehicles, but I am also talking about unmanned undersea vehicles as well.

I am also eager to see more Virginia-class submarines deploying to the Western Pacific, like the USS *North Carolina*, which is home-ported here. I look forward to more being deployed to Hawaii in the future.

But it is not just about platform, there is a lot of new equipment and technology that is coming to the Pacific. Two weeks ago the guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Erie fired two missiles, both Standard Missile-3's, which successfully intercepted a complex short-range ballistic missile target off the coast of Kauai. With North Korea's nuclear ambitions and testing long-range missiles possibly capable of reaching Hawaii and Alaska. I think we can all appreciate the importance of this new technology in the region. A few months ago I had the opportunity to visit

Kauai and saw the new AEGIS Ashore test facility under construction. It is another important step in the right direction as we develop our Ballistic Missile Defense capabilities.

As excited as I am about our new platforms and equipment, I am even more excited about the rebalance of intellectual focus. The whole of our United States Government is rebalancing intellectual capital and leadership attention toward the region and the United States Navy is doing the same.

Consider what is going on there right now. Secretary of Defense Hagel has been visiting the Republic of Korea to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our alliance, the 45th Security Consultative Meeting, and preside over the United States Forces, Korea, change of command ceremony. He then travels to meet up with Secretary of State Kerry in Tokyo, as they attend the United States and Japan Security Consultative Committee meeting.

The president of the United States is planning to travel to Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines as part of his ongoing commitment to increase U.S. political, economic and security engagement with the Asia Pacific.

Of course military leadership is engaging in military-to-military dialogs throughout the region as well. In fact I am supposed to travel to Japan and Australia starting tomorrow on a mission to do this type of engagement.

The Pacific Fleet is sharpening our focus on the warfighting missions that are most important in the Asia Pacific, improving our interoperability with our joint forces, including working closely with the United States Air Force on the Air Sea Battle concept.

We are prioritizing doctrine in our concept of operations development and increasing our experimentation and the validation of new tactics, techniques and procedures, and operational concepts. We are developing our people to serve in the Asia-Pacific, to include revitalizing the Foreign Area Officer program as just one example. Having talented people that know the region, building strong relationships is key to our success.

The Navy has increased efforts to assure our allies and strengthen our partners. We know the potential challenges we face in this region can surpass the ability of any one nation to address them alone. That is why it is so important to have interoperable capability with our allies, partners and friends, to quickly respond to those potential problems. Today the Navy conducts exercises and training events with more than 20 allies, partners and friends to increase partnership capabilities and to address uncertainty in the region. Working together in adherence to existing norms and frameworks is key. Additionally, that is why I am heartened to see nations in the region taking on greater leadership roles and setting the example by working together as partners to address the challenges that we all face.

Recently the dock landing ship, USS *Pearl Harbor*, finished up Pacific Partnership 2013. This ship is based in San Diego, but I think she represents the aloha spirit of Hawaii quite well. During that operation they performed humanitarian and civic action (HCA) activities in Samoa, Tonga, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Pacific Partnership is a multi-national effort

where we work with partner nations and non-governmental organizations to improve synchronizing effects, improving interoperability, building partner capacity and helping train other nations to lead future humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. This year, Pacific Partnership was partially lead by Australia and New Zealand.

Of course, here in Hawaii, the real stand out for multilateral engagements is the Rim of the Pacific exercises held every two years. Last year's RIMPAC was the largest in its history. We had 22 nations participating with over 25,000 personnel, more than 40 ships and submarines and more than 200 aircraft. After decades of working closely with some of our allies and partners, they were ready, willing and able to step up and lead. For the first time, we had non-U.S. officers commanding components of the Combined Task Force during the exercise. You may remember this was the first time we had Russia participating and now China is planning to participate in RIMPAC 2014. Already we have started the robust training cycle to prepare for RIMPAC 14, starting with a multi-national planning conference in San Diego this summer.

It is also interesting to note that RIMPAC gives us an opportunity to try out some of our new technology. Last RIMPAC several of our ships were directly involved in the Great Green Fleet demonstration – showing fleet conservation efforts and tools; but also the use of a bio-fuel mix, innovative energy solutions for our future. Not only were ships powered by biofuel, but their helicopters were too. I had an opportunity to fly from ship to ship in one of those helicopters with the Secretary of Navy and Chief of Naval Operations. We survived, so clearly biofuel works!

Our CARAT exercises, that is Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training exercises, have traditionally been bilateral. But we are putting emphasis on our desire to up the game in these events and make them multilateral, where appropriate. Of course, this also helps out with the cost of each event, so there are many benefits to this initiative. Besides traditional military-to-military engagements, we are also looking to leverage international forums to further build those relationships, including our participation in such events as Western Pacific Naval Symposium and ADMM+, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus, working groups.

Hawaii too, is an important partner in the rebalance across every aspect of National influence. Hawaii's strategic location places it front and center in the Pacific. A full steaming week further into the region than our ports in California or Washington, ships stationed here save us that much time and put us closer to areas of consequence throughout the region. We also have Pacific Command and the functional components, whose presence here on the island is a force multiplier.

The harbors and bases we use are among the very best in the world and the world class facilities like the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Pacific Missile Range Facility, true strategic gems in my opinion, provide tremendous support to our efforts in the region.

For an economic development model, Hawaii has cultural diversity, roles of women, small and medium enterprise, and it is ideally suited for economic interaction among regional partners.

It has intellectual organizations like Center for Strategic and International Studies-Pacific Forum, East West Center and the Asia-Pacific Center for Strategic Studies, all providing rich dialog and intellectual capacity essential to the rebalance.

I appreciate the focus Hawaii is putting on innovation and technology, the promotion of STEM, that's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, in our schools and the effort to champion robotics as an extracurricular activity on par with many of our traditional sports programs. Did you know that 75 percent of our schools have a robotics program, the highest percentage in the Nation? I am a firm believer in our need to invest in the bright minds that will lead our Nation tomorrow and I appreciate your support in this.

Finally, I am grateful to the community of Hawaii, which has always reached out to our Sailors and their families, including mine, and embraced us as ohana.

So as you can see, our rebalance to the Indo-Asia-Pacific is in progress on so many different levels, and we are all involved. Today's dialog is of course part of the strategy, and I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you today to discuss it.

As I bring this to a close, I cannot help but reflect on one of my favorite words, aloha. Last week some of you may have seen my picture in the Mid-Week paper. The article was titled "Aloha means goodbye." While I suppose that is technically correct, I am leaving for Omaha, Nebraska in a few weeks to become Strategic Command commander, I don't like to think of aloha as goodbye. Instead I like to think of aloha as 'see you later'. I have had four jobs here in Hawaii and I have truly enjoyed each one. It is my hope that I will have an opportunity to come back and visit again someday. I know from experience that the allure of the islands is why so many of our Sailors want to come here to serve. I also know that the aloha spirit and sense of ohana is why so many of them want to stay.

Thank you for your continued support of our Navy, our Sailors and their families, and for helping promote our Nation's values at home and abroad. Thank you and mahalo nui loa.