



Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet  
Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace  
Exhibition in Malaysia  
Admiral Patrick M. Walsh  
November 30, 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important forum. It is an honor to be on this panel and to be among so many maritime professionals gathered here today. I am especially grateful to conference organizers who put together this excellent program. You have afforded all of us a unique chance - at an important time - to meet naval leaders, operators, practitioners and colleagues - who see the need and sense the urgency - to work the critically important issues related to maritime security. Speakers before us have already reminded us that the stakes are very high.

I am here this morning to share one perspective and describe the impact that the changing nature of maritime security has on the American Navy. The organization, training and equipping of the US Navy, is part of the public record. For those interested, you can find how much we spend, what platforms that we buy, the number of people who we recruit and have a relatively good sense of our operations by examining records in the public domain. Of greater interest to the audience this morning, I think, would be in what we think and how we arrive at our conclusions.

To be effective on the water across the spectrum of possible military operations, we must examine the contours of the security environment, which requires, a review of sociological, ideological, political and economic trendlines, so that we understand the nature of conflict and backdrop of activity in the maritime domain. Those assessments serve to inform, develop and guide how we chart the course for the future.

In many respects, the program, the speakers and the audience interaction yesterday, framed the nature of the collective challenge. LIMA '09 has told us that we are in area considered the lifeblood of the global economic system that supports 90 percent of world trade. It is an area characterized by evolving political and economic ties; increasing demand for resources; rapid modernization of military capabilities; competing national interests; as well as, long-standing regional and international disputes.

Navies bring a unique perspective to this discussion because they are an eyewitness to the changing nature of our world as well as the physical climate in which we operate. In this region alone, geography facilitates or hinders the movement of people, commerce, and resources; history



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influences national identity, grievances, and fuels sovereign passions; cultural and religious centers extend influence well beyond the national horizons depicted by coordinates and lines on a map.

As we heard yesterday, communications, transportation, information technology and economics - link all nations in every way, all the time - so the order and flow of information is raw and unfiltered and does not move from local to regional to national levels in an orderly method - it is viral. Therefore, it is possible to start/incite a movement in real time - local news can have immediate regional implications with a direct impact to those charged with responsibility for security and stability.

We learned about the nature of the challenge. In a globalized world, there will be winners and losers. Explosive population growth rates, the growing demand for raw materials, shifting spheres of influence, and blurring of national and transnational threats present a combination of factors that will stress and challenge the governance of the nation-state in new ways and call into question the role of government, the use of force, and the adaptive role and use of the Navy in an environment that continues to evolve.

I would suggest that we see a direct connection and draw a direct correlation, between the stability of the global commons and the security and prosperity of nations. We share this mission at an extraordinary moment in history - when the movement of information, the shipment of energy, goods and commodities, combined with the ability to communicate beyond national borders and opportunities for travel ... have resulted in linkages and connections that make us increasingly reliant on partners in the international community ... and dependent on the sea, and its security, for many elements of our daily lives.

In the Asia-Pacific region, we are witness to a period of increased demand for resources and increased competition. It is a period when the demand for access and freedom of movement that we typically view through the lens of the national interest...is equally important to the interests of the international community as well. In other words ... now, more than ever before, the



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consequences of activities that impede those vital connections no longer affect simply one nation, but rather the vital interests of the global community.

As Sailors, we have the honor, good fortune, and responsibility to represent our nations at sea, at a time when the security and stability of the global commons has so much at stake for the community of nations. Mariners operate in one continuous body of water that covers 70 percent of the globe. Unlike land that others will fence, put up borders and protect, we share the sea. Therefore, the very nature of the operating environment requires a collective approach for the shared benefits and responsibilities of the sea.

No matter what advancements futurists predict for the movement of energy and goods...the bulk (90 percent) of the world market will continue to move by sea in an environment where security challenges continue to cut across national boundaries and borders.

Today, we recognize how quickly conflict can escalate and disrupt the international economic system. The potential for conflict based on grievance, resentment, and state interest, fueled by weapons proliferation, characterized by terrorism, insurgency and disorder, now seems more troubling in areas of economic vulnerability, poor governance and demographic stress and consequential for more nations than the ones simply affected.

In this environment, we understand the necessity to position forces forward ... to move promptly to alleviate the impact of disaster, provide humanitarian assistance, and interrupt the symptoms of disease, strife, or conflict before local problems become regional or international.

Therefore the character of today's challenge to organize, man, and equip the Navy cuts across traditional boundaries and demands solutions that are rapid, credible, joint, inter-agency, combined with international partners, and cooperative. This is why, the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard took the unprecedented step in signing a unified maritime strategy, which acknowledges the role of the services as well as recognizes that today's security challenges require us to move seamlessly across the maritime domain prepared for any contingency.



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Two years ago, the US Navy, Marines and Coast Guard published “The Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower.” Reflecting the changing security environment, the strategy emphasizes the importance of working with international partners as the basis for maritime security. Trust and cooperation are fundamental to our ability to respond to crises; we cannot surge them. Instead, it takes time to build partnerships based on mutual understanding and respect.

Our longstanding friendships in the Asia-Pacific region underpin the U.S. Pacific Fleet’s role in regional cooperative maritime efforts. In many respects, the document codifies and builds on a long history of collaborative relationships in the Asia-Pacific region. The strategy serves to guide our concepts of operations, preparation of people, as well as the development and procurement of future systems. Our leaders expect the Pacific Fleet to prepare and respond to a broad range of missions. Exercises with our partners in the Pacific are a foundational element to our cooperative strategy.

For example, the Rim of the Pacific Exercise has brought navies together to the Hawaiian operating area every two years since 1971. RIMPAC provides a premiere training venue for navies from around the Pacific - and we are looking forward to hosting many of you in the summer of 2010.

Since 1995, Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) bilateral exercises have strengthened relationships with the navies of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. This year observers from Bangladesh and Vietnam participated. CARAT allows us to work together in key maritime security tasks such as interdiction and boarding as well as practice information sharing while enhancing interoperability. Pacific Fleet ships learn a great deal from those who must practice maritime security in a demanding environment such as the Strait of Malacca and Singapore.

I applaud the success of regional efforts to address maritime security challenges. The Malacca Straits Patrol collaboration of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand – serve as models for effective action against common concerns. Your work and leadership against a backdrop of



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competing maritime claims with the attendant and associated sovereign tensions, is especially noteworthy and has proven that reasoning and pragmatism at sea can prevail.

Our maritime strategy places a premium on the Navy-Coast Guard partnership and the Pacific Fleet is supporting Coast Guard initiatives to enhance maritime domain awareness in the vast EEZs of Pacific Island nations, helping to protect their natural resources from illegal fishing.

We are using our naval forces in many creative ways that make them more relevant and valuable in today's security environment.

Building on our shared experience in bringing relief to areas affected by the tsunami of December 2004, we have begun a program of proactive humanitarian assistance known as "Pacific Partnership." We do not have to wait for a disaster to do good works, and along the way humanitarian work fosters trust, mutual understanding, and goodwill.

The hospital ship Mercy sailed to the western Pacific three times in the past five years. Mercy provides a unique platform for international cooperation. In 2008, 10 partner nations and numerous non-governmental organizations participated in Pacific Partnership during visits to five nations. Over a four-month period, 90,000 people received medical treatment and engineers built community buildings such as schools and clinics.

This proactive humanitarian work during periods of calm helps us work together in a crisis. Our presence in the region enables us to respond quickly to disasters such as the recent, near simultaneous, flooding in the Philippines, the tsunami in Samoa, and the earthquake in Padang, Indonesia.

In the next six months, we will bring more capability into the fleet with the introduction of the Littoral Combat Ship; LCS 1 is the first in a class that we estimate will have 55 ships for use largely in the littoral regions of the Asia-Pacific.



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These are tough challenges, but I am optimistic because maritime forces are well equipped to respond the changing security environment - the response from partners in the international community is encouraging.

At the International Seapower Symposium, we witnessed 90 Chiefs of Navy and representatives from more than 100 navies sit down, roll up their sleeves, and work Maritime Domain Awareness issues ... each had his own view, his own national guidance, tasking and policies. Yet within the conference was broad recognition that the maritime environment breeds a culture of adaptability, resilience, pragmatism, and flexibility that pointed the audience to the realm of what was possible, what we could do, instead of what we could not do. We could work specific arrangements so that we could share information at sea.

Additionally, we have multi-mission platforms that have critical command and control capability. We have worked the logistics requirements so that we understand how to support forces forward for the duration of a crisis.

We have very important military-to-military relationships and exchanges to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations at sea. Today, we have naval officers who are regional specialists, with expertise in civil affairs and still others who perform important functions on the ground with Army and Marine forces. We have officers who were refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia as children now in command of ships at sea – this is a reflection of our model for diversity.

The Pacific and Indian Oceans, adjacent seas, waterways, and merchant sea-lanes upon them are inseparable from the global economic system. Maritime operations are particularly well suited for partnerships; they offer unique opportunities for innovative command and control arrangements and information sharing. Our challenge is to forge a way ahead...to find aspects of maritime security that we can share and cooperate. Ultimately, the stakes are very high and the role that navies play will affect more than simply the nations that we represent.