



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
39th Pacific Area Senior Officer Logistics Seminar
Kurumba, Maldives
Admiral Patrick M. Walsh
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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen...and thank you for traveling vast distances to be here at the 39th Pacific Area Senior Officer Logistics Seminar. It is an honor for me to be with you as we continue work begun nearly four decades ago; work that is dedicated more than ever to enhancing cooperation and mutual understanding; work that has proven so vital in developing and putting into action cooperative logistics. Since the establishment of PASOLS, many multi-national responses, small and large, have provided rapid relief to those in need...logistics is always the foundation for this success...so I am especially grateful for the opportunity to be here with you today.

I would like to recognize our host, the Government of Maldives, and thank you for your warm hospitality and extensive preparations – it is great to be in your beautiful country. You have afforded us a unique opportunity to collaborate with military leaders, operators, practitioners and colleagues from around the globe to improve our joint logistics capabilities and strengthen and expand our relationships with one another.

Since its inception in 1971, PASOLS has grown from a gathering of nine countries, to 26 member nations and 12 observer nations today. It is currently the only multinational, multi-service, ministry and Department of Defense level logistics forum in the Asia-Pacific region and, as such, serves as an example everywhere for the collaboration and improvement of joint cooperative efforts.

Next year is the 20th Anniversary of Operation Sea Angel. Launched in response to a devastating cyclone in Bangladesh, Sea Angel stands as one of the largest international relief operations in history. Involving participants from the United States, the United Kingdom, China, India, Pakistan and Japan, Sea Angel is credited with delivering 3000 tons of supplies and saving the

lives of as many as 200,000 people. The success of that mission demonstrated what can be accomplished when the military forces of our nations work in partnership. As we consider the lessons and accomplishments of Sea Angel, it is only fitting that the theme of PASOLS 39 is Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.

We share this mission at an extraordinary moment in history - when the movement of information and 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. As Sea Angel demonstrated, the sea is often the principal medium for the passage of the tangible components of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Sailors have the honor, good fortune, and responsibility to represent their nation 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 by internal laws and defensive postures, we share the vast regions of the sea. Therefore, the very nature of the operating environment suggests a collective approach for the shared benefits and responsibilities of the sea.

In an age where commerce, resources, and communications link all of us in every way, the need to develop seamless mechanisms for providing timely humanitarian assistance and disaster relief is more crucial – and more challenging – than ever before. All of these areas can be advanced by working together and exchanging ideas and information in venues such as this symposium.

We have much to learn from one another. My own country discovered how much we had to learn about planning, communications, and relationships required for logistical support during the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Various agencies and services in the U.S. discovered the absolute necessity of prior coordination and practice – and those are exactly the steps we want to take here in the Maldives.

Today, we are building the links that will sustain us into the future. When our nations are called together to assist one another, to respond to or mitigate the effects of disaster, it is the personal connections and relationships we build during this conference and others like it that will be essential to creating a consistent, powerful, and unified front through which we can provide much needed aid to ease the onset or likelihood of human suffering.

In 2004, when an earthquake struck Sumatra and unleashed a devastating tsunami which ultimately claimed the lives of over 230,000 individuals, the world rallied to provide assistance to the region. In 2010, when Haiti experienced a magnitude 7.0 earthquake, the international community again answered the call by providing much needed relief including food, water, and medical supplies. During the recent flooding in Pakistan, numerous nations have collaborated to provide aid to those affected. In all of these tragedies, the international relief response has been immediate and all of this was dependent on the interoperability of logistics support between nations.

In the Asia-Pacific alone a natural disaster occurs, on average, every 60 days, more than any other area of the world. An estimated ninety-percent of the world's earthquakes occur along the Pacific Rim of Fire. According to the Fritz Institute, over the next fifty years, the frequency of both natural and man-made disasters is expected to increase five-fold as a result of environmental degradation, rapid urbanization, and endemic public health crises.¹ While we do not know the time or place, we can say with certainty...your country will call you and expect you to be ready.

We have seen how essential it is to continue to train together and collaborate, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to improve interoperability in order to respond effectively to any situation. For it is through proactive collaborations and operations that we can refine and better integrate our reactive capabilities.

¹ Thomas, Anisya M., and Laura R. Kopczak. *From Logistics to Supply Chain Management: The Path Forward in the Humanitarian Sector*. Fritz Institute, 2005. Web.

Through multinational humanitarian operations such as Pacific Partnership, or multilateral conferences such as the upcoming April 2011 Western Pacific Naval Symposium on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, we are discovering international solutions to international problems, enhancing security, stability, and prosperity throughout the Pacific.

It has been my sincere pleasure speaking to you today. This event brings together incredibly dedicated and talented people to collaborate and establish the relationships that will save lives and relieve human suffering. Over the course of the next few days you will have the chance to learn more about each other's organizations. It is important that as we build our relationships, we also identify ways to improve our cooperation in order to continue our strong track record of providing rapid regional response to those in need.

When the call comes for the next large scale humanitarian assistance or disaster relief mission, you may very well have to work closely with some of the same men and women in this room today. PASOLS provides an opportunity to develop the personal and professional relationships that allow nations, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and militaries to work effectively together. When we are called once again to bring relief in the wake of a disaster, many of you may play an important leadership role...we must be ready.

Have a productive and enjoyable conference – I wish you all continued success.