



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet  
Kokoda Foundation  
Canberra, Australia  
Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr.  
31 October 2013  
As prepared for delivery**

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Let me begin by saying how honored I am to represent Admiral Locklear tonight and how proud I am to command the United States Pacific Fleet.

I'm honored to be here. It's apropos that this is my first international trip as the new Pacific Fleet commander.

Special thanks to the Kokoda Foundation; what you do to enhance understanding of the complex security challenges we face in the Indo-Asia-Pacific is important work.

As I thought about what I would talk about tonight, I brushed up on my history and read about the hardships confronted by those who fought on the Kokoda Trail more than 71 years ago. It occurred to me just how much the Indo-Asia-Pacific has changed in the last seven decades.

Today the world is interconnected and interdependent in ways unimaginable then. It's no exaggeration to state that freedom of the seas is our very life blood and critical to global economic health and prosperity. But today, not only does 90 percent of the world's commerce travel on the seas, 95 percent of our Internet traffic travels under it. Here in Australia, more than 99.5 percent of trade by volume is carried by the sea.

Freedom of the seas matters.

In order to ensure that conditions are set for that future, we can't rest on our laurels. We must innovate as we work and operate together. We must be aggressive to increase collaboration, cooperation and strengthening trust among our allies and partners.

Around the world, the United States has only seven bilateral treaty allies, five of them are in the Indo-Asia-Pacific and two of them are right here tonight -- Australia and Japan. The relationships between our nations are as important to our future as they have been to our past.

This is why I'm committed to deepening the maritime piece of our defense relationships with our allies and security partners throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific. My intent is not to plan for war against any particular nation, but rather to lessen the chances of conflict by increasing security and stability more broadly throughout the region. But the Pacific Fleet is prepared, unequivocally, to respond to threats to our nation, our interests and our allies from a position of strength.

Of course, the real world often has a nasty habit of intruding on the perfect one, and there is no shortage of challenges to a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Asia-Pacific.

Consider the competition for resources, territory and influence, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the threats posed by terrorism, piracy, cyber, and trafficking in all its forms, not to mention the natural disasters that arise with increased frequency.

The world is indeed a dangerous place in this, the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Let me assure you, if you only remember one thing from my remarks tonight, it should be this: you can count on the United States of America.

Our president and our secretary of defense have been crystal clear. We will rebalance to the Indo-Asia-Pacific, we will properly resource the rebalance, and we will work closely with our allies and partners as we do so.

Make no mistake, the United States is and will remain a Pacific power.

America has faced austere economic cycles and political turmoil many times since World War II. But our nation's commitment to this region has never wavered. We know that presence matters, and our Navy has always maintained a robust and capable presence in this region. In fact, we're celebrating the 70th anniversary of the U.S. 7th Fleet, which was first established in 1943 in Brisbane, Australia.

And even though our Navy has gotten smaller in the last few decades, the number of ships, submarines, aircraft and personnel we have forward-deployed to this region -- and this is important -- has in fact increased.

The rebalance recognizes that U.S. economic prosperity and security are inextricably linked to the Indo-Asia-Pacific.

This is an intentional effort based on a strategy of collaboration and cooperation. But the rebalance is not just a security- or defense-centered policy, it is a whole of government effort: diplomatic, economic, political and security.

No one should question our commitment to the rebalance. Not only can we do this, we are doing this. The physical manifestations of our rebalance in new platforms, equipment and technology out here are plain to see.

Our first littoral combat ship is deployed to Southeast Asia, conducting operations with our friends and partners.

In December we will deploy -- for the first time -- the P-8 Poseidon, our newest anti-submarine warfare aircraft. For a guy who has spent his career flying the mighty P-3 Orion, I can tell you, the future is here.

Our newest EF-18 Growlers and Virginia-class submarines are deployed to the Pacific, as are our newest amphibious ships to deliver Marines wherever they need to go.

And speaking of Marines, I don't have to remind anyone in this audience that we now deploy them to Darwin, and our Marines are flying their new MV-22 Osprey aircraft throughout the region.

The joint strike fighter will come this way soon, an awesome capability.

We are well on the road to meet our year 2020 goal to homeport 60 percent of U.S. Navy assets in the Pacific.

And this is only about the Navy and Marine Corps team. Our brothers and sisters in Pacific Air Forces and U.S. Army Pacific are leading their services in the rebalance as well.

But the rebalance is about more than just stuff, it's about developing gray matter.

We're bringing our intellectual focus to bear on the region. We're increasing experimentation and validation of new tactics, techniques and procedures and operational concepts.

We're putting people with extensive operational experience in the Pacific, as well as broad combat experience, to key leadership positions out here. Vice Adm. Robert Thomas, our new 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet commander, is one example.

We're developing and educating our younger personnel to serve in the Indo-Asia-Pacific, to include revitalizing our foreign area officer program, as an example. We know that having talented people who know the region, who speak the languages and understand the cultures, is important to what we're trying to do.

Our cultural diversity as Americans is proving helpful here. This includes me, for example -- my mother is Japanese. I was born there, and I've spent almost half my career in the Pacific. My roots here run deep, and I'm glad to be back.

All of these are concrete examples that America's rebalance to the Pacific is real. And it means that I have homework to do. The U.S. Pacific Fleet will remain forward-deployed so that we are where it matters, when it matters. The Pacific and Indian oceans are big, and there's plenty of room for all of us to navigate these seas together. This is why we stress multilateral maritime operations and exercises which enhance our ability to operate collectively during crises.

I can think of no better example than our recently concluded Pacific Partnership 2013 mission. This year marked the first time partner nations -- Australia and New Zealand -- took the lead in individual phases. Japan will play a central role in next year's Pacific Partnership.

Multilateral efforts are increasingly important today as opportunities to build trust and cooperation and ultimately deter conflict and crisis. This approach was also on display during last June's ASEAN disaster relief and military medicine exercise that brought together navies from 18 nations, including China.

That's important. Some in the media like to speculate that our rebalance effort is about China, but this is simply not the case.

We seek to define our relationship with China by our shared future and mutual responsibilities and not by our past histories and differences. A strong relationship with China is an important part of the rebalance and that is the reason why Pacific Fleet continues to build a constructive relationship with the Chinese Navy. Indeed, this is why we've invited China to participate in our 2014 Rim of the Pacific -- or RIMPAC -- exercise.

RIMPAC is the largest maritime exercise in the world. Last year, 22 nations participated, the largest number in its 41-year history. And last year's RIMPAC was the first one where non-U.S. officers commanded functional components, including and especially leaders from Australia and Japan.

Our alliances are the very corner stone to security and stability in this region. So let me assure you that our cooperation with China will occur within the existing security framework and not at the expense of our alliances.

Though we all have many interests related to this important region, security and stability are key to our shared prosperity and peace. While we certainly respect healthy competition, we can all appreciate the fact that conflict and crisis are bad for business. That is why the United States and so many of our allies, partners and friends in this region are committed to fostering a rules-based system that respects international law and adheres to international norms. This is what makes great powers great.

While peace and prosperity are the most desirable outcomes of our efforts, I will never lose sight of the fundamental function of the United States Navy, and that is to fight and help win our nation's wars, particularly at sea. I think in those terms and I live in that world. And that means my team is working hard to ensure that the Pacific Fleet stands ready, from Hollywood to Bollywood and everywhere in between.

Ladies and gentlemen, I've talked too long so let me close with this thought. I'm reminded of the words of the great French diplomat Talleyrand, who once said to the head of the French Army, "When my profession fails, yours must come to the rescue."

I would submit that we cannot afford to separate diplomacy and force so rigidly. Instead, we should follow the advice of McGeorge Bundy, special advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, who once wrote, "Near the heart of all foreign affairs is the relationship between policy and military power." I think that is closer to the mark.

Now I see that many of you have pushed back your dessert plates, a clear indication that I have talked too long. Recently, when my wife Bruni and I were entertaining some dignitaries in our home in Washington, I gave a little talk after dinner. Afterwards, as our guests were leaving, one of the ladies said to me, Admiral, I really enjoyed your speech. I woke up so refreshed.

Well, I hope you are refreshed -- and coffee'd up -- and ready to ask some tough questions.

Thank you very much.