



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet  
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Honolulu, Hawaii  
Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr.  
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Thank you Sherry for that introduction.

Ladies and gentlemen, since becoming the Pacific Fleet commander last October, I've given a bunch of speeches here in Hawaii, and overseas as well. My remarks have focused on the importance of security and stability in the Pacific, and how the Pacific is crucial to America's economic prosperity. Last month I spoke at the 72nd commemoration of the attack on Pearl Harbor, where I talked about the importance of remaining vigilant so that our nation is never again strategically surprised.

These are just a few of the reasons why our nation is rebalancing to the Indo-Asia-Pacific. It's an intentional effort based on a strategy of collaboration and cooperation with our allies and partners, and I've been busy discussing the rebalance with our partner nations, letting them know that despite fiscal challenges, the rebalance is real and being realized.

Our rebalance to the Pacific recognizes that U.S. economic prosperity and security are inextricably linked to the Asia-Pacific. But it's not just a security, or a defense-centered policy, it's a whole of government effort, including diplomatic, economic, business, political and security. So today I want to talk about how Hawaii is, in my view, the gateway to America's rebalance to the Pacific.

It would be a mistake for anyone to assume that because our nation is rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific, Hawaii will easily be able to maintain the resources that we have become accustomed to. As we all know, our nation has undergone some financial belt tightening of late. It won't be easy, but it's not impossible either.

Until last year, the access, influence, and decades of experience of two legendary Senators from Hawaii played a vital role in supporting our U.S. military in the Pacific, and especially here in Hawaii. While that level of access and influence is surely difficult to replace, we are fortunate to have a governor, two new senators, two congresswomen and mayors who truly understand the importance, to America, of our military here in Hawaii.

But to completely fill the substantial shoes of Senators Inouye and Akaka, all of us here today, all of us here today, must step up our game or accept greater risk to Hawaii's prominence as the gateway to America's rebalance. This is why I applaud the Military Affairs Council's efforts to reorganize, build new alliances and centers of influence, and further leverage the vast talent of Hawaii in new and innovative ways.

And this is also why I challenge the Military Affairs Council and Hawaii's government and business leaders, and myself, to do even more in the future. It's crucial that Hawaii's leaders work

to maintain this state's relevance, while helping maintain our Nation's leadership role in this region and throughout the world.

Today, Hawaii plays a key role in the rebalance, across every aspect of national influence. And clearly the legacy of past leaders has put Hawaii on solid footing, but this torch has been passed to you, to us.

For example, the state of Hawaii is a leader in 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. Let's get the word out.

Hawaii has cultural diversity, women in prominent roles in industry, business and government. Hawaii is ideally suited for economic interaction among regional partners. This is a terrific economic model. So let's get the word out.

Hawaii has first-rank intellectual organizations like the Center for Strategic and International Studies-Pacific Forum, the East-West Center, and the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, all providing rich dialogue and brain-power essential to the rebalance. Let's get the word out.

For us military types, we appreciate the strategic location, placing us front and center in the Pacific. The harbors and bases we use here are among the very best in the world, and the world-class facilities like the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Pacific Missile Range Facility provide tremendous support to your fleet.

We also have Pacific Command, with Admiral Locklear in charge, and the service components, whose co-located presence here on the island is a force multiplier. No other combatant command has this.

But we also appreciate the warm welcome that those of us who get to live here receive. In fact, it's no accident that so many of us military types retire here. Old Sailors and Soldiers never die, we just move to Hawaii.

This is a great foundation for Hawaii to build upon and I know that leaders like you will continue to work to maintain Hawaii's relevance throughout the rebalance.

Of course our military forces also play a significant role in the rebalance, and while we start from a strong foundation, we must adapt to changing times as well. As you heard this morning, each of the services are sending their newest and most capable platforms to this theater. Just consider what we are doing in the Pacific from your Navy's perspective.

By 2020, 60 percent of our Navy will be in the Pacific and many of those forces will be completely modernized. Consider the new platforms and equipment we already see coming to the Pacific.

Last month, USS Freedom, our first Littoral Combat Ship, pulled in to Pearl Harbor as she concluded her first deployment to the Western Pacific.

We just deployed the first P-8 Poseidon squadron, our newest anti-submarine warfare aircraft...and for a guy who has spent his career flying the mighty P-3 Orion, I can tell you the future is here.

We have MH-60 Romeos replacing legacy helicopters at Kaneohe Bay, providing a significant improvement to our capabilities in anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare.

And as you heard earlier from Rear Admiral Williams, the guided-missile cruiser Lake Erie is being replaced with the guided-missile destroyer John Paul Jones as the Navy's missile defense test ship. She's the first integrated air and missile defense ship...and will lead the way for all others to follow. Homeporting our most capable ships here in Hawaii continues to be a priority for your Navy.

Our Zumwalt-class destroyers will be homeported in the Pacific and I expect the Joint Strike Fighter to be flying in the Pacific soon.

But it's not just platforms, there's a lot of new equipment coming to the Pacific. In the newspaper recently you may have read about the new AEGIS Ashore test facility nearing completion at the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai. This is another important step in the right direction as we develop our Ballistic Missile Defense capabilities.

Of course it is easy to focus on new toys --especially coming out of the Christmas season--but the rebalance from the Navy's perspective is about more than just stuff, it's also about developing gray matter.

We're bringing our intellectual focus to bear on the region. We're increasing experimentation and the validation of new tactics, techniques, procedures and operational concepts. We're working closely with Pacific Air Force to put teeth into the new Air Sea Battle Concept.

We're putting leaders with extensive regional experience in key positions in the Pacific. We're revitalizing our Foreign Area Officer program and we've just established the Asia Pacific, or APAC Hands program, an initiative to build and identify officers with regional understanding and know-how to inform decision makers. We know that having talented people who speak the languages and understand the cultures is important to what we're trying to do.

Our Nation's cultural diversity is proving helpful, and this includes me--my mother is Japanese, I was born there, and I've spent almost half my career in the Pacific, including time in Hawaii. My roots here run deep and I'm glad to be back.

On all levels we are working to strengthening our relationships with our allies and partners. It's interesting to note that around the world, the U.S. has only seven bilateral treaty allies and five of them are in this region. 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.

We're providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to those in need. Just consider our latest effort in the Philippines, our oldest ally in the region, as we aided in their recovery from the

recent super typhoon, led by MARFORPAC. I believe our proximity mattered, forward deployed forces in the Western Pacific, leadership in Hawaii, and plain old American can-do, all made the difference.

And we routinely engage in bilateral and multilateral exercises to strengthen our interoperability with the navies of nations throughout the region. The most well-known of these is the Rim of the Pacific exercise that will be held here this summer. RIMPAC 2014 will be the largest ever in its 42-year history, with 23 participating nations, including for the first time, Brunei and China. Not only is RIMPAC important to shaping an environment of peace and stability, but it also brings a substantial economic benefit to Hawaii. It's win-win for all of us.

There is little doubt that our Navy today is second to none and I guarantee that tomorrow's Navy will be as well. Our Navy evolves and adapts better than any Navy in the world. This is not based on simply studying about stuff, though that's important. This is based on solid operational experience. It comes from the strength of our Nation's brave sons and daughters who have chosen the warrior's way, all those who have served before them, and all those who will serve after, an unbroken chain of Americans from generation to generation.

Now I'm no expert on the Good Book, I prefer to leave the preachin' to preachers, like Chaplain Dondi Costin who gave that great blessing a bit ago, but I do know that in the book of Ezekiel, God was searching for a person who would "Build up a wall and stand in the gap" to defend a new nation, a warrior who would represent the honor and integrity of the people.

Thankfully, our nation has always been blessed to have strong men and women with exceptional courage, who are willing and able to stand in the gap and defend America, whenever our liberty is in jeopardy.

Our nation has been blessed to have innovative industries that provide the best equipment and technology that enable defenders to get the job done.

And our Nation is richly blessed to have informed citizens, people like you, who are aware of the challenges, opportunities, and dangers we face here in this region, and around the world.

You play an important part in shaping our nation's future...as you develop new centers of influence, here in Hawaii, so that your military forces can remain strong.

As President Eisenhower once noted, "Only alert and knowledgeable citizens can ensure the responsible use of power, so that security and liberty may prosper together."

The people of Hawaii, the Aloha State, epitomize President Eisenhower's "alert and knowledgeable citizenry."

Hawaii continues to play a key role in the defense of our Nation, and is truly the gateway to America's Pacific rebalance. Those of us in uniform are grateful for your efforts. Keep doing what you're doing!

May God bless our men and women who wear the cloth of our Nation.

May God bless the great State of Hawaii.

And may God bless the United States of America.

Thank you.