



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Opening Ceremony for Exercise Fortune Guardian
Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies
Honolulu, Hawaii**

Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr.

August 4, 2014

As prepared for delivery

Thank you Dave Leather for that introduction and the work you've put in to this exercise.

And I thank all of you who worked so hard to make this PACOM-hosted event a success.

General Hirai, thank you and the entire team here at APCSS for providing the venue for exercise Fortune Guard, and pass that on to 'Fig' Leaf when he returns from travel please. You guys offer great facilities, a great staff and, being so close to Waikiki Beach I think we can all agree, you offer a great location.

Distinguished guests, and there certainly are a lot of you here, from 18 nations at last count, and all representing diverse leadership from many facets of your government, thank you for taking the effort to travel so far to be here.

For me, it's a special honor to talk to you on such an important topic. Back in May 2003, I had the privilege to be present at the creation of PSI. Now I have the privilege to speak at the kickoff of the Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation. So, in many ways I feel I've come full circle. So welcome to all.

As I listened to Mr. Rosenbach speak about the So San a moment ago, it brought back some memories. I was serving in Bahrain as the assistant chief of staff for operations, plans, and political-military affairs for the commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. Fifth Fleet at the time. So what that really means is that I was in that area of the world and was being briefed on the So San every day.

Those were some interesting times, as some of you may recall. The United States had been concerned with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction for some time, especially with the collapse of the Soviet Union. But in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, we were at a heightened level of awareness for anything that might involve a terrorist threat.

The strategic surprise that our nation suffered on September 11, 2001, was extraordinary in many ways; not least of all was the asymmetric means for conducting the attack, using our own airliners as weapons of mass destruction.

The change in tactics by those who were threatening our nation certainly got us thinking. How else could they hurt the United States and other nations?

I can remember some of the ideas being thrown around. After the attacks there was no lack of speculation about the next threats.

And the threats keep getting more sophisticated, especially when we think about nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the many different types of delivery systems out there.

So, in 2002, amidst that heightened level of awareness, we suspected the So San might be transporting weapons of mass destruction from North Korea. We learned that the period of discovery of the legal mechanisms to confiscate the weapons was far longer than the window of time that we had to act. So the best we could do was board the ship, inspect the cargo, and hold what turned out to be Scud missiles for a short while before letting them go again.

In the new world that dawned after 9/11, mere inspection wasn't good enough. We needed a way to address these types of challenges and threats, to stop the flow of WMD, their delivery systems and related materials.

President Bush charged his administration to resolve the problem. Together, with key partners, a new multilateral initiative was born, the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Since then, PSI has brought together an international community capable of acting at a moment's notice, who are committed to planning and training for any possible contingencies or eventualities, and who are willing to work together, government-to-government, to facilitate rapid decision-making.

PSI has created a new norm for counter-proliferation interdiction over the last decade. It has galvanized the resolve of nations around the world and continues to grow. Since its inception in 2003, we have seen PSI grow from only 11 endorsing nations to 104, with the most recent additions earlier this year.

And we've had some success. It wasn't that long ago that M/V Light out of North Korea had to turn around for home without delivering its cargo, or a North Korean ship was caught smuggling missile parts through the Panama Canal. The president of Panama tweeted a selfie to the world with that material in the background, a strong message to those who are thinking about smuggling WMD through the Panama Canal.

And now we're upping our game, as we gather for the first exercise under the annual Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation, starting here in the United States, then next year New Zealand, then Australia, Singapore, the Republic of Korea and Japan. Together we are taking the next great step in preventing the proliferation of WMD, their delivery systems and related materials. And we're taking that great step together.

During exercise Fortune Guard, you will be conducting a tabletop exercise, a live exercise at sea on the USNS Henry J. Kaiser and a port exercise over at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. The practical experience that you will gain from these events is important as we work together to further enhance partner nation capacity, strengthen our resolve to take decisive action to prevent, and when necessary, to stop these illicit shipments.

The world recognizes that the Indo-Asia-Pacific is an increasingly vital part of the globe, where we see the greatest potential for economic growth, and population growth, over the next century.

That is part of the reason the United States is conducting a whole of government rebalance to the Indo-Asia-Pacific.

Another reason is that we are aware of the threats present in this critical part of the world, where we all face the potential for natural and man-made crises -- including the threats caused by state, and non-state actors, who attempt to trade in weapons of mass destruction.

By working together, especially during an exercise like Fortune Guardian, we are able to demonstrate in a public and visible way that 104 nations of the world are working together to stop proliferation. And we have the capacity necessary to stop the spread of WMD through cooperation fostered by the Proliferation Security Initiative.

There is one other aspect of this endeavor that I want to highlight. The success of this initiative has always been, and will likely always be, built on the strength of relationships among like-minded nations. Nations that are no longer willing to stand idly by while would-be proliferators threaten the security and stability that is so important to peace and economic prosperity, all around the world. These important relationships start here, with those of you in this room.

Former Chief of Naval Operations Gary Roughead once said, "Although our forces can surge, trust and cooperation cannot be surged." That takes interaction over time. So take advantage of that here. Get to know each other in this time of relative peace, so that in times of challenge, or in times of crisis, you are able to reach out to each other so that you understand the character of the people you are putting your faith and your trust in.

All right. I know what it's like in the early afternoon, when you've just had lunch and you've been sitting in a quiet room where the guest speaker goes on and on. Not wanting to see any of you doze off, let me leave you with this final thought.

We must always remember that the fate of all nations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific is inextricably linked together. Security and stability in this region of the world comes from the united effort of like-minded nations, and like-minded people. People like many of you in the audience, here today -- people who are aware of the challenges, aware of the opportunities, and aware of the dangers we all face together, now, and in the future.

By working together toward a common goal we have an opportunity to help shape a brighter and more prosperous world for all us. It's a tremendous responsibility and an important one, one that I know you are capable of fulfilling.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your support and participation in exercise Fortune Guard.

I wish all of you the best of luck as you work hard in the coming days, to keep the world safe in the coming decades.

Thank you.