



Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
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Sydney, Australia
Admiral Patrick M. Walsh
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Mr. Chairman (Chief of Royal Australian Navy, VADM Russ Crane -- Chairman of the Plenary Meeting of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium 2010), I would like to comment on the impressive presentations and highlight the professionalism of the briefings. Our delegation sees great benefit from the analysis and insights of the presenters as well as the lessons that we discuss and distribute for all partners to share.

My experiences with many navies represented in the room today began in 2005 when I lived in Bahrain and worked with the international community to construct the initial response (at the time) to the burgeoning problem of piracy at sea off the coast of Somalia. While my tactical familiarity with the day-to-day mission is now dated, I would suggest that there are key lessons, that endure today and inform our view as we shift the discussion in the program from operations in the Middle East to operations in the Western Pacific.

The presentations on counter-piracy operations are informative and remind us of the modern day impact that any interruption to the sea lines of communication can have on the international community. These activities affect the freedom of movement for goods from all countries, not simply one nation because much of what travels by sea has become interwoven with the quality of all of our daily lives. Modern day piracy reminds us that we cannot assume that the seas will secure themselves.

We have learned that with threats and challenges to freedom of movement at sea...there is also an opportunity among navies for a renewed emphasis, focus, and approach to maritime security.

We have witnessed in the Gulf of Aden the power and the commitment of the international community as it speaks with one voice about the importance of security and stability at sea. Today we witness the equally powerful role of navies around the world as they roll up their sleeves to work the hard details of: information sharing, freedom of movement, securing the sea lines of communication, regional peace and security, and multilateral approaches to security in international waters.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to speak at this forum, because it allows us to keep pace with today's challenges to security, stability, and freedom of movement at sea.

Captain John Bischeri, Head -- International Policy Division at U.S. Pacific Fleet, will address 'Maritime Security Challenges' from the U.S. perspective.

NOTE: See Captain Bischeri's [brief](#) and [script](#).