



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet  
“Partnership and Cooperation  
in the Maintenance of Good Order at Sea”  
IMDEX 2011, Singapore  
Admiral Patrick M. Walsh  
May 19, 2011**

Good afternoon and thank you for the warm welcome and the opportunity to participate in this important forum. It is an honor to be among so many distinguished guests. I am especially grateful to the Republic of Singapore Navy and RSIS for hosting this excellent program. You have given all of us a unique opportunity – at an important time – to meet leaders, operators, practitioners, leading thinkers, and colleagues who sense the urgency and the need to address the vital issues related to maritime security.

The true benefit of the IMDEX conference is represented by the intellectual wealth in the room, the compelling ideas presented, as well as the critical relationships cultivated here. I want to highlight the impressive presentations and commend the professionalism of the briefers. Our delegation has benefitted from the analysis and insights of each of the presenters.

Our final topic is equally important to the broader set of discussions because partnerships and cooperation are fundamental to good order at sea. The discussions that began with the remarks of the Deputy Prime Minister remind us that any interruption to the sea lines of communication can have great impact on the international community.

These activities affect the freedom of movement for goods, resources, and people from all countries, not simply one nation because much of what travels by sea has become interwoven into our daily lives and livelihoods. The statistics from modern day piracy are staggering (over 500 hostages detained) and remind us of a broad, but very important point: we cannot assume or expect the seas to remain secure by themselves.

We have learned that with threats and challenges are opportunities -- opportunities among navies for new approaches to maritime security. What we have witnessed and heard reinforced here today is the power and the commitment of the international community as it speaks about the importance of security and stability at sea.

In a remarkably collegial way, our conversations have brought forward important topics from previous venues such as LIMA International Maritime Conference, the International Seapower Symposium in South Korea, the Royal Australian Navy Seapower Conference, and the Western Pacific Naval Symposium. The US Navy will hold the 20th International Seapower Symposium in October at our Naval War College – so that we can build upon our previous work (in 2009) when nearly 100 Chiefs of Navy came together to roll up their sleeves and work the hard details of information sharing, regional security, and multilateral approaches to security in international waters.

In many respects, the program, speakers and audience interaction have framed the nature of our challenge. IMDEX '11 has told us that we are in an area considered the lifeblood of the global economic system that supports more than 90 percent of world trade. It is an area characterized by evolving political and economic ties; rapid modernization of military capabilities; competing national interests; and wide variances of interpretation to lines of demarcation, national borders, boundaries, and interests.

Since IMDEX 2009, the world has witnessed events and circumstances that challenge good order and security at sea from many perspectives and at many levels. I suggest the following three examples where recent partnership and cooperation helped to maintain good order at sea and ashore.

At one level: The attack on a Republic of Korea naval vessel in March 2010 and the artillery attack against YP Do underscored the dangers of aggression and armed conflict that still exist. South Korea and the ROK Navy prevented provocations from becoming a wider conflict. The crisis strengthened the long-standing alliance between the Republic of Korea and partnerships with many friends in the region, and has reinforced cooperative efforts in Northeast Asia for missions critical to maritime security such as ballistic missile defense.

On another level: Transnational threats continue to represent challenges to stability at sea. Many of the navies represented here today have taken strong action against piracy, including the use of force to defend lives and property.

In January 2011, South Korean navy commandos rescued 21 crew members of a freighter, then Malaysian naval commandos stormed the MT Bunga Laurel, a chemical tanker, in the Gulf of Aden, freeing 23 Filipino crew; examples that highlight an increasing demand for naval forces – but also

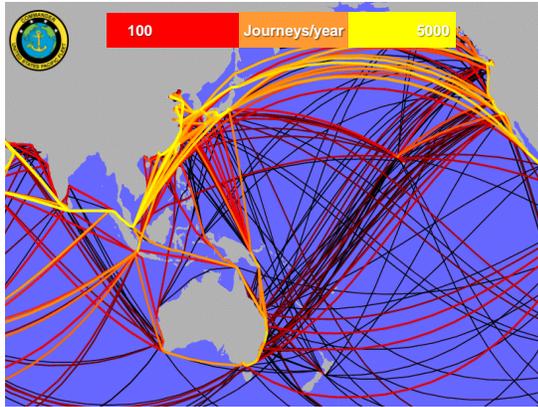
demonstrate the imperative for enhanced maritime cooperation as we continue to see that strong arrangements such as the Malacca Strait Patrol are required to combat piracy and other transnational threats.



And at another level: Naval forces have also played key roles in the aftermath of natural disasters, working in concert with government relief agencies, international relief organizations, and non-governmental organizations. A long history of partnership and cooperation with Japan enabled us to respond quickly to the recent earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crisis. The Joint Support Force in Operation Tomodachi highlighted that despite dangerous, dynamic circumstances in a contaminated radiological environment, we worked together to deliver food and water and open harbors and airports. The relief effort demonstrated the agility, value, and interoperability of naval forces.

As a Pacific nation with an enduring commitment to the stability of the region – we see challenges that require solutions across a broad spectrum of missions and therefore, place a high premium on partnerships to achieve security.

Navies bring a unique perspective to this discussion because they are eyewitness to the changing nature of the security environment as well as the physical climate in which we operate. In this region alone, geography facilitates or hinders the movement of people, commerce, and resources; history influences national identity, grievances, and fuels sovereign passions; cultural and religious centers extend influence well beyond the national horizons depicted by neatly organized lines on a map.



We see a direct connection and draw a direct correlation, between the stability of the global commons and the security and prosperity of nations. Collectively, our mission occurs at a moment in history – when the sharing of information, 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, for security and for many elements of our daily lives.



As you review these snapshots of the number of ship journeys per year and examine the close proximity of individual EEZs, I suggest that you will find a blending of many national interests that form along these important sea lines of communications that affect the potential stability and prosperity for those who live in as well as beyond the Asia Pacific region.

Since our last meeting, the world has continued to be more inter-connected, our community of nations more dependent on each other, and the issues increasingly sharp and complex.

Developments in economy, health, and per capita income have brought trends into sharp focus and in macro terms, have generated the amount of shipping that you saw earlier.

Our longstanding friendships in the Asia-Pacific region underpin the U.S. Pacific Fleet's role in regional cooperative maritime efforts.

While missions such as ballistic missile defense and submarine rescue will continue to be key capability priorities for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, we are committed to cooperative activities that keep the maritime commons safe and secure from transnational threats. We routinely exercise at sea with allies and partners, learning from each other as we improve interoperability and strengthen relationships among officers and sailors.

For example, our 60-year alliance with the Philippines is robust; our forces come together to exercise maritime interdiction, information sharing, and amphibious capabilities. The goodwill and affinity between our nations was evident last week when President Aquino honored us with his visit to USS CARL VINSON.



Last July, the Exercise Rim of the Pacific, or RIMPAC, brought the world's largest exercise of navies together to Hawaii as it has every two years since 1971.

RIMPAC provides a premiere training venue for over 22,000 Sailors from around the Pacific - and serves as a platform for navies to exercise together in many mission areas while enjoying the camaraderie of seagoing professionals.



We have built our humanitarian relief expertise with a program of proactive civic assistance known as “Pacific Partnership.” This annual mission fosters trust, mutual understanding, and goodwill. During this year’s Pacific Partnership, the militaries of Australia, Japan, France and New Zealand are joining the U.S. Navy and numerous non-government organizations to conduct medical, dental and engineering outreach in Oceania. Today, USS CLEVELAND is in Papua New Guinea after completing work with New Zealand military personnel in Vanuatu. This proactive humanitarian work during periods of calm helps us prepare to work together in a crisis.

Today’s dynamic strategic environment demands a network of maritime professionals working together for common interests...and as mariners we must always maintain a vigilant watch for challenges and threats coming over the horizon...

These threats are often transnational, interrelated, multi-dimensional, and cross many jurisdictions. Illegal activity on the seas – such as human trafficking, piracy, illegal fishing, and drug smuggling – represents crime and injustice that exploit ungoverned spaces and vulnerable people – these are vital missions for maritime forces.

The competition for resources, the effects of climate change, and environmental degradation can also contribute to tension and instability.

Increased demand for resources create opportunities for transnational organized crimes such as human trafficking because of a general lack of governance and rule of law. As highlighted in a recent RSIS commentary by one of today’s panelists Dr. Euan Graham, the fishing industry lacks the regulation and oversight associated with the international legal and regulatory framework governing

the merchant marine. The impact of Illegal, Unreported or Unregulated (IUU) fishing to the global economy is valued at upwards of \$24 billion per year. IUU activity is a lucrative incentive for transnational crime in various ways. As the hunt for fish depletes traditional grounds, vessels must sail even greater distances thereby increasing their operating costs. Furthermore, those fishing fleets risk confrontation due to overlapping maritime jurisdictional claims. In an effort to reduce expenses, some fishermen employ cheap migrant workers who may be exploited and fall victim to trafficking at sea. Additionally, some vessel owners have turned to smuggling or acts of piracy in an effort to survive in the fight for fish.

For Pacific Island nations who depend upon the sea for food and economic opportunity this represents a threat to their livelihood. We are pleased to be part of the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative, an arrangement that enhances maritime domain awareness in the vast EEZs of Pacific Island nations and seeks to protect their scarce resources.

Additionally, this year's Pacific Partnership mission in Timor-Leste will team with the Coral Triangle Initiative to address conservation of fragile, bio-diverse marine natural resources and sustainable management of fisheries.



As maritime professionals, sharing the common bond of the sea, we have important roles in ensuring peace and prosperity as we work together to ensure success in addressing these future challenges. Recognizing the incredible value of partnership and cooperation, we continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations at sea. In the U.S. Navy, we have naval officers who are regional specialists to further strengthen our commitment and support for our allies and partners. We

have examples of officers whose families are from the region and are now in command of ships assigned to our deployed naval forces.

While this is clearly a reflection of our nation's model for diversity – we also see these leaders as uniquely positioned to foster deeper understanding and cooperation with the people and navies of Asia-Pacific with whom we share a unique bond.

Strong relationships among navies and among seagoing professionals are a vital element of the partnerships and cooperation that promote good order at sea. As Secretary Clinton recently stated, “No one in Asia -- anywhere in Asia -- needs to ask if the U.S. will show up when it is needed.” The work that U.S. Pacific Fleet Sailors have done in partnership with many of your navies – and will continue to do – demonstrates this enduring commitment time and again.

Now, more than ever, we must reinforce our bonds as maritime professionals and work together through action and discourse to support our shared interests of peace and prosperity. The connections we have made over the past two days and the habits of cooperation and respect will help us work together more effectively to keep the seas secure and free. I look forward to continuing the dialogue in future gatherings and hope to see all of you at ISS in Newport later this year.

Thank you and I look forward to continued dialogue during the panel discussion.