

Remarks as Delivered by Admiral Mike Mullen
Delivery of the 100th AEGIS System, Moorestown, NJ
27 November 2006

Secretary Etter, fellow flag and general officers, foreign guests, other many, many distinguished visitors, ladies and gentlemen.,

I really am delighted to be here today thank you for joining us today... as we celebrate the delivery of the Centennial AEGIS combat system to our Navy.

To echo what Charlie Hamilton said -- "What a great Navy day."

What a great Navy day.

I would like to extend a special welcome to a mentor and a dear friend, Admiral Wayne Meyer, the "Father of AEGIS."

It is also very special to have here today, someone who I consider a Saint, that will have a very high place in Heaven, that's Anna Mae and many others from the Meyer family.

I'm very fond of speaking to the needs to recognize the sacrifices of our families of the families of men and women in the uniform. And I assure you that there has been that sacrifice in the Meyer family as well. We simply would not be here without it.

I am not sure that many of those working on that very first AEGIS system would have believed that one day the Navy would be accepting System One Hundred except, of course, for Admiral Meyer.

He was never not sure, he was always committed to realizing the full potential of this fantastic combat system or to constantly improving it along the way.

It was his belief in rigorous system engineering that got us here and it is those same principles that must lead us forward, not just in AEGIS but in all aspects of engineering design in our Navy.

All you have to do is ask him and he'll tell you.

Now being the CNO, you think I might be able to affect this program and I always worried about having the might before Admiral Meyer. He loves this work with a passion.

Every time we speak, it seems he is quick to tell me that my career peaked about 12 years ago.

It's always good to hear how I haven't progressed since I left command of YORKTOWN.

He then always goes on to explain, like only he can do, how the AEGIS system is always reaching for new heights.

It is truly a system that has delivered time and again.

We saw it during the Cold War, when our brazen motto was: “Stand by, Admiral Gorshkov, AEGIS is at sea!”

We saw more recently during the Desert wars, as our AEGIS ships performed brilliantly providing a shield to the fleet, launching Tomahawk cruise missiles, interdicting smugglers, controlling aircraft – and so much more.

We see it today, as AEGIS is at the heart of our surface Fleet that is globally deployed in defense of freedom.

While founded on the same basic system design that graced TICONDEROGA and YORKTOWN this Centennial System’s advanced combat system and revolutionary radar – truly represent a new era of technology.

For while AEGIS was originally optimized for blue water operations against Soviet bomber raids, this system brings unprecedented capabilities to the fight to the new wars and the new enemies we now face.

These enemies know no bounds. They believe nothing that we believe.

It is the war that we must win and it is a war we will win.

In today’s fight, AEGIS is a sword and shield that enables us to command the sea, control the littoral, project power ashore, and safeguard our troops and our allies from growing threats like ballistic missiles.

Nothing else at sea today even comes close.

AEGIS ships today truly represent naval excellence, strength and freedom. And are the foundation for a strong fleet and a strong Navy which this nation has always had and must have for the future.

But it isn’t just our Navy; there are other navies as has been stated.

AEGIS is sailing strong aboard Japan’s KONGO class of destroyers as well as Spain’s F-100 and Norway’s F-310 frigates.

And it will not be long before AEGIS is put to sea aboard new destroyers in Australia and the Republic of Korea.

Wherever freedom is challenged, AEGIS is there.

Thanks to Admiral Meyer and this team, Sailors across the globe can sail confidently, they have the best equipment this great country can produce -- with the best training we can provide.

I am mindful, that sailing with them, is a little piece of every one of you here, those of you who design, build, test, and deliver AEGIS.

Yes, where AEGIS sails, you are there too.

Your hard work – your enthusiastic patriotism – your dedication to putting AEGIS to sea is every bit as important as that of the Sailors who operate this terrific system in harm’s way.

To this entire Navy team, Lockheed Martin, and specifically to the workers here at Moorestown, thank you -- I appreciate what you are doing for our country.

And I know each of you work tirelessly everyday to make AEGIS even better.

I am convinced that as you embrace open architecture you will stand on the shoulders of this great AEGIS legacy as you take this program to new heights.

Legacy -- clearly, the AEGIS Fleet has a legacy of excellence. But, some use the term “legacy” to refer to “antiquated systems.”

I have even heard some call our in-service Fleet, “legacy ships.”

AEGIS and the fleet is anything but that.

As AEGIS transitions to open architecture, innovation will rapidly and simultaneously be introduced throughout our Fleet.

O-A assures that there will be no “legacy ships” – instead, every ship of the line will be a state-of-the-art combatant.

It is clear to me that we must spread this open approach across the entire Navy.

When I say open, I mean *open* systems, *open* competition and *open* the throttle. I want to move as fast as we can.

Open architecture starts with fielding systems that leverage commercial standards to create an interoperable Fleet that connects seamlessly with our sister Services, our allies and many other global partners.

Navies all over the world are excited about the idea of coming together in a 1000-ship navy to help each other meet the difficult challenges ahead.

But to do that we must be able to talk to each other and it is open systems that will enable us to work together as one.

As we open the throttles and move quickly forward it is clear that Admiral Meyer’s principles of “build a little, test a little,” of innovation, and of sound systems engineering are the model we must continue to follow.

It is a model that is reflected soundly in the 100th Aegis system we accept delivery of today.

Every AEGIS system needs a home, and this Centennial System is no exception -- it is heading to Bath Iron Works in Maine for installation in DDG-108, or, as they like to call her in Bath: "Hull Number 503."

When he hears someone refer to a ship simply by her hull number, Admiral Meyer always reminds us that "a ship has a name for a reason!"

Indeed, the namesake of a warship inspires the crew and instills a fighting spirit. To have one's name immortalized in an AEGIS warship is a high honor indeed -- both for the individual, and for the ship.

And that's why DDG-108 will forever be known as United States Ship *WAYNE E. MEYER*.

Honor - we are all so proud!

I can think of no better name for a *warship* of the U.S. Navy than *WAYNE E. MEYER* and no better tribute to the *man* who delivered engineering excellence to the Navy and instilled operational excellence in the fleet.

Now, I know you're proud of the Wayne E. Meyer Institute for Systems Engineering at the Naval Postgraduate School and the Wayne E. Meyer AEGIS Education Center in Dahlgren, but those buildings will never get underway.

So, yes, Admiral, ships do have a name for a reason, and that's true of this one in particular.

Many of us here have seen first hand how your commitment to learning, your demanding standards, your fighting spirit and your extraordinary leadership changed our Navy indeed; revolutionized warfighting while changing everyone around you -- for the better.

It is a spirit and character that will undoubtedly serve the crew of *MEYER* well as they serve in defense of freedom.

Just as your noble legacy lives in every AEGIS ship, it will confidently guide those who sail in the one that carries your name.

You can take great pride in knowing that some day soon a young Commanding Officer will surely consider command of the *USS WAYNE E. MEYER* the peak of his or her career.

You have blessed us all for over four decades.

May God continue to bless you, your family, our Navy and our Nation.