

**Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Jonathan Greenert**

National Press Club Q&A

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Moderator: Your article in Foreign Policy speaks of balancing the force. How do international navies play into your strategy?

Admiral Greenert: The international navies play into the strategy really by mission, I think, and by alliances that we've had, and really speak to the alliance.

I just spoke to the Western Pacific. The Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force plays, we cooperate with them to share what we call a long range search and track mission there in the Western Pacific. With the navies of the Republic of Korea, they've shown an interest in continuing to do that. So alliances that we have, we're taking those and we're evolving the mission in that regard to do that.

With regard to counter-piracy right now in the Gulf of Aden, alliances play a major major part. We have a coalition maritime force called 151 in the Gulf of Aden which has been led by Pakistan, it's been led by Bahrain. Actually the Iranian navy takes part, not in the coalition there operating with us, but in that area. The Chinese operate in that area, the Russians operate in that area. Not necessarily in a coalition, but in the sense of with alliances we share this, but also it brings together an international community that has a common concern.

Moderator: As tension between China and Japan over their claims on the Senkakus increase, how concerned are you about the possibility that a miscalculation on either side might lead to heightened conflict?

Admiral Greenert: Well if I were to take a word to describe the concern it's exactly that, it is a miscalculation causing escalation.

I think the key here is a common set of protocols to deal with interactions in that area. I've spoken about this with my counterpart in the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force, the Singapore Navy and the Philippines, and we all agree that what we need are a consistent set of protocols laying out very clearly where we stand. Freedom of navigation in international waters. A consistent set of protocols about how we describe that and discuss that with any navies in that area.

With regard to China in that regard, I believe we need to continue the dialogue and build upon the dialogue that we have today. We have a system, a series of talks that are sponsored by the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement, an agreement reached years ago where a group of O6s from the Chinese Navy and the U.S. Navy sit down and discuss a common set of agenda

items. That has been expanded to a plenary session where now flag officers sit down and discuss that.

We in the Department of Defense have now a deliberate strategy for engagement with the Chinese and military and I think it's important that we continue on that path, again, to be sure that we work with them and that we can work on the issues in the region.

Moderator: What is the biggest challenge presented by China's early naval strength?

Admiral Greenert: I think the biggest challenge is understanding the intent, understanding the strategy that China intends to unveil in that regard. They're making great headway in surface ships, they're making great headway in tactical aircraft, and it appears they have a definite interest in improving their technology.

So I think the biggest challenges for us will be to continue the dialogue and to learn how to operate together in a cooperate manner in areas that are important for freedom of the seas, that are important for economic development both in the Western Pacific and if they choose to expand operations, as they have, I mentioned the Gulf of Aiden, for the common good, if you will, and security in all the oceans.

Moderator: You see the maturing alliances in the Western Pacific. Can you talk about the movement of Marines from Okinawa to Guam, Australia and Hawaii?

Admiral Greenert: I can speak to, that's really probably better suited for the Commandant, but it is clear that the footprint of the Marines in the Western Pacific is changing and they're going to change. That lay-down is described and will evolve from Okinawa toward Guam, and also in the rotational deployment aspect to Australia.

Our job will be to provide the maritime lift for Marines who will rotationally deploy to Darwin, Australia.

Today there are about 250 Marines exercising with the Australians. That will grow. It will double and grow until toward the end of the decade. By 2020 we'll have a Marine Expeditionary Unit size, about 2500 rotationally deploying there. Our job will be to bring the Amphibious Ready Group to bear at that time to provide the lift and provide them the means of working together to operate in the South Pacific region.

Moderator: How close are the Chinese to our Navy base nuclear capabilities, and should the U.S. be worried?

Admiral Greenert: The Chinese do have nuclear submarines today. I would say that it's very difficult bringing on a nuclear program. We certainly learned that throughout the years. I'd say vigilant, I would say is the right term; worried, not quite yet.

I'm very confident in our ability to operate wherever we need to in the undersea domain.

Moderator: Can the U.S. Navy build and maintain the fleet required by the pivot to the Pacific?

Admiral Greenert: Today in the Defense Strategic Guidance there are a set of attributes, a set of missions that we're required to bring forward. This is all underwritten by what we call the Global Force Management Allocation Plan. It is really my covenant with our global combatant commanders to what we need to provide worldwide. And I'm comfortable today and in the future as shown by the chart as we evolve to operate forward using the innovative means and the current shipbuilding plan, that we can meet the requirements of the Defense Strategic Guidance.

Moderator: Will the U.S. return to old bases and places such as the Philippines?

Admiral Greenert: That's a good question that is under deliberation and consultation right now with the Philippines government. Today we operate from, some of you remember Clark Air Base, an Air Force base at one time. We fly with the armed forces on what we call Maritime Domain Awareness Flights with RP-3s. They have crew members on board. We do this about once a month.

We still make port calls to Manila. The George Washington was there not that long ago, as was the Eisenhower, I believe it was. We had a nuclear carrier visit there. And we somewhat routinely make port calls there.

But I think to return to a base requires a series of deliberations, if you will, that we have to work out. The Status of Forces Agreement, which has expired, would have to be renegotiated. It would require a long-term commitment. But those are under discussion.

Moderator: Can you elaborate on how the Law of the Sea Treaty would assist you or impact you with respect to ongoing confrontations in the China Sea?

Admiral Greenert: Yes. I'm a proponent. I support the Law of the Sea Treaty, particularly in the case of the South China Sea and its area. It would give us a document of reference to continue these, as I mentioned before, the dialogue that we have with the Chinese Navy and the Chinese military, a reference that would clearly articulate things like what the international exclusive economic zones, how they are laid out; territorial seas, how they are laid out; freedom of navigation and what those protocols are; and that we can then continue the dialogue in a common document both nations have signed up to and ratified.

We've already seen some examples of countries, Southeast Asian countries -- Vietnam, and the Philippines worked out using the Law of the Sea Treaty, the means to determine territorial, and resolve in some cases, territorial disputes in there. Clearly lay them down so you can have a trail, a path with further deliberations to solve it.

Moderator: The first Mobile Landing Platform has been assigned to Central Command. Will future MLPs be assigned to Pacific Command? And what are the merits, especially position?

Admiral Greenert: The precise assignments for the Mobile Landing Platform are not complete yet. I would tell you it will certainly deploy to the Pacific Command because what it brings, the

Mobile Landing Platform, because again as I described it, it's a former tanker. The engine room and the hull shape is a large tanker, but then the inserts that are tanks is space, volume, that you can ballast down, that you can then bring landing air cushion craft on board, that you can bring small boats up to. So it's volume, it's persistence, it's major fuel and maintenance support that you can bring to bear for a long time at various places around the world.

We see African Command and Southern Command and some elements of Central Command to be key as you mentioned. Already we're seeing the payback from the Central Command.

Moderator: The carrier Eisenhower, one of four deployed carriers, is on a nine month deployment, giving the Iraq-Iran-Afghanistan situation and the new emphasis on the Western Pacific Theater. When do you expect carriers to get back to a six month deployment?

Admiral Greenert: I don't think six month deployments are in the future for I would say the next two or three years at least. The reason is two-fold. One, the requirements for deployment around the world. As we see it, the Global Force Management Allocation Plan that we signed up to. Secondly, we need 11 carriers to do the job. That's pretty clearly written and it's underwritten in our Defense Strategic Guidance. We have ten carriers today. As the Eisenhower returned from her last deployment just a week ago, and she is getting ready to decommission before it will come into being, commissioned, around 2015 and we hope to get deployment about a year-plus later. So as we migrate from 10 toward 11 carriers, a real requirement, we're looking at probably closer to a norm of about a seven month deployment, for our carriers.

Each of our ship classes have a different level, if you will, of notional deployment. Some folks kind of move that together with the carriers, that's what all of our ships do, but six months remains notional for our submarines, six months remains notional for some of our [inaudible] and some of our other classes of ships. But seven months is more notional I think, or notional term for our carriers in the future.

Moderator: With the current carrier OpTempo and cost and time to build a new carrier, why didn't the Navy extend the Enterprise for another five years?

Admiral Greenert: Enterprise is almost 51 years old. Anything from the cabling was degrading, just the insulation on the carrier cabling that was so old. Her reactor plant was built for so many years of operation. So after numerous and very very close and comprehensive evaluations from the reactor plant to the propulsion plant to the auxiliaries to the flight deck, I think you get the point. She was tired and it was time for the Enterprise to complete her service.

Moderator: The Littoral Combat Ships are requiring more shore-based maintenance than originally planned. Is this sustainable?

Admiral Greenert: Well, the Littoral Combat Ship is a program that is still coming into its being. We have really one ship, the Freedom, who has been operating in somewhat of a routine. She does require a bit of maintenance, and we're learning a great deal about what exact maintenance we would want. What will be the balance of using what we call organic or typical means of doing maintenance today versus using contractors for maintenance.

So as we speak today, I stood up a Littoral Combat Ship Council and I placed a senior three star admiral in charge. He used to be, he was the tide commander, if you will, the surface force commander, knows a lot about the Littoral Combat ship.

What we want to do is get in place very quickly what kind of planned maintenance the ship needs, what will be its maintenance plan, what will be the maintenance scheme, how much do we operate it, do we have the manning about right? And he has a pretty high-level group and comprehensive group looking at this so we can respond and bring that class in like it needs to be brought in because it will be a very very important part of our future.

Moderator: The GAO in a September 21, 2012 report said that the Navy's training and maintenance plans were vulnerable. What is your reaction?

Admiral Greenert: Our training and maintenance plans always need review. I don't understand the context, I'm not familiar with the context of that specific report. But we're constantly reviewing better ways to do maintenance, better ways to do training. Particularly in our surface fleet, we have done a very big round turn, studying what are the maintenance requirements of our surface ships, our amphibious ships, destroyers, our cruisers, patrol craft, mine counter-measure ships, in order to assure that all of those ships will reach their expected service life, and we get what the American public should get for the cost of the ship.

Moderator: Why are men and women at the Naval Academy wearing the same covers? Are you planning to move it from the Academy to the whole fleet?

Admiral Greenert: We have a pilot, and it was, the uniforms are designed to be as uniform as they can be. It makes sense. So what we have in place is merely a pilot so that again, the folks, the male and female uniform, the same hat makes sense and we're using the Naval Academy as a pilot.

Moderator: Can we get an update of [NAVFIT] 98?

Admiral Greenert: I'm afraid you won't get it at this forum. [NAVFIT] 98, that's a good question and I'll have to take that back and I'll send you a report on that.

Moderator: What's the future role of the carrier?

Admiral Greenert: The carrier, I read an article a while back, as I was looking at platforms and how platforms have evolved, how we buy things and put so much money into them and how well do they evolve and are we getting our money's worth? If one looks at the Enterprise, when she was built over 50 years ago the type of aircraft she used, the type of vacuum tubes in her radars. She just completed deployment where she employs the most cutting edge strike fighter that we have. She had the cutting edge radar. She was the ship on the point supporting operations in Afghanistan, supporting for our troops.

So I think the future of the carrier is it has volume, it has persistence, being nuclear powered, and certainly it has speed. It certainly has the ability to employ a whole panoply, a myriad of aircraft, and I still wonder about bringing unmanned aircraft to the carrier.

I think it's almost the imagination can expand on what we can do with the aircraft carrier given it has persistence, speed and volume.

Moderator: If we need less ships will they be replaced with smarter ones?

Admiral Greenert: Smarter ships in the context, if it's in the context of reduced manning, more efficient fuel and better sensors, yes. We will definitely.

Will we need less ships? We should think of the number of ships that we need based on what capability the ship brings for what mission and in what parts of the world and for what portion of the future and what threat we may deal with. I think that's a better evaluation.

But one cannot make any mistake. You need a certain number of ships. As I say, quantity does have a quality of its own. As I showed on my handout here, it's not just the number of ships, it's the number of ships forward and what type and what capability for what mission around the world.

Moderator: How has the force structure changed over the past year, and can you give us your thoughts on shipbuilding today and in the future?

Admiral Greenert: In the past year, we started the year with 285 ships and we've grown to 287 ships. There hasn't been really a change of two, that's the net change. The good news is, the last six ships that we have commissioned, that we have accepted in the Navy from industry have been under budget or on budget, and it has been ahead of time or on contract time. That includes two nuclear submarines, it includes an auxiliary, it includes an Arleigh Burke destroyer, it includes a Littoral Combat Ship. So I think you can see many different classes of ships.

We are the recipients most recently of what can happen when you have a predictable, stabilized shipbuilding budget. Industry has the opportunity to make a profit and to reinvest, if you will, to hone their skills with their labor force because they have a predictable labor force. A lot of that is on us to make sure that I bring and my staff brings forward requirements that make sense and that we can sit down and where it makes sense do a multi-year procurement, that is buy things in an economic quantity. This past year has been a reflection of what can happen as we've grown and gotten things on time or early and on budget or early, and quality, where the builder's trust has gone quite well in our ships.

Moderator: How have females for mariners performed so far? And is the Navy happy with that performance?

Admiral Greenert: Yeah, in a word I would say exceptional performance. The anecdotal feedback, if you will, and the consistent feedback is that females that have integrated on our SSBNs, our ballistic missile submarines down in King's Bay, Georgia. They've gone on patrol,

at least three crews, and that would be 12 per ship on deployment. They stand watch . They stand watch very well. The measure of a junior officer's skill and performance is who is chosen to be the engineering officer of the watch when you have an inspection to return to patrol. On two of these ships one of these women were selected to do that. I think that's a pretty good reflection of their dedication, the ability to integrate quite well with the crew and the ability to prove their support. So this is going quite well and I think we'll continue in a similar manner .

Moderator: More than 20 commanding officers have been relieved this year. What does the Navy intend to do to remedy this high rate of firings?

Admiral Greenert: I'll tell you, one of the things about how and why we're replacing commanding officers. There are four basic categories as to why a commanding officer has tended to fail. One, a grounding or an untoward incident -- grounding or collision. Two, just incompetence. Not cut out to be a commanding officer. Three, unable to deal perhaps with the stress, and one might become abusive, overbearing. Four, misbehavior such as a DUI, an adulterous affair or something of that nature. And by a factor of at least two to one, as you look at these 20, it's been misbehavior.

I don't understand why they're misbehaving. I'm concerned about that and I'm looking into that, looking into it very hard.

What we need to do, what we've been doing in this regard is one, evaluating our performance and being able to develop and nurture our commanding officers, and we did that in 2004 with a Navy IG review that took place; we did it again in 2010. We are implementing the findings in the 2010 report that we have out there. So you've got to I think evaluate that.

Number two, we're rebaselining, and what I mean by that, or I should say baselining. Making sure that our track, the way we nurture our officers as we bring them along, the way we screen them for command, is consistent across the Navy, whether you fly, whether you're in surface ships, submarines, whether you're a SEABEE or whether you're in the information dominance corps, that there's a consistency to the screening process and the evaluation process so that we see that we're taking into account those matters and that we're also developing the character of our officers as they grow up and they inherit actually more stress, more responsibility. That's important.

Lastly, we want to shape them. We want to take what we learned from these reports and embed that in our leadership continuum and shape our officers to make sure that the character that they have is the character of the commanding officer that the American people deserve.

In the end, to take command of any Navy unit, it's unique and it's unlike any other command in the Department of Defense. I'm a firm believer in what we call the charge of command. This individual has a unique responsibility, has unique authority, and therefore has the accountability that they owe the people of the country.

Moderator: How will the Petraeus/Allen scandal affect the Navy's officer selection process and training methods?

Admiral Greenert: I don't think it will affect the officer training selection process. I can't imagine. I'd have to give that some great thought. But we have been introspective as a result of the events in the past week. We, the service chiefs, are looking at it ourselves and talking with the Chairman and we're to have a Tank, what we call a Tank. It's a meeting of the service chiefs with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, next week and sit down and talk about what are the attributes, what took place here? What facts are involved with this, how will we view ethics and accountability and behavior, and where might we be witnesses as we look across our four star ranks in our respective services, in the joint command area. And then look internally to be sure that our flag and general officers, we are leading them properly, and as I just mentioned on commanding officer character and behavior, are we developing character right? Are we assuring that we're looking at ourselves as closely as we would want to look at our subordinates and bringing that all together?

Moderator: Should adultery that does not involve a senior/subordinate relationship still be punishable by the UCMJ?

Admiral Greenert: Today I would choose not to question the UCMJ. It is the UCMJ and so I think, I don't think, I know it is my responsibility to carry it out.

Moderator: The military has been on the forefront of social change over the years such as race and gender equality, expectation that persons on the job be drug and alcohol free, and mostly gay rights. Can you anticipate in which way the military will again lead the way in social justice in the future?

Admiral Greenert: To me, the subject is diversity. To me, we have to have a diverse force and it's all about survival. We must go where the talent is. We have to have the talent. That involves, if you will, ethnic diversity, it involves gender diversity, it involves geographical diversity -- kids from all around the country and what they bring from their unique area, and professional diversity. Some folks brought together with a different view. It's good for the institution.

To me, we've got to get the recruiting right. We've got to go out and, as I said, go mine those skills and bring them in. Today about one out of four folks in high school qualify to be recruited into the Navy, only one out of four. And so you can try and picture that in the future. I can't tell you if that's going to expand or get less, but that's our challenge.

So I think we've got to recruit properly, and then we've got to develop those that we recruit. If it's somebody that may be not a minority, somebody that isn't used to doing what we do in the maritime forces, encourage them to see that they can do this. If somebody wants to fly, give it a try. If a woman wants to have a family and have a Navy career, it has been done. We have great role models to see that that can be done, et cetera. Then I'm working very hard, and I think it's important that our leadership understand that diversity has to be sort of institutionalized. It has to be kind of a second nature aspect when you go out to hire, when you go out to recruit and pull people in. you've got to think diversity because when you bring diversity you bring great value.

Moderator: The Secretaries of State and Defense have visited Vietnam. How important is Vietnam to U.S. strategy and will you visit?

Admiral Greenert: I hope to visit Vietnam. I'm going to the Asia Pacific next year and that's one of the places I hope to visit. Vietnam is key, geography is important. They have offered the ability or at least to talk about perhaps opening, increasing the number of port visits. We do a port visit in Vietnam, I can't say exactly how many times a year, Pacific Command kind of coordinates that, but it's happening with our ships. We are increasing cooperative opportunity. They have joined some exercises, particularly in the search and rescue, and like I said before, some of the maritime security aspects that are so important.

So there's an opportunity here and it will be matter of moving forward I think at a rate that we need to do to respect their sovereignty and respect where they stand in their security matters.

Moderator: What does downsizing of the Navy mean for global security as well as our allies that count on us for an added layer of security?

Admiral Greenert: As you look at the chartlet that I gave you, we will grow the Navy roughly 287 today to 295 ships by 2020. Downsizing may refer to personnel, and frankly, we're not downsizing. We're growing over the years in the number of personnel. So as ship count is going up the number of people are going up.

Frankly, we did some efficiency methods recently in about the 2005, 2006 and we cut too many people out of some areas that we thought we could. We're restoring that from billets at sea to some maintenance billets ashore, roughly 2,000 here, so that we have a nice rich sea/shore rotation so kids can develop their skills ashore, and in return, back to sea, that much better.

Moderator: What's your assessment of whether the Iranians will shut down the Strait of Hormuz given the sanctions the West has imposed and that 80 percent of Iran's revenue comes from oil?

Admiral Greenert: It's difficult to say whether the Iranians will attempt to shut down the Strait of Hormuz. I am confident that we have the capability to open the Straits of Hormuz if they are shut down. We have made some great strides in counter-mine warfare over the past year to the programming we did, increase in emphasis on the skill, and in fact just a few months ago we did an international mine exercise. It was a pretty good success. We were able to test new technology, autonomous underwater vehicles for finding mines and neutralizing mines. We brought an international coalition together. We hoped to get about 20 countries there, we had 35 countries take part in this exercise. Twenty of them brought ships or helicopters or other means.

We used the Afloat Forward Station Base that we mentioned before as, if you will, a flagship, the command ship for the coalition operation. So we learned a great deal. We learned that there's a lot of synergy that we can bring together. We learned that unmanned, underwater vehicles do work for counter-mine, and that you don't need a mine counter-measure ship and a large helicopter dragging a sled to clear these things out to be effective. That in fact smaller ships that

some nations with smaller navies can bring to bear at this and become very very effective participants in the mission.

Moderator: We are almost out of time, but before we get to the last question I have a couple of housekeeping matters to take care of. First of all I'd like to remind you about our upcoming luncheon on December 18th. We have --

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